



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

### MIKE SPANO

January 20, 2023

Dear Members of the Independent Redistricting Commission:

My name is Mike Spano and, I am the current Mayor of the City of Yonkers, and prior to that had represented the City in the Assembly for many years.

I wish to express strong opposition to the current redistricting proposal, which would divide Yonkers into four Assembly districts, compared to the current three districts. This is a continuing step in the wrong direction for the City. Until 2022, Yonkers consisted of two Assembly Districts. In 2022, this was expanded to three districts, with a small portion of northern Yonkers being combined with dissimilar communities to the north. Now, under the current proposal, this process becomes even worse.

Yonkers, a City of more than 200,000 people, would have only one Assembly district that is completely within its borders. In other words, it would have only one Assembly member whose interest is solely in representing what is now the State's third largest City. In two of the proposed districts, the new 90<sup>th</sup> and 88<sup>th</sup>, small portions of Yonkers would be completely subsumed by the much larger portions of neighboring communities.

Yonkers is very different in so many ways from the communities into which its diluted voice would be submerged under the current plan. To take one example, the city has a dependent school district whose students are overwhelmingly people of color, at or below the poverty line, and face unique challenges. There is no comparison to the school districts of neighboring municipalities whose boards of education and tax rates are subject to a separate vote, whose funding is far more secure, and in which the economic and cultural standards of the students are a world away from those in Yonkers.

If you think the needs of Yonkers can be met in the same way as the needs of Bronxville and Scarsdale, then please think again, because they cannot. If you think the needs of Yonkers can be met in the same way as the needs of Ardsley and Hastings on Hudson, please think again, because they cannot.

Besides diluting the voice of Yonkers between four Assembly Districts – two of which will have Yonkers as only a negligible part of the district, the current proposal also divides communities of interest within the City itself.

Cohesive neighborhoods are inexplicably split up. Neighborhoods such as Colonial Heights and Beech Hill for example, whose residents have long been able to call upon a single Assembly member in a united manner, will now be divided into separate districts. The voice of the people will be diluted.

I am in the fortunate position of having served Yonkers in the Assembly, and now running its government as Mayor. Therefore, I see the issue from both sides – as a local official presenting the City's needs to the Assembly, and in the past as an Assembly member responding to the local officials.

I can tell you with 100 percent certainty that the current proposed map is a recipe for failure on both ends.

There are good and workable alternatives to the current proposal. I will leave it to the Commission to decide which of those alternatives work best. However, I can say without any doubt that there is one plan, which does a disservice to every resident of the City – and that is the plan that is currently proposed.

Thank you in advance for your consideration, and I appreciate this opportunity to offer my comments to the Commission.

Very truly yours,



**MIKE SPANO**

Mayor