

**Written Testimony of Common Cause/NY**  
**Supplementing Oral Testimony Before the NY State Redistricting Commission**  
**Brooklyn Hearing, November 16, 2021**

**Introduction**

Common Cause/NY submits this written testimony to supplement the oral testimony of its Executive Director, Susan Lerner, at the Brooklyn Hearing conducted on November 16, 2021.

Common Cause is a national nonpartisan advocacy organization founded in 1970 working to ensure that every vote counts, that every eligible voter has an equal say, that our elections represent the will of the people, and that our government is of, by, and for the people. Common Cause/NY is one of the most active state chapters within Common Cause, with tens of thousands of members and activists in every county of New York State.

Fair Redistricting is a major policy focus for Common Cause across the country. Our national Redistricting Project helps members of the public play an active role in shaping our own representation, leading efforts to create fairer and less partisan processes for drawing districts. Common Cause/NY is actively engaged in assisting members of the public and organizational partners in understanding and participating in the redistricting process through our series of community mapping workshops. In the last redistricting cycle, Common Cause/NY was the only organization to draw statewide reform maps for both houses of the Legislature and Congress. Portions of our congressional map were expressly adopted by the federal court and form the basis for several upstate districts in the current congressional map. Accordingly, we are familiar not only with the law and policy governing redistricting but the actual process and challenge of drawing fair and nonpartisan district lines.

In this written supplement, we present detailed analysis and recommendations regarding district lines to be drawn in four of the five New York City boroughs: Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. Cognizant of the state constitutional requirement to respect the cores of existing districts where practical, we begin our discussion with relevant demographic changes, both borough wide and as impacts current district maps.

We will provide an additional written analysis of proposed plans for the remaining regions of New York separately.

## General Observations

Before turning to our evaluations, some general comments and observations. First, the Commission is to be commended for its website and the data contained therein, particularly its presentation of the proposed maps and the ability of the public to download the maps in workable formats. However, the format in which the proposed maps were presented to the public is needlessly complicated and obfuscating.

Styling the maps “Names” and Letters” does not confuse anyone as to what portion of the politically divided Commission drew which maps. Better to have straightforwardly labeled the “Letters” map “D” and the “Names” map “R”, as those working with these maps refers to them. Similarly, not labeling the proposed districts with the numerical districts that they propose to replace required unnecessary time and trouble harmonizing each proposed district to its antecedent in order to evaluate the proposal under the requisite constitutional standards. It is not possible to determine whether the proposed maps maintain “the cores of existing districts” and to what extent those cores were considered by the Commission, as required by Art.III, § 4(c)(5), without doing that extra and laborious work. While helpful, the online map overlay of the current districts provided by the Commission does not replace numbering of the proposed districts. Accordingly, we have provided maps attempting to reconcile the proposed districts with existing districts accompanying our discussion of proposed plan.

Additionally, while the proposed maps are accompanied by demographic analysis, there is no explanation of the choices made in drawing the districts. We recommend that the final maps prepared by the Commission include such a prose explanation of the districts as drawn.

## Brooklyn

### ***Relevant Demographic Shifts***

From 2010-2020, Brooklyn grew by over 9.2%, a surge driven by a combination of new housing development in areas like Williamsburg and Downtown Brooklyn, and rapid growth in the Asian community in southwest Brooklyn. Downtown Brooklyn’s residential population grew by over 67% and Williamsburg’s by 41% as over 20,000 new units of housing were developed in these two areas alone. Brooklyn also experienced the most dramatic demographic shift of any Borough as non-Hispanic White population surged in historically Black and Latino neighborhoods of central and north Brooklyn (including Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, Bushwick, and Prospect-Lefferts Gardens) while rapidly declining in the Bensonhurst and Marine Park neighborhoods in southern Brooklyn.

Combined with concurrent declines in the Black and Latino populations of the central and north Brooklyn neighborhoods, and rapid growth in the Asian community in southern Brooklyn, these shifts are transforming communities (and thus politics) across the Borough.

In the four central Brooklyn community boards 3, 4, 8, and 9, combined (comprising Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, and Prospect-Lefferts), the demographic mix shifted from

approximately 55% NH<sup>1</sup> Black, 27% Hispanic, 13% NH White, and 3% NH Asian in 2010, to 39% NH Black, 27% NH White, 24% Hispanic, and 5% NH Asian in Census 2020.

The total NH White population increased by 8.4% while the NH Black population decreased by an almost equal proportion. The only neighborhoods where Black population grew were Downtown Brooklyn (a factor of the huge increase in housing there) and the outermost southeast Brooklyn neighborhoods of Marine Park, Canarsie, and the southern portion of East New York.

In addition to these demographic shifts fueled by gentrification in Central Brooklyn, there was the surge of Asian population in the southern Brooklyn neighborhoods especially Dyker Heights, Bensonhurst, Gravesend, and Midwood, and concurrent decline of the White population in those areas. Overall the Borough NH Asian population surged by over 40% to now account for nearly 14% of the VAP.

And from 2010-2020, the Latino population grew by about 4% but diffused throughout the Borough as longstanding Latino-majority neighborhoods in Bushwick and Sunset Park lost Latino population but neighborhoods like Brownsville, East New York, and Bensonhurst gained.

We would hope to see maps which fairly represented these significant demographic changes in Brooklyn. New district maps should also respect the requirements of the Voting Rights Act, which is well reflected in the current congressional maps.

## **Congressional Plans**

### ***Relevant Demographic Changes***

Due to the population growth in Brooklyn and nearby areas of Manhattan and Queens, three of the current congressional districts are actually over-populated despite the increased size of the new Congressional districts. These six districts together are overpopulated by about 0.8% -- meaning it's possible to maintain the approximate geographic size of the current districts.

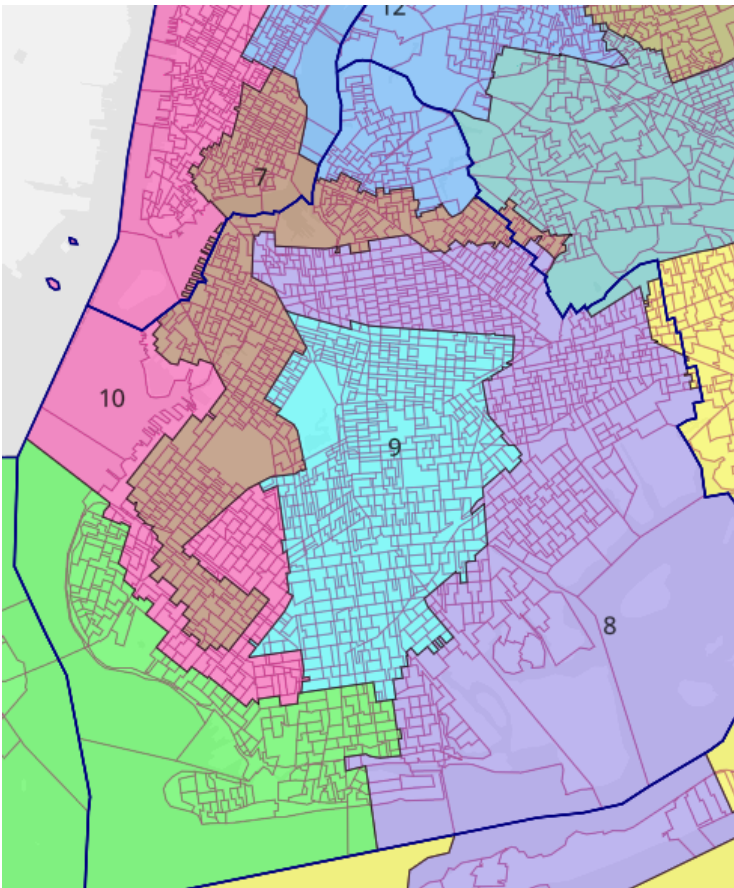
Congressional District 7 is a Latino plurality district drawn to connect the majority-Latino communities in North Brooklyn and along the Queens border with the Lower East side and Sunset Park. Members of the public often misinterpret the twisting shape of this District as a gerrymander when it is actually drawn with VRA empowerment of the Latino community in mind.

Congressional Districts 8 and 9 are VRA districts for Brooklyn's Black community, with both drawn to over 50% NH Black VAP in 2010. Due to the population shifts described above combined with the larger size of the new districts, it is no longer possible to draw two 50%+ NH Black VAP districts but it is possible to maintain or slightly strengthen the two districts from their current 43.6% and 42.9% Black pluralities.

---

<sup>1</sup> We follow the convention of abbreviating Non-Hispanic populations as "NH".

## **Congress: Proposed Democrats' Plan "Letters"**



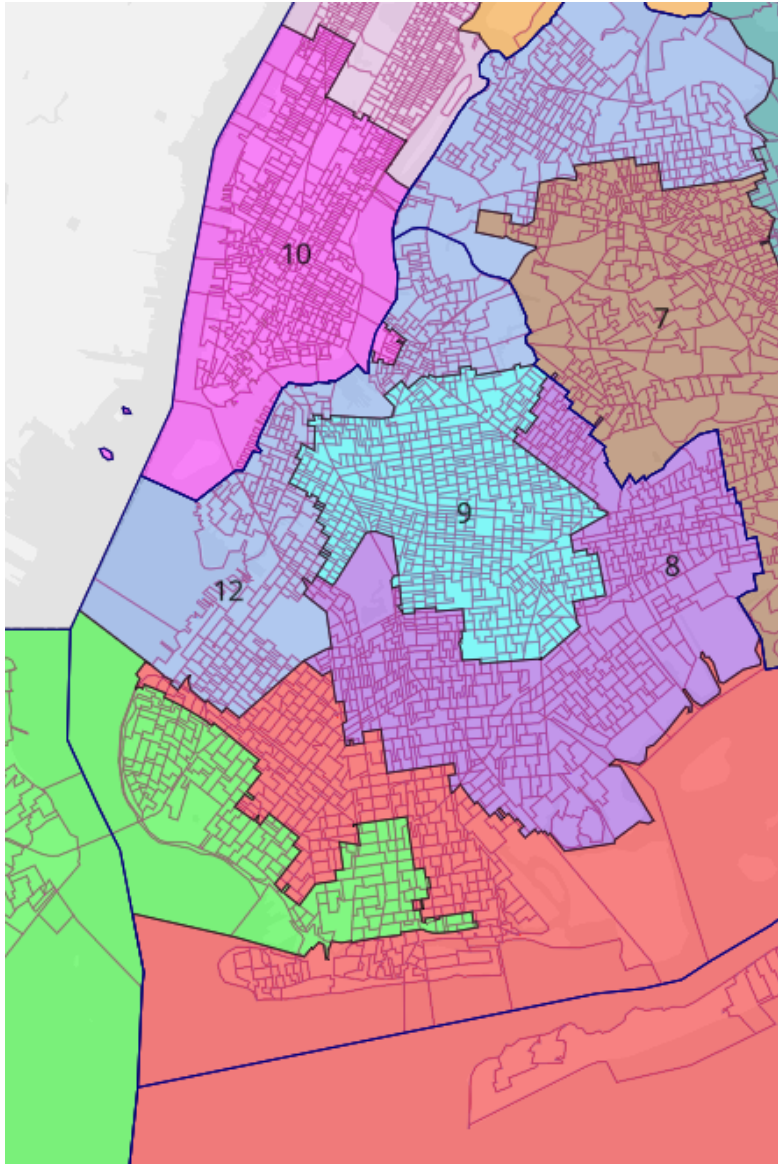
The "Letters" Plan represents something close to a "Least Change" map from the current districts in most respects. However, District 7 as proposed here would drop most of Bushwick, Ridgewood, Cypress Hills, and Woodhaven and instead take in more of the Lower East Side, Brownstone Brooklyn, and Sunset Park. These changes would have the undesirable effect of making the district plurality NH White VAP and reducing the Hispanic/Latino VAP from 37% to less than 26%. Asian representation would be increased from 20.5% in the current district to over 24% here. But this district as drawn would clearly reduce the opportunity of Latino communities in Brooklyn and Queens to elect a representative of their choice and would also leave neighborhoods like Bushwick and Ridgewood with divided representation. The rest of the Brooklyn Congressional districts in "Letters" are much more straightforward "least change" proposals.

Districts 8 and 9 are drawn to 44% NH Black VAP and maintain their current cores, with District 8 dropping Coney Island and Howard Beach but adding more of Bushwick, and District 9 shifting slightly east and dropping some of the Sheepshead Bay area that is currently drawn into the district.

District 10 shifts further into Manhattan than the current District and the narrow path proposed to carve the district to reach Borough Park has the effect of dividing the Bay Ridge and Bensonhurst neighborhoods. Districts 12 takes up additional Queens neighborhoods while maintaining the Greenpoint-Williamsburg areas in North Brooklyn. District 11 adds Coney Island, Brighton Beach, and parts of Sheepshead Bay and Gravesend.



## Congress: Proposed Republicans' Plan "Names"



While the "Letters" Plan takes a least change approach to the New York City Congressional Districts, "Names" proposes a drastically different and unacceptable map that shows no deference to the existing districts (many of which have cores that have been in place for decades and have histories that intimately relate to struggles for civil rights and political representation).

"Names" vaporizes the current District 7, instead drawing it as a plurality Latino district entirely within Queens including the neighborhoods of Howard Beach, Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, Ridgewood, Middle Village, most of Forest Hills and Rego Park, Elmhurst, Sunnyside and Woodside, and parts of Corona and Jackson Heights. At approximately 35% Latino VAP, 27% NH Asian VAP and 27% NH White VAP, it is entirely unclear how this new district arrangement would actually perform. Moreover, when looking at 2019 CVAP, the district's electorate is clearly plurality NH White, and looks like an unlikely configuration to elect a Latino

representative, to say nothing about the way it divides numerous neighborhoods.

Eliminating the configuration of the current District 7 opens up the possibility to draw a District 10 entirely within Manhattan and a District 12 along nearly the full length of the East River from Astoria to Sunset Park. With an NH White VAP plurality and a population increasingly trending that way, this District would also be unlikely to be an effective share for Latino communities to elect a representative of their choice.

“Names” also reconfigures Districts 8 and 9 while maintaining them as near-majority NH Black VAP districts. District 9 takes up Central Brooklyn while District 8 wraps around it like a “U”. Bed Stuy is swapped into District 9 while East Flatbush is swapped into District 8. Cypress Hills and Bushwick, with significant commonality of interest, currently in District 7, are split between the two.

In South Brooklyn, District 11 is drawn as “least change” from the current lines. But the rest of South Brooklyn is pulled into a completely new District configuration that pulls Borough Park, Gravesend, Sheepshead Bay, and Coney Island out through the Rockaways into a district that runs all the way along the Atlantic coast to Long Beach out in Nassau County. Considering the length of time it takes to travel between the Long Beach area and South Brooklyn and the completely different local government structure, this is hardly a community of interest and looks more like a partisan attempt to draw a Republican opportunity. In short, the Names Map for Brooklyn should not be adopted.

## **State Senate Plans**

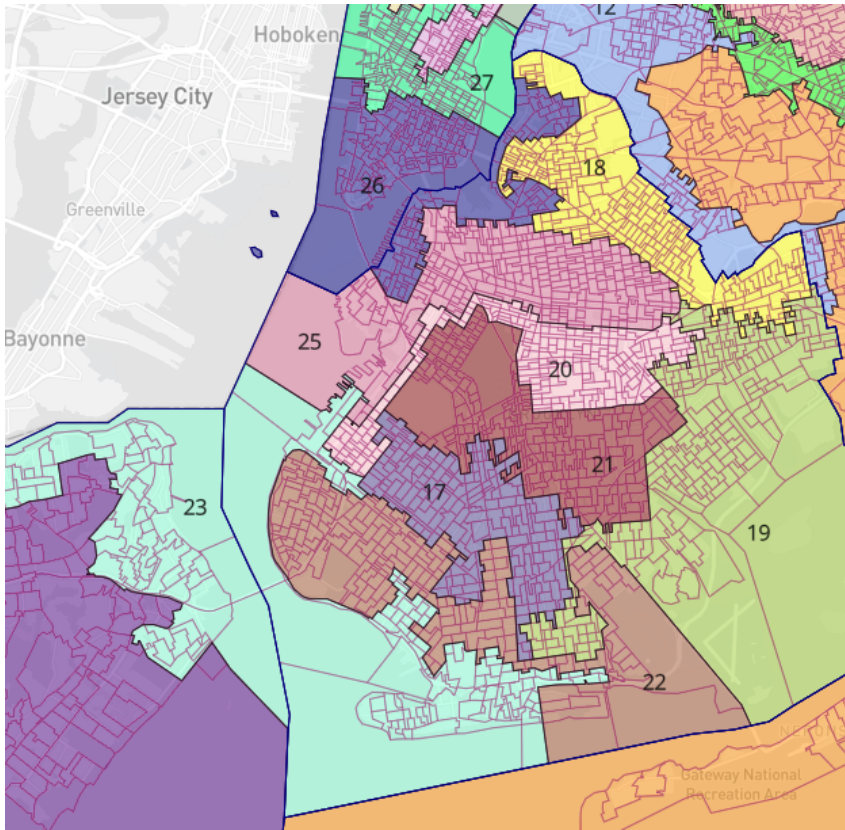
### ***Relevant Demographic Changes***

Due to population growth and the systematic overpacking of New York City Senate districts in the 2011 Plan, eight of the ten current Brooklyn state senate districts are overpopulated in excess 5%, with Districts 25 and 26 leading the way at 13% and 17.9% over ideal population. Altogether the districts are roughly 240,000 over ideal population – which adds up to more than 75% of the size of a district. Thus, one of the two Senate districts which demographics dictate imported from Upstate will land at least partially in Brooklyn.

A compelling argument can be made that an additional Brooklyn senate district should be located in Sunset Park. With over 40% population growth in the Asian population and the fact that there is no Asian State Senator representing Brooklyn, adding a district in Sunset Park-Bensonhurst that could now be drawn to majority NH Asian VAP can be accomplished. Doing so would allow this rapidly growing community the chance to elect a representative. This can be done with no negative impact on the existing VRA districts. With a new district slotted in Sunset Park-Bensonhurst, the lines in the rest of the districts can be adjusted to better follow neighborhoods.



## State Senate: Proposed Democrats' Plan<sup>2</sup> "Letters"



The "Letters" Plan keeps the cores of the five VRA districts somewhat intact but disappointingly fails to reinforce them to +50%. Drawn here to include the Hasidic section of Williamsburg and the East Village in Manhattan, District 18 is barely plurality Hispanic VAP and drops below a plurality in CVAP. "Letters" also fails to draw District 20, 21, and 25 to majority NH Black VAP (they are majority Black VAP however).

"Letters" also maintains a District 17 that covers the Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods of southern Brooklyn and keeps Sheepshead Bay together. After that, things become very different.

The Plan proposes a new State Senate district for Sunset Park and Bensonhurst that is close to majority NH Asian VAP, reflecting the rapid growth of this community (labeled G in the "Letters" nomenclature, it would substitute for displaced upstate district 51).

District 22 ditches its squiggly south Brooklyn gerrymander and instead becomes a Bay Ridge, western Sunset Park, Red Hook, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, and Downtown Brooklyn district, moving into neighborhoods formerly occupied by Districts 20, 25, and 26 (which here gets pushed into Manhattan to become an entirely lower Manhattan district).

District 12 is proposed to be brought down from the Long Island City area of Queens alongside Williamsburg-Greenpoint and a little chunk of Manhattan's east side. There may be some potential merit in combining Williamsburg-Greenpoint with Long Island City as both areas have experienced extensive new high-rise housing development and face similar issues of rapid neighborhood change.

"Letters" lands the second new State Senate district for NYC in Central Queens covering Sunnyside-Woodside, Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village, Glendale, parts of Rego Park and Kew Gardens Hills

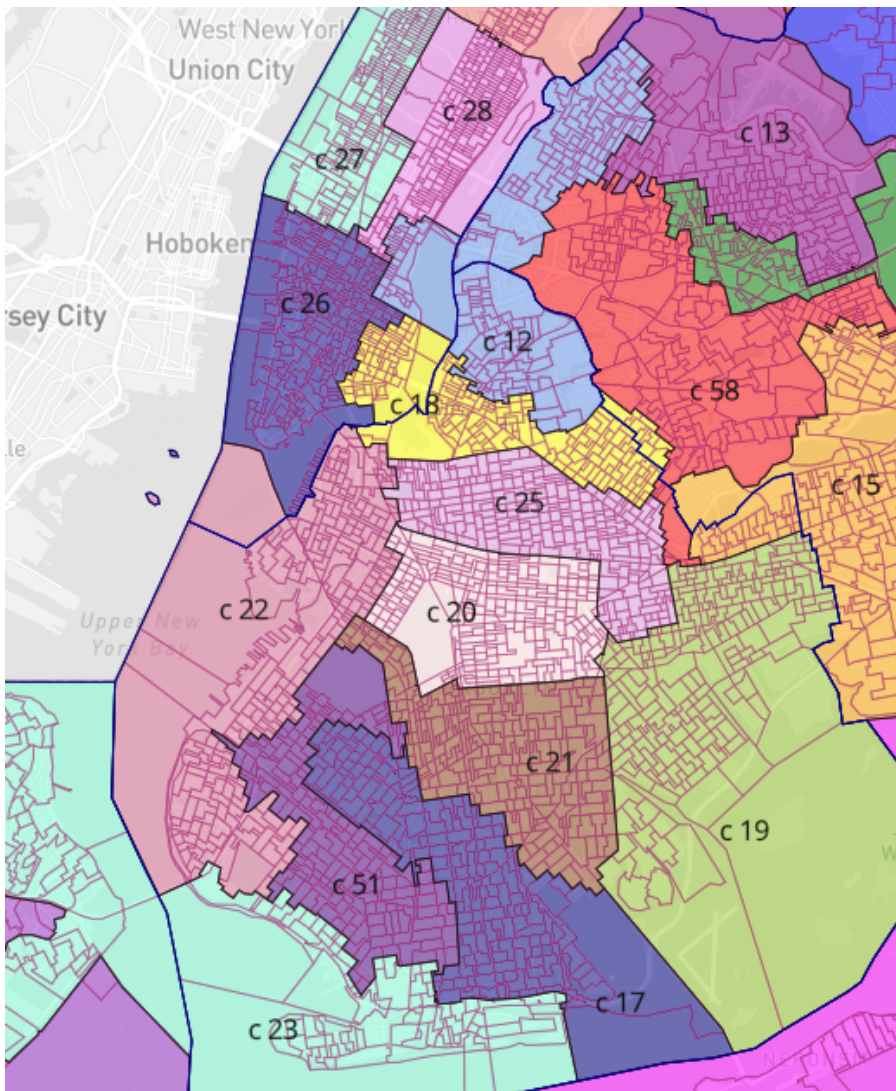
<sup>2</sup> The total population figures for the commission plans use the prisoner-adjusted file (but the VAP figures do not) – we have used the current information available on Daves' Redistricting website in our calculations.



and most strangely a southern tail into a couple of blocks of Bushwick and Cypress Hills. This tail into Brooklyn suggests sloppiness and has no apparent rationale.

“Letters” also proposes to bring the Queens-based District 15 over the borough border to cover the Latino community of Cypress Hills which is currently in District 18 alongside Bushwick. This is a questionable move to say the least as it removes the community from what was drawn as a majority-Latino district ten years ago into a district likely to be dominated by Queens voters in neighborhoods like Forest Hills. “Letters” treatment of the Latino communities in Bushwick and Cypress Hills is especially poor as Bushwick would also be divided between three districts here and as mentioned above, Latino voters would unacceptably lose most of their voting strength in this proposed District 18.

In short, the Letters plan fails to fairly reflect the demographic changes and fails to maximize opportunities for minority communities to be able to elect representatives of their choice.



**State Senate: Proposed Republicans’ Plan “Names”**

“Names” proposed a very different map than “Letters” but with its own set of defects. Like “Letters”, “Names” dismantles the Latino-majority District 18 (even more thoroughly in this case) instead drawing a nearly majority-white Districts that puts Williamsburg and the northern fringe of Bushwick into a district with Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village, and part of Rego Park. Not only does this district undermine Latino voting power, it makes no sense as a community of interest as the central Queens neighborhoods have little commonality with Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

For the four Black VRA districts, “Letters” proposes a 19 and 21 relatively similar to the current districts (with 19 adding Cypress Hills and Howard Beach in Queens, and 21 shifting out of Park Slope and south to Marine Park instead), but completely reorients 20 and 25. The affected communities should weigh in on this proposal as it is different than most districts in the area orient (Bed-Stuy is split between the two districts).

“Names” drops a new State Senate district into Brooklyn but it is not drawn as a nearly majority Asian Sunset Park-Bensonhurst district like in “Letters.” It’s instead drawn here as Sunset Park-Red Hook-Park Slope-Carrol Gardens-Windsor Terrace. While this district keeps the Sunset Park neighborhood together it draws it in a way that it would likely be dominated by the brownstone Brooklyn neighborhoods to the north. And no district in this plan as greater than 34% NH Asian VAP, whereas the Sunset Park-Bensonhurst district can approach nearly a majority.

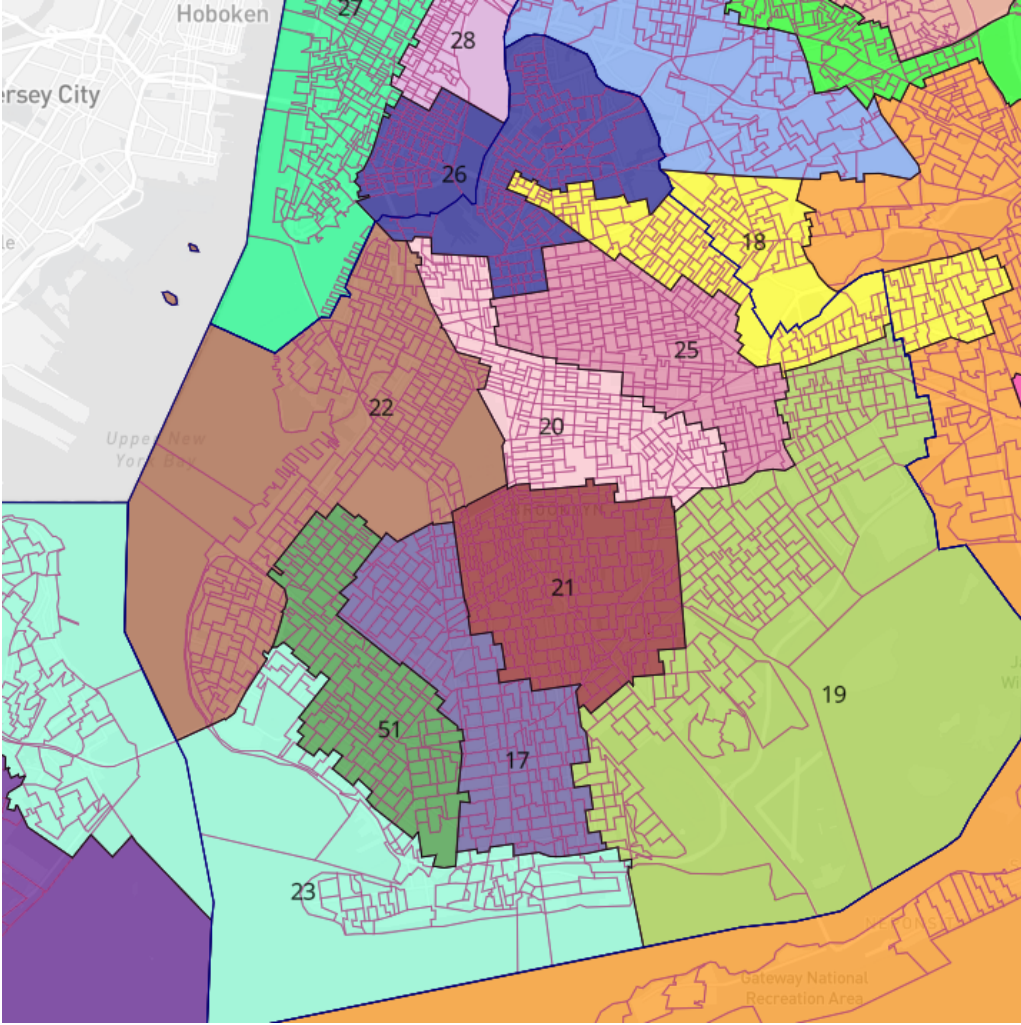
Districts 17, 22, and 23 are kept fairly similar to the current districts in this plan, while District 26 shifts to take more of Brooklyn compared to its current Manhattan-majority.

### **Alternate Scenario**

Alternative to the proposed Commission Plans, it is possible to draw Brooklyn State Senate districts that reinforce each of the five VRA Districts to +50% while also drawing a new district that is nearly an Asian majority in Sunset Park-Bensonhurst. The map below would accomplish this while also following neighborhoods and communities of interest more closely than either Commission plan.



**Common Cause/NY Alternative Brooklyn State Senate Plan**



## **State Assembly Plans**

### ***Relevant Demographic Changes***

Despite Brooklyn's population growth, the 20 current Assembly districts are, as a whole, nearly balanced in population because they were drawn to nearly -4% deviation per district in the last cycle. However, three districts that experienced a concentration of new housing development (and thus population) – Districts 50, 52, and 57 – are far overpopulated and will have to shrink their borders. Conversely, District 42 was the only area of Brooklyn that saw a loss in population and will have to gain.

Eight of the current districts were drawn 50%+1 NH Black VAP in 2010 and of these, seven maintain that status in the new census. District 57 experienced the greatest influx of both new population and displacement of the Black population and is now only 33% NH Black VAP. It is possible to reinforce the district back to 50%+1 but such a move would require shifting the district significantly to the east (as the UNITY Map proposes to do)

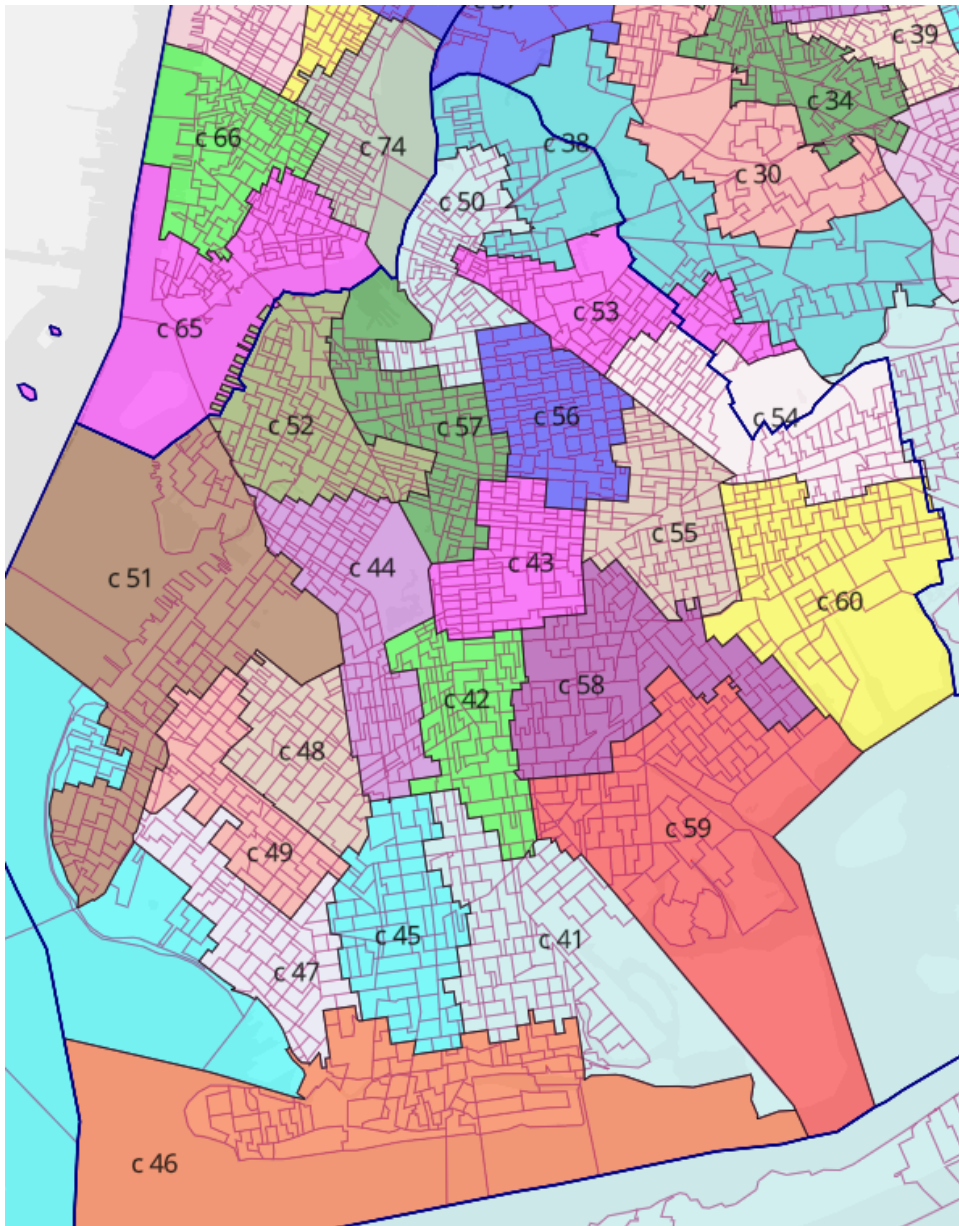
Three of the current districts were drawn with Hispanic VAP majorities – District 51 in Sunset Park-Red Hook, 53 in Williamsburg-Bushwick, and 54 in Bushwick-Cypress Hills. Due to the demographic shifts described above, these districts have also fallen below 50%. While the Bushwick-Cypress Hills districts could be reinforced back to 50% -- especially if one crossed the borough border into Ridgewood – District 51 can only be a plurality since there are no additional adjacent Latino-majority precincts to shift into.

For the Asian population, District 49 was drawn in 2010 at nearly majority NH Asian VAP and has grown to 57.6% under the current lines, and District 47 grew its Asian share from 31% to the now plurality of 42%.

While some of the division in neighborhoods is driven by VRA priorities, one neighborhood that is clearly poorly served by the current lines is Bay Ridge, which is divided into three pieces with no apparent rationale other than political gerrymandering.

### ***State Assembly: Proposed Democrats' Plan "Letters"***

"Letters" keeps most of the cores of existing districts intact but makes several odd decisions about VRA districts and the division of particular neighborhoods.



“Letters” fails to reinforce District 57 to an NH Black VAP majority bringing the percentage up to only 36%. The Plan reinforces Districts 53 and 54 but does not go to 50%+1 for District 53 despite drawing the District into Ridgewood. The decision for District 51 is more bizarre as the plan proposes to draw the district into a majority of Bay Ridge, turning a near-majority Latino VAP district into a plurality White one. The Plan also draws District 38 as a district that straddles the Brooklyn-Queens border and divides the Greenpoint and East Williamsburg neighborhoods, putting them into a district with parts of Middle Village and Glendale in Queens which have very different concerns and priorities.

This plan should be adjusted to increase minority voting strength wherever possible

and to avoid straddling the Brooklyn-Queens border.

**State Assembly: Proposed Republicans’ Plan “Names”**

As has been the pattern, “Names” proposes more significant changes from the current district lines in most respects.

Many of these changes are triggered by the new district the plan draws in Prospect Heights, Fort Greene/Clinton Hill, and Hasidic Williamsburg, a plurality White district that does not make much sense to anyone who knows Brooklyn neighborhoods. Not only does the plan divide the Hasidic South Williamsburg neighborhood, it puts the majority of it with neighborhoods in a completely different

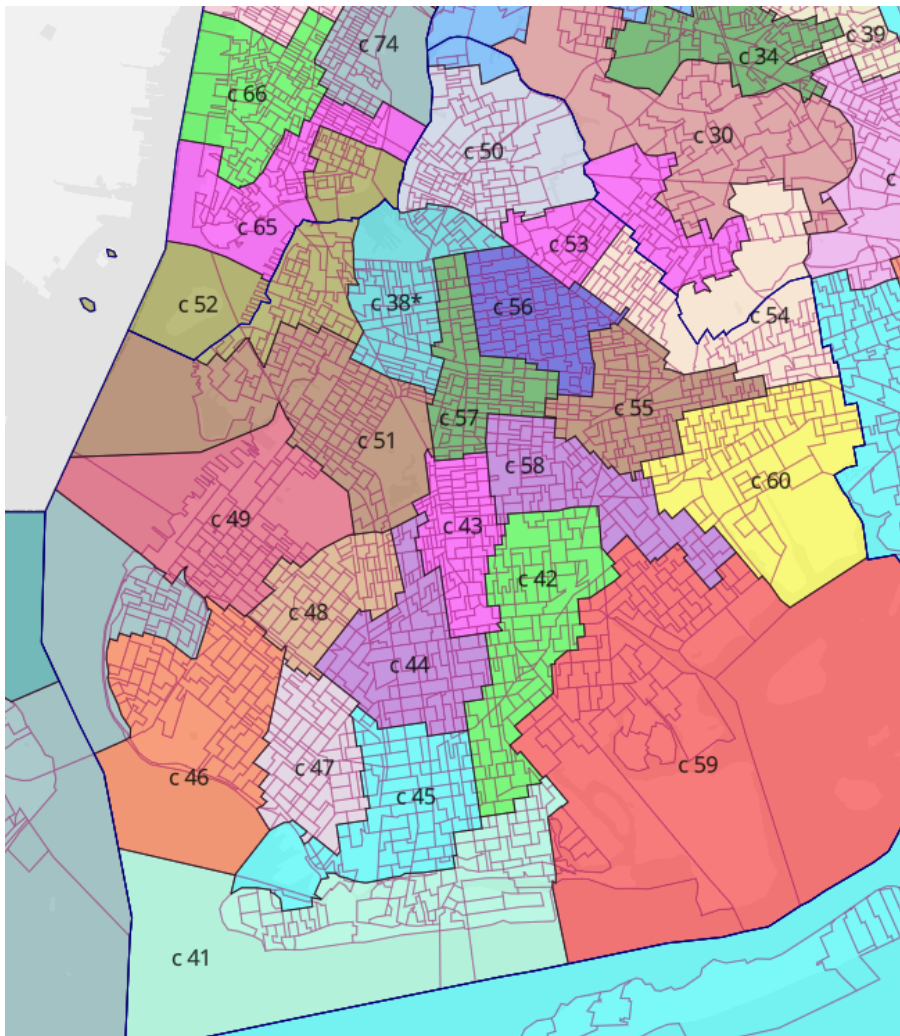


community board and sphere of Brooklyn interactions – the district just doesn't make any sense for anyone as drawn.

But drawing a new district in this general area does allow for the historically Black-majority VRA districts to slide east and be reinforced – the plan draws 6 districts at 50%+ NH Black VAP and two and 44.9% and 48.6%

District 53 is drawn to lose the historically Latino precincts of Williamsburg and instead pick up Ridgewood, while 54 stays in Bushwick and Cypress Hills but randomly picks up a chunk of Glendale Queens.

The question of how to redraw the very over-populated District 50 looms large in North Brooklyn – options include tightening it to Williamsburg (including Hasidic South Williamsburg) as proposed in “Letters”, drawing it to cover Greenpoint-Williamsburg more broadly but not include Hasidic South Williamsburg (as drawn in “Names” – but this takes in majority-Latino areas that have historically been joined with Bushwick in districts) – or adding Long Island City of the Lower East Side to a district



that takes in less of Brooklyn. The Commission and Legislature should consider feedback from the affected communities in this decision.

District 52 as drawn here is another odd pairing of neighborhoods – Downtown Brooklyn and Brooklyn Heights and vicinity with Chinatown and the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

“Names” proposes a very different arrangement for southwest Brooklyn with Sunset Park kept in a single district rather than the western Latino-majority portion of the neighborhood joined north with Red Hook and the eastern Asian-majority section joined with parts of Bensonhurst. This

sets up a potential conflict over the district's representation with nearly equal Latino and Asian voting blocks (note the UNITY Map avoids this scenario). Disappointingly, not a single majority Asian VAP district is drawn in this map but two are over 40% (47 and 49) and one additional at nearly 35% (46).

## **Manhattan**

### ***Relevant Demographic Changes***

Powered by a surge in new residential construction, Manhattan's population grew by nearly 7% to nearly 1.7 million.

Growth was strongest in the far west side areas that was booming housing development such as Chelsea, Hudson Yards, Lincoln Square, and Hell's Kitchen, as well as the Financial District and northern Central Harlem. Population actually declined in two neighborhoods – Chinatown and Washington Heights – where lower-income immigrant communities experienced pressure from gentrification and saw large family households replaced by smaller households.

The significant localized population growth in particular parts of Manhattan will have an influence on the shape of the borough's districts, especially in the Senate and Assembly.

As a whole, Manhattan is highly diverse with no one racial or ethnic group forming a majority. But this of course varies tremendously by the particular neighborhood.

NH White population grew rapidly in Upper Manhattan, especially in Harlem and Washington Heights, continuing a trend from 2000-2010. Overall, the NH White population in the four Upper Manhattan community boards grew by 24.7% while the NH Black population fell by 8% and the Hispanic population declined by 7.4%. This pattern has ongoing implications for Voting Rights Act districts in the area.

Throughout all of Manhattan, NH Black VAP was almost exactly flat, with the overall NH Black population decreasing by about 3% -- most heavily in Central and West Harlem as described above.

NH Asian population grew by nearly 24% overall to now account for over 13% of the VAP, with the largest increases on Manhattan's West Side associated with the new development in Chelsea-Hudson Yards and Hell's Kitchen. Asian population actually decreased by about 15% in Manhattan's Chinatown – continuing a pattern seen from 2000-2010. Despite Chinese communities growing very rapidly in Brooklyn and Queens, Manhattan's Chinatown continues to decline in population.

The Hispanic/Latino population in Manhattan overall was flat – with decline in Washington Heights and Inwood offset by growth on Manhattan's far west side.



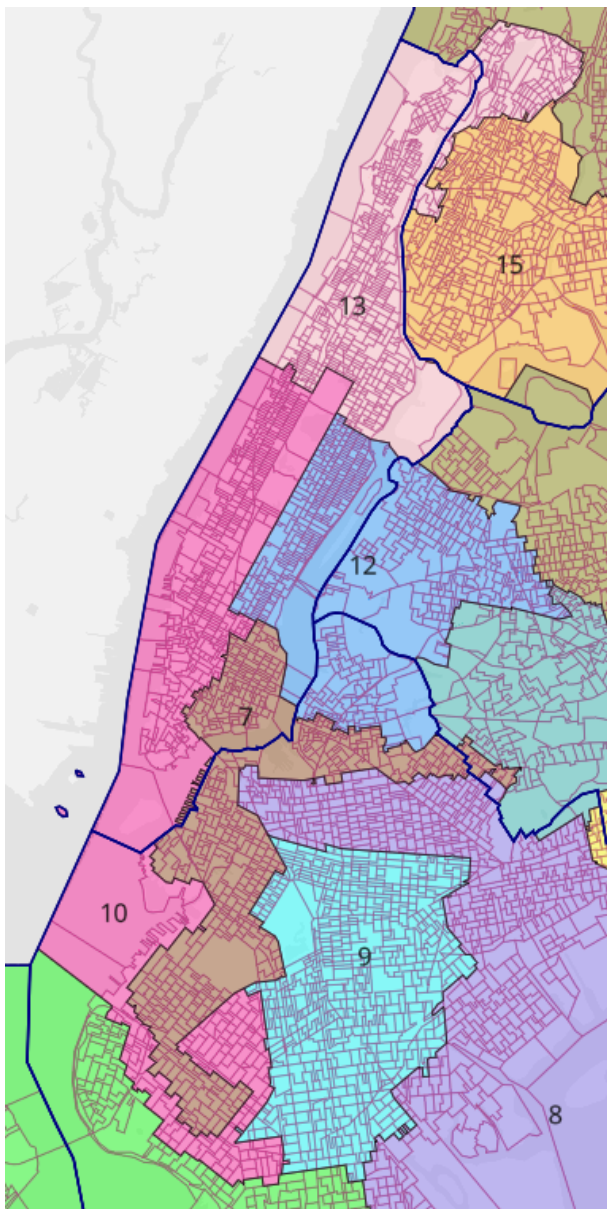
## Congressional Plans

### **Relevant Demographic Changes**

Manhattan is currently divided between four Congressional districts, none of which are entirely within the Borough. Because of the strong population growth in parts of Manhattan, western Queens, and Brooklyn, District 10 and 12 are actually overpopulated even after accounting for the loss of a district in NYS.

### **Congress: Proposed Democrats' Plan "Letters"**

The "Letters" Plan represents something close to a "Least Change" map from the current districts in most respects.



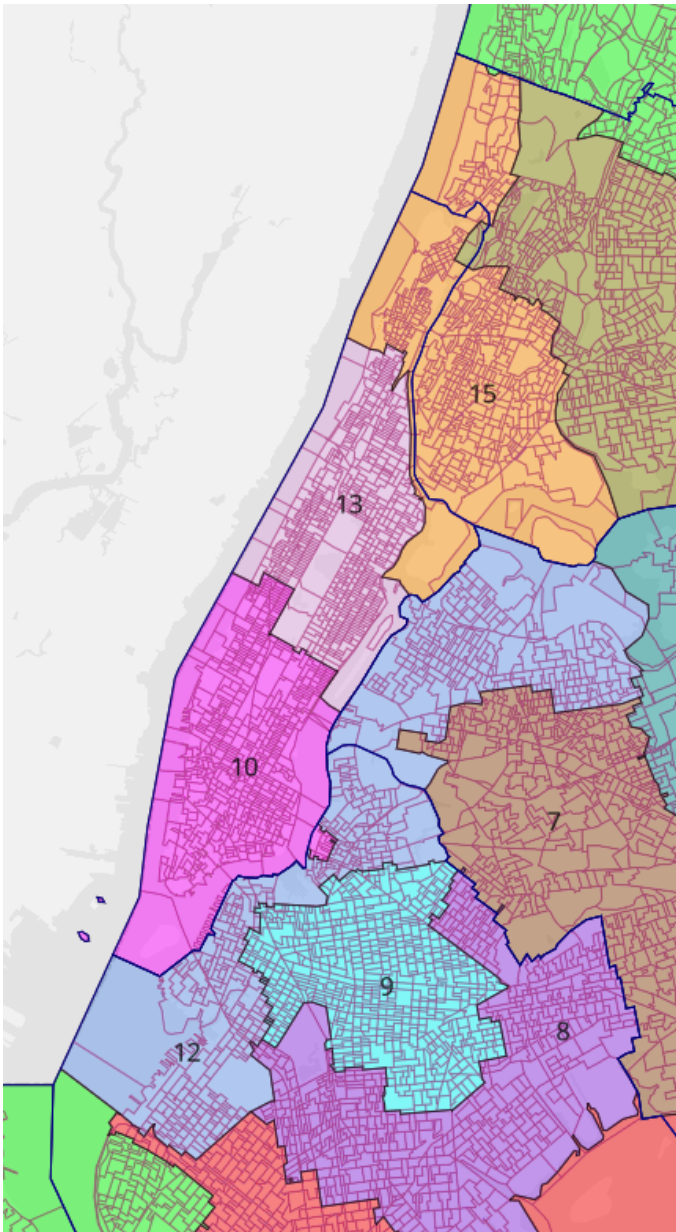
However, District 7 as proposed here would drop most of Bushwick, Ridgewood, Cypress Hills, and Woodhaven and instead take in more of the Lower East Side, Brownstone Brooklyn, and Sunset Park. These changes would have the effect of making the district plurality NH White VAP and reducing the Hispanic/Latino VAP from 37% to less than 26%. Asian representation would be increased from 20% in the current district to over 24% here. But this district as drawn would clearly reduce the opportunity of Latino communities in Brooklyn and Queens to elect a representative of their choice and would also leave neighborhoods like Bushwick and Ridgewood with divided representation.

Districts 10 and 12 are much more straightforward "least change" proposals, with 10 taking in more of Manhattan than the current district and 12 shifting further into Queens but still retaining most of Manhattan's east side.

District 13 as proposed here extends further south into Morningside Heights and the Upper West Side to pick up needed population, which has the side effect of reducing the Hispanic VAP below 50% and the NH Black VAP further as well.

If the goal is a "least change" from the current map in New York City, which we would endorse, these lines would be acceptable drawn with a closer eye on the VRA and on neighborhood borders.

## **Congress: Proposed Republicans' Plan "Names"**



While the "Letters" Plan takes a least change approach to the New York City Congressional Districts, "Names" proposes a drastically different map that shows no deference to the existing districts (many of which have cores that have been in place for decades and have histories that intimately relate to struggles for civil rights and political representation).

In Manhattan, "Names" proposes a compact District 10 entirely covering the southern half of Manhattan with just a tiny piece of the Williamsburg neighborhood in Brooklyn. While a Manhattan-only district here may make sense at first glance, it is dependent on the dismantling of the current District 7 – drawn to empower the Latino communities of Queens, Brooklyn, and the Lower East Side.

The "Names" plan then proposes a Manhattan-only District 13 that combines Harlem with the Upper East and Upper West Sides. This district divides the Latino (heavily Dominican) community of Upper Manhattan in two and would have a clear NH White plurality that would most likely lead to an Upper East or Upper West side candidate replacing an Upper Manhattan candidate in a district that has been a historic seat of Black representation followed by the seat of the first Dominican-American Member of Congress.

For the uppermost portion of Manhattan, "Names" proposes a District 15 that retains a core in the south Bronx but adds Washington Heights and Inwood in Manhattan and the Riverdale neighborhood in the northwest Bronx. While this retains a similar percentage of Black and Latino voters as the current district, it breaks up the longstanding District 13 combination of Harlem and the other Upper Manhattan communities.

In short, "Names" appears to be a plan drafted with little knowledge of New York civil rights and the historic struggles for representation by Black and Latino communities. We do not support it

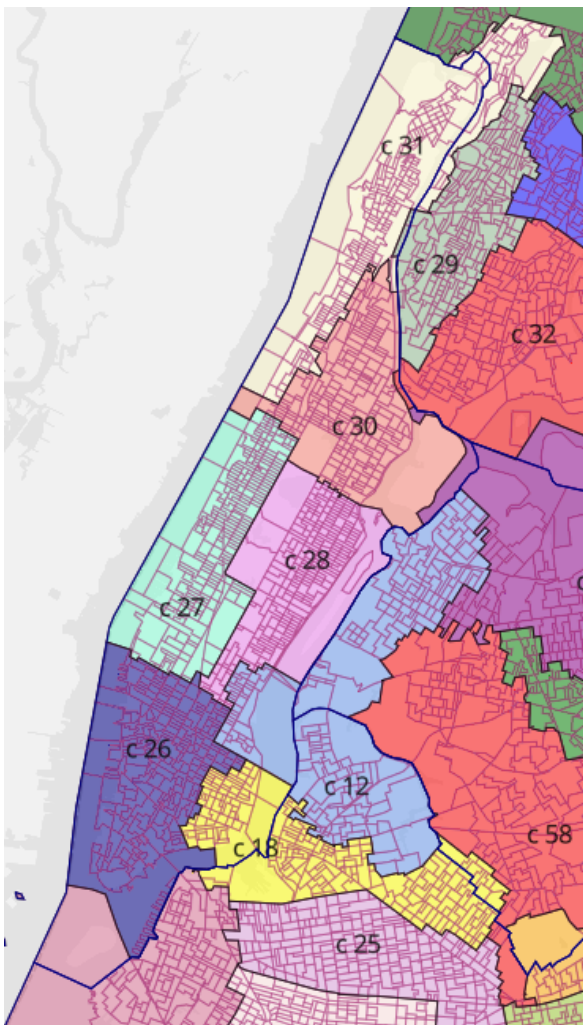
## State Senate Plans

### **Relevant Demographic Changes**

Due to population growth and the systematic overpacking of New York City State Senate districts in the 2011 Plan, four out of the six current Manhattan State Senate districts are over the legal limit of population deviation. As a result of this and of the population growth in neighboring areas of Brooklyn and Queens, it is likely that one of the “new”(i.e., displaced) State Senate districts relocated to New York City from Upstate to rebalance statewide population deviations should land at least partially in Manhattan.

The current State Senate districts were also often drawn in bizarre geographies for no apparent objective (not even politically). With this redistricting cycle, there’s a clear opportunity to repair these bizarre lines and draw districts that more compactly cover communities of interest and maximize voting rights opportunities.

### **State Senate: Proposed Democrats’ Plan “Letters”**



The “Letters” Plan proposes five compact districts all or mostly within Manhattan supplemented by two districts crossing the East River from North Brooklyn and the Long Island City area.

This plan proposes to redraw District 12 – currently entirely within Queens-- as a tri-borough district with Long Island City, Williamsburg-Greenpoint, and a portion of Manhattan’ east side. While the Queens-Brooklyn combination may make some sense, the addition of this piece of Manhattan is a questionable fit.

“Letters” also proposes to take parts of the Lower East Side and East Village into District 18 based in Southside Williamsburg, East Williamsburg, and Bushwick – an idea worth considering as it follows the pattern of Congressional District 7.

The “New” district entering the picture in this plan is actually in Central Queens as more of Manhattan is taken into these new shapes for Districts 12 and 18.

District 26 shifts out of Brooklyn into entirely lower Manhattan here, and Districts 27 and 28 are



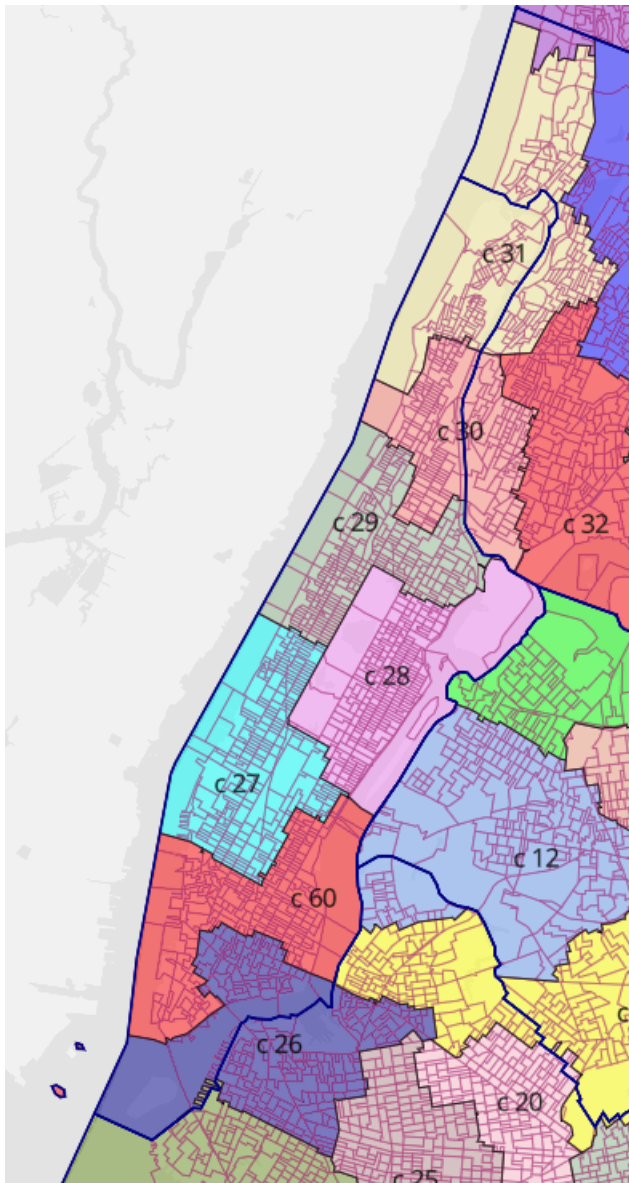
similarly compact proposals for the east and west sides. All three of these districts are proposals that appear to represent the neighborhoods of Manhattan relatively well – with the exception of the division of Manhattan’s Chinatown between Districts 18 and 26.

Finally, Districts 30 and 31 in “Letters” are also solid proposals to clean up the boundaries of those current districts while maintaining their cores in Harlem and Washington Heights respectively.

In sum, with some adjustments, the “Letters” plan is basically acceptable.

**State Senate: Proposed Republicans’ Plan “Names”**

“Names” proposes a very different alternative for Manhattan that deviates further from the current district plan In many respects.



Here, Districts 26, 27, and 28 retain similarity to the current districts but are supplemented by a brand new District for Lower Manhattan that includes the Financial District, Battery Park City, Tribeca and West Village, Greenwich Village, East Village, and Gramercy areas. Landing the new district entirely within Lower Manhattan while pushing District 26 further into Brooklyn is a credible proposal that could take this form or other permutations.

The “Names” plan goes all wrong in the northern half of Manhattan though. By having District 30 and 31 spanning Manhattan-Bronx, a new Upper West Side-Harlem district is drawn that is plurality white and would divide the voting strength of Harlem.

The lines here divide both the Black community in Central Harlem (between 30 and 29) and the heavily Dominican Latino community in West Harlem and Washington Heights (between 30 and 31) as well as placing East Harlem with the Upper West Side in District 29. Anyone who knows Upper Manhattan would point out that these lines make no sense from both a communities of interest and VRA point of view.

In short, this proposal does not pass muster.

## State Assembly Plans

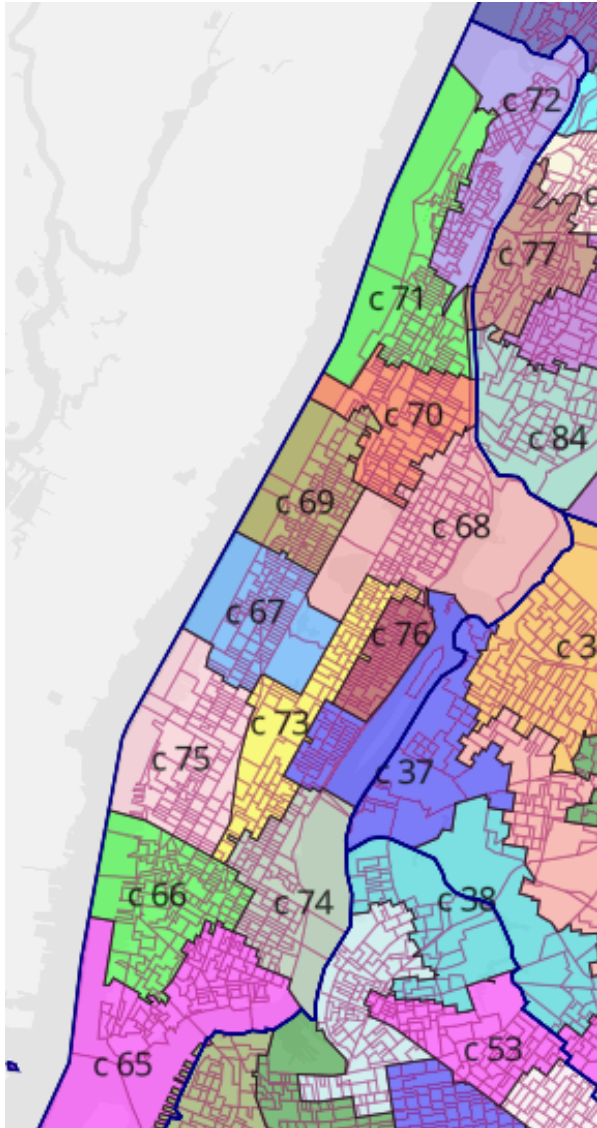
### Relevant Demographic Changes

Manhattan is currently home to 12 Assembly Districts drawn entirely within the Borough's borders. With the borough-wide increase in population by nearly 7%, it is nearly impossible to maintain this current arrangement as the districts are collectively at +4.6% deviation.

Other than the population deviation issues – which are even more pronounced for particular Districts 67 and 75 -- the districts are generally compact and follow neighborhoods in most cases.

VRA-sensitive districts include 65 in Chinatown, 68 in East Harlem, 70 In Central Harlem, and 71 and 72 in Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood.

### State Assembly: Proposed Democrats' Plan "Letters"

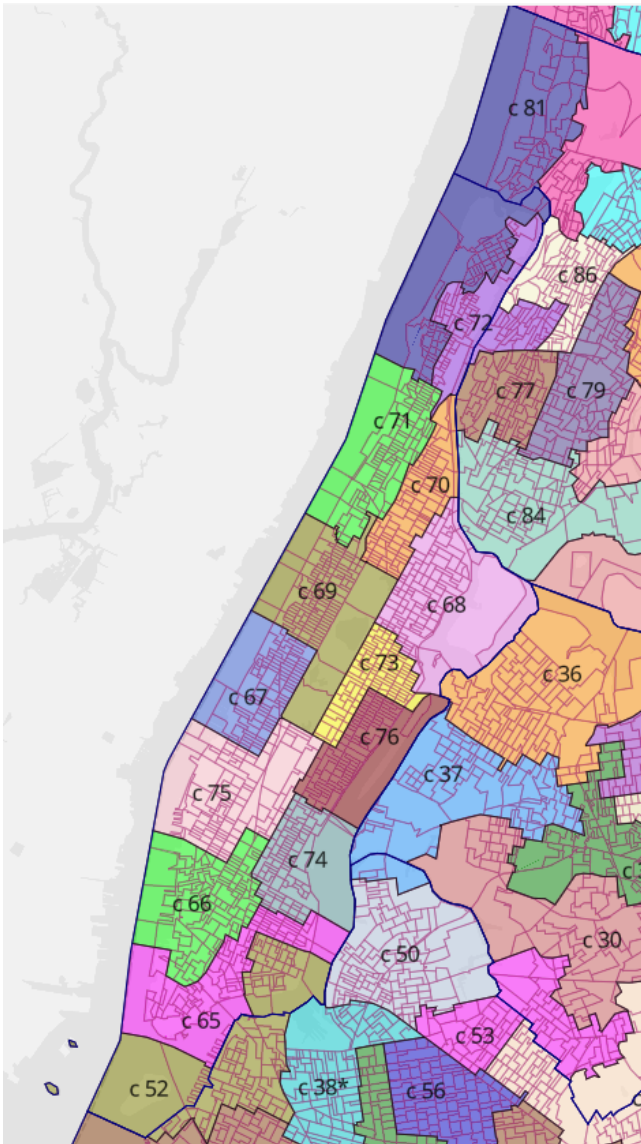


Letters" proposes to solve the population deviation issues by drawing Queens' District 37 over the East River to include Roosevelt Island and part of Manhattan's East Side. Other than this major change, the map largely represents a "least change" with the row of districts on the west side all sliding a bit south to account for the rapid population growth on Manhattan's west side and the population decline in the uppermost part of the borough.

The VRA-sensitive districts are all maintained levels of VAP very close to the current lines. Notably District 74 here is drawn to nearly the full +5% deviation while the rest of the districts are balanced out – a strange choice that is probably a drafting error.



## State Assembly: Proposed Republicans' Plan "Names"



As has been the pattern, the "Names" Plan from the IRC deviates much more from the current districts in its proposal.

"Names" proposes three districts to cross between Manhattan and other boroughs – one with Brooklyn and two with the Bronx. The proposed Brooklyn crossing district would divide the Chinatown community rather than include it whole within District 65, an undesirable result.

The proposal for Upper Manhattan has more potential merit. Districts 70 and 71 here are drawn more in-line with Community Board lines and create a district that is more strongly NH Black VAP in Central Harlem and Latino VAP in West Harlem/Hamilton Heights. Then to the north, District 72 and 81 are both majority Latino VAP in Washington Heights and Inwood – both by adding parts of the Bronx. We note testimony at the Manhattan hearing which preferred the manner in which the current assembly lines [;aced neighborhoods and communities together than the proposed Names plan.

In between the north and south of the borough, the Names lines hew closer to the current lines with no radical changes proposed.

## Bronx

### Relevant Demographic Changes

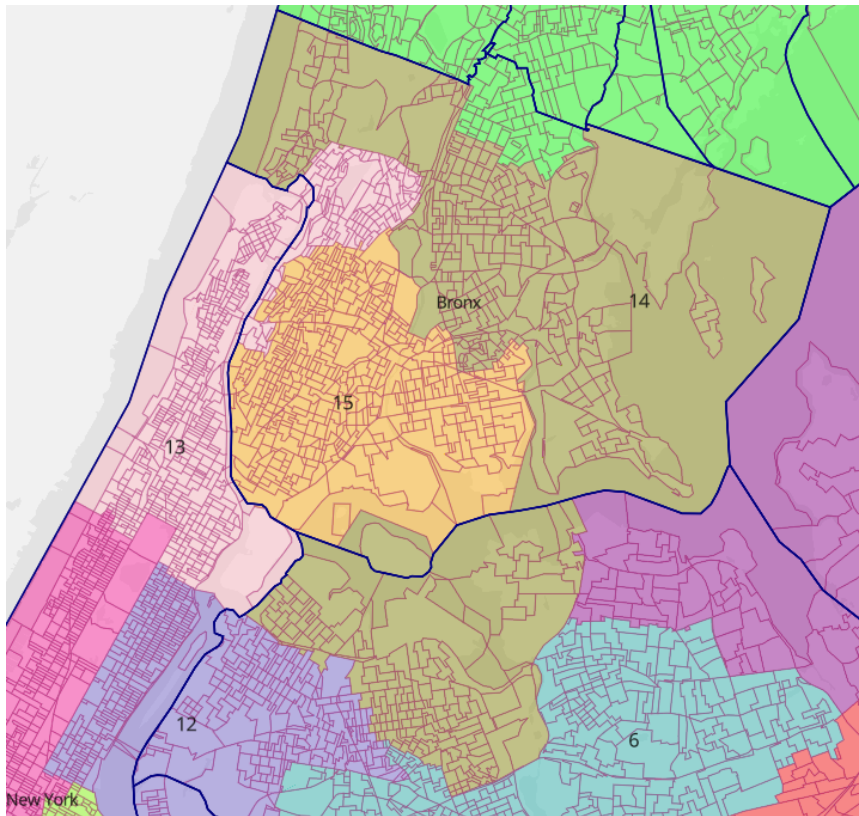
After growing faster than Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn in the 2000-2010 period, the Bronx slowed down just a bit with those parts of the city all growing faster in the more recent period. But at a 6.3% increase, the Bronx was still the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in New York State during this period and only one of ten that grew faster than 5%. With now nearly 1.5 million residents, the Bronx is at it's all time high population, surpassing the prior 1970 peak

Growth took place in most neighborhoods throughout the Bronx but was most rapid in the southernmost Mott Haven and Port Morris neighborhoods where significant new development took place, and Williamsbridge in the northern central Bronx.

Demographic change in the Bronx followed much the same pattern in the 2000-2010 period, with the NH White VAP (concentrated in the outer neighborhoods of Riverdale in the northwest and in the eastern Bronx) decreasing by over 15% to now account for less than 10% of the Borough. The NH Black population experienced a small increase concentrated in the south Bronx and comprises 29% of the Borough, and the Bronx remains a majority-Latino borough with continued growth in that community nearly across the board but especially in the eastern Bronx. The Asian population in the Bronx had the highest growth rate at over 40% but still remains less than 5% of the population – far less than the other four boroughs of New York City.

## **Congressional Plans**

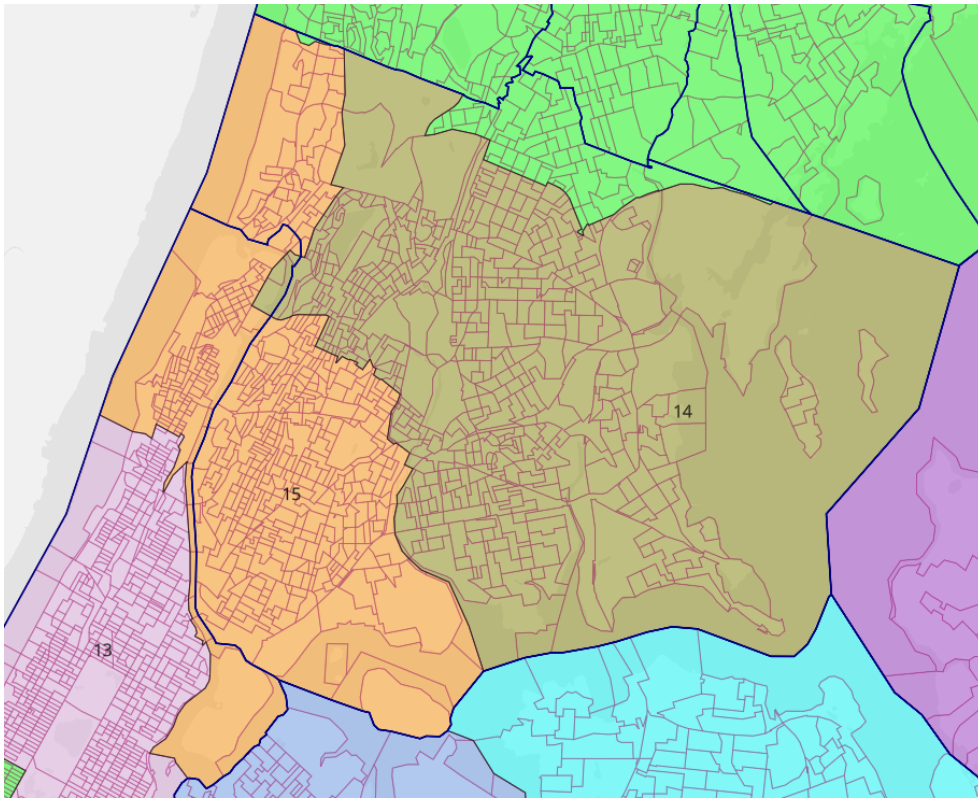
### ***Congress: Proposed Democrats' Plan "Letters"***



The "Letters" Plan represents something close to a "Least Change" map from the current districts. District 13 extends further south into Morningside Heights and the Upper West Side to pick up needed population, which has the side effect of reducing the Hispanic VAP below 50% and the NH Black VAP further as well. District 14 pushes slightly north to take in most of Wakefield and Riverdale while dropping Sunnyside, Woodside, and Parts of Astoria in Queens. District 15 remains very close to the current lines and District 16 pushes north and would retain only a small part of the Wakefield neighborhood in this map, reducing the NH Black VAP in the district from the current plurality of 34% down to 21%. That is perhaps the strongest criticism of "Letters" in that it does not keep together the full area of the Black community that spans this

part of the Bronx into Mount Vernon and is traditionally kept together as a community of interest (see current Senate District 36 for example). We note extensive testimony in earlier hearings requesting that the North Bronx and Southern Westchester communities be kept together in the congressional maps and urget the Commission to follow the residents' request.

## **Congress: Proposed Republicans' Plan "Names"**



While the "Letters" Plan takes a least change approach to the New York City Congressional Districts, "Names" proposes a drastically different map that shows no deference to the existing districts (many of which have cores that have been in place for decades and have histories that intimately relate to struggles for civil rights and political representation). In the Bronx, "Names" proposes a District 15 that retains a core in the south Bronx but adds Washington Heights and Inwood in Manhattan and the Riverdale neighborhood in the northwest Bronx. While this retains a similar percentage of Black and Latino voters as the current district, it breaks up the

longstanding District 13 combination of Harlem and the other Upper Manhattan communities. And while some might appreciate a District 14 that is entirely within the Bronx (except for a couple of precinct in Inwood, a mistake?), the proposed Districts 14 and 16 here again split the Black community in Wakefield-Mount Vernon just like the Letters Plan.

An alternative that would keep these communities together could involve drawing District 14 into Westchester to include Pelham and New Rochelle while drawing the District 16 line further south to include Wakefield, Edenwald, and Williamsbridge neighborhoods in the Bronx.

## **State Senate Plans**

### ***Relevant Demographic Changes***

Due to population growth and the systematic overpacking of New York City Senate districts in the 2011 Plan, three of the five Bronx districts are over the legal limit of population deviation and must be brought down.

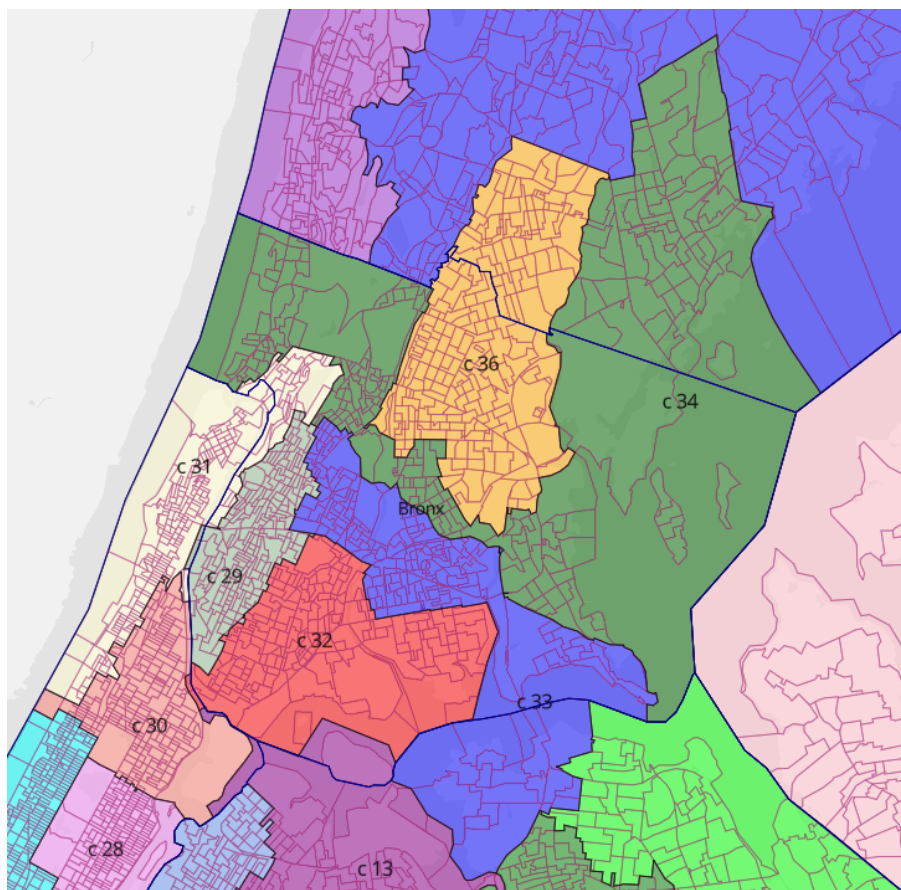
Besides this basic observation, the current State Senate districts were also often drawn in bizarre geographies for no apparent objective (not even politically). Other than the compact District 36 that



covers the Black community that spans Wakefield to Mount Vernon in Westchester, the District shapes are bizarre.

With this redistricting cycle, there's another clear opportunity to repair these bizarre lines and draw senate districts that more compactly cover communities of interest and maximize voting rights opportunities in the Bronx as elsewhere in New York City.

**State Senate: Proposed Democrats' Plan "Letters"**



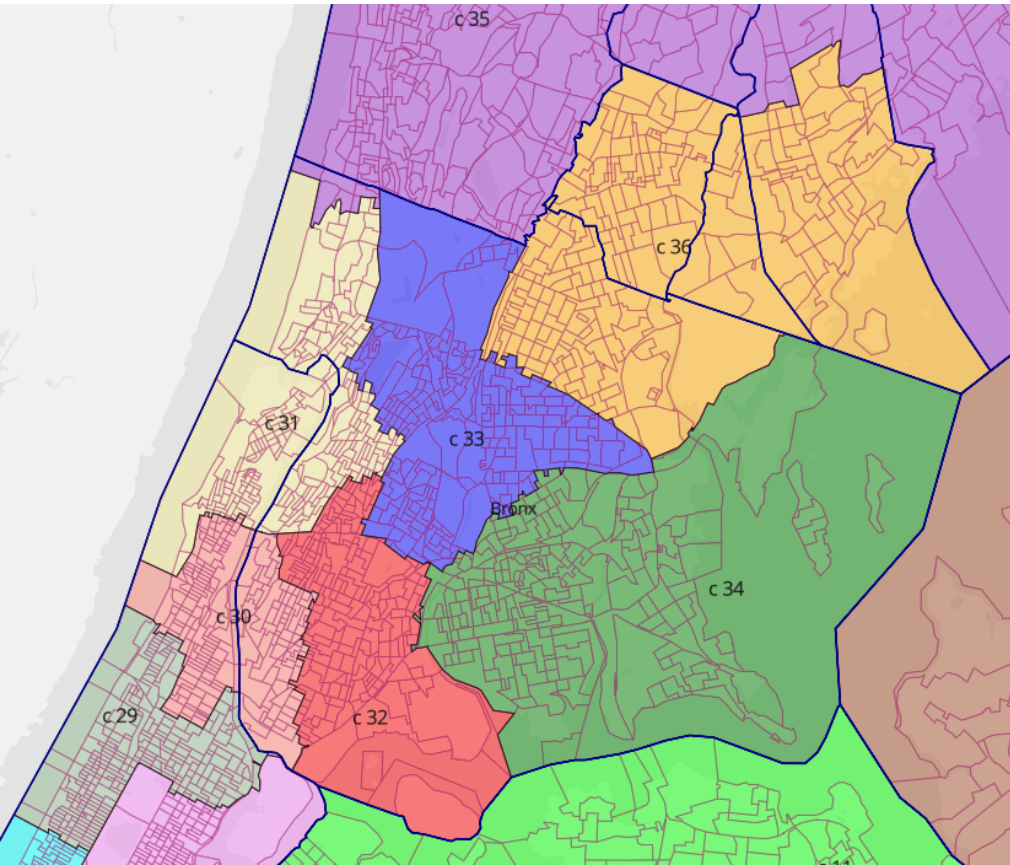
For four out of the five current Bronx Senate Districts, the "Letters" Plan maintains the current core of the District while repairing the bizarre borders and shapes of the current plan. Districts 29 (BB), 32 (BA), 34 (AQ), and 36 (AJ) all follow this pattern.

The Plan deviates from this approach with District 33 (X), which is completely redrawn to snake across the Borough east-west and extend into College Point in Queens. This is a strange proposal when a new District 33 could be drawn compactly within its current neighborhoods of Kingsbridge, Norwood, Bedford Park, and Fordham. Instead, this area is split between four districts including a District 31 proposed to come into Kingsbridge from Upper Manhattan.

In the "Letters" Plan, "X" marks the spot for a strange district that spans multiple communities and multiple boroughs with

little apparent rationale.

## State Senate: Proposed Republicans' Plan "Names"



The IRC "Names" Plan deviates further from the cores of the current districts in most respects, except for District 33 which this plan proposes more similar to the current district.

Instead of a District 29 based in the west Bronx, "Names" proposes a District 30 that combines this area with parts of Central and West Harlem. While this district may look compact on the map, the lines here divide both the Black community in Central Harlem (between 30 and 29) and the heavily Dominican Latino community in West Harlem and Washington Heights (between 30 and 31) as well as placing East Harlem with the Upper West Side in District 29. Anyone who knows Upper

Manhattan would point out that these lines make no sense from both a communities of interest and VRA point of view.

On the other hand, the "Names" drafts for Districts 33, 34, and 36 are credible proposals that local communities should weigh in on, especially the compact proposal for District 34. The proposed District 36 here should extend further south to fully include the Black community in this part of the Bronx.

## State Assembly Plans

### **Relevant Demographic Changes**

The Bronx is currently divided between 11 Assembly Districts, all of which are entirely contained within the Borough. The districts are generally compact but some unnecessarily divide neighborhoods such as Morris Park, Norwood, and Wakefield.

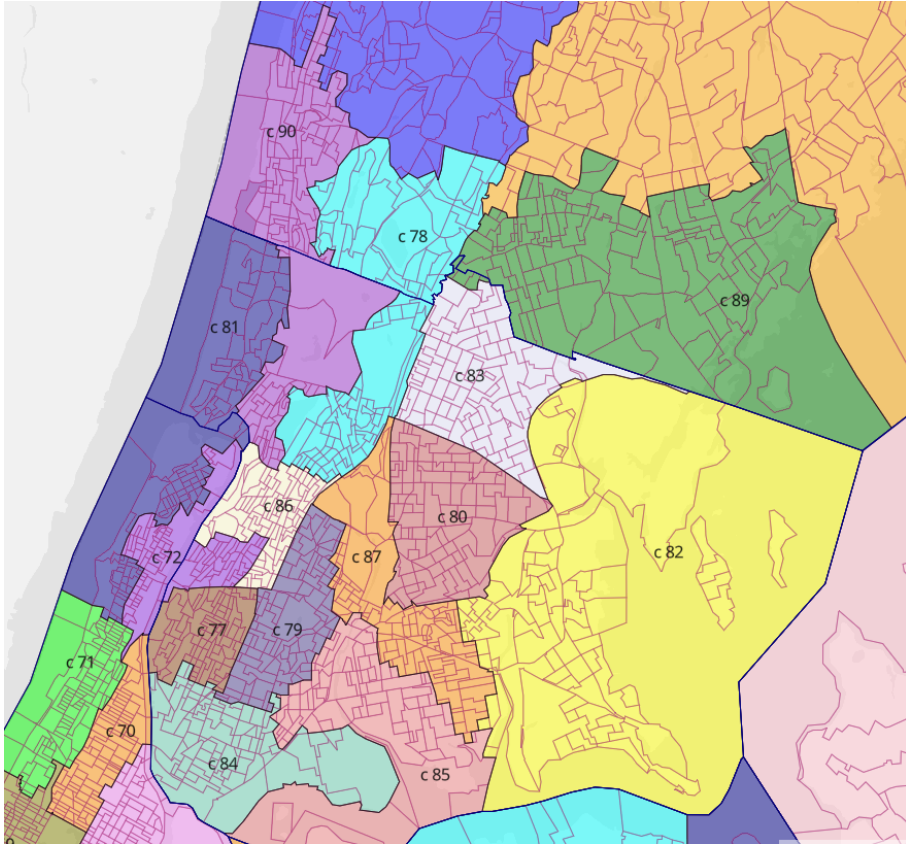
There's a clear opportunity to adjust these districts to better reflect neighborhoods and communities of interest



**State Assembly: Proposed Democrats’ Plan “Letters”**

The “Letters” Plan for the Assembly is nearly a “least change” map with only minor adjustments to the current districts proposed.

**State Assembly: Proposed Republicans’ Plan “Names”**



The “Names” Plan from the IRC deviates much more from the current districts in its proposal. Most significantly, this plan proposes districts that cross both between the Bronx and Westchester and the Bronx and Manhattan rather than maintaining the 11 Bronx-only districts.

That being said, some of the districts proposed here remain close to the current lines – namely the eastern half of the Bronx in Districts 80, 82, 83, 87, and the Mott Haven-Port Morris-Hunts Point District 84.

The major differences proposed here are in the west and northwest Bronx with a District 72 that extends into the Bronx

from Washington Heights, a District 81 that joins Riverdale with Inwood and parts of Washington Heights, a District 90 that joins Kingsbridge with Yonkers, and a

**Queens**

**Relevant Demographic Changes**

From 2010 to 2020, Queens grew by 7.8%, second only to Brooklyn among the five boroughs and third among all New York State counties. Growth was most rapid in Long Island City, driven by rapid new development, and was also strong in Flushing. College Point, the Forest Hills area, and Jamaica.

Queens’ demographic trends from the prior decennial Census period continued, with northeast Queens rapidly decreasing in White population and increasing in Asian population, and central Queens rapidly diversifying with growth in both Latino and Asian communities.

Overall, White population decreased by nearly 11% with the largest losses in the neighborhoods surrounding Flushing and in Elmhurst. NH White population increased with the new development in Long Island City and Astoria.

Queens' Black population remains highly concentrated in the neighborhoods of southeast Queens and in Far Rockaway. Black population fell by 4%, driven by declines in the western southeast Queens neighborhoods (especially South Ozone Park) and in the Lefrak City area of Corona.

Asian population grew by nearly 30% and is now the plurality of the Voting Age Population. Asian communities continued to grow rapidly in the northeast Queens neighborhoods surrounding Flushing but also grew very fast in Long Island City, Richmond Hill/Ozone Park and in Maspeth. Also of note is the nearly 6% of Queens VAP that identifies as "some other race" – a large proportion of this cohort is the growing Guyanese community who often identify in this way on the Census.

Hispanic/Latino population grew by nearly 9% in Queens and this growth was distributed in many areas throughout the borough, including the Central Queens neighborhoods of Maspeth, Middle Village, and Forest Hills/Rego Park, College Point, and Howard Beach. Hispanic population decreased by 10% in Ridgewood – following the same pattern as neighboring Bushwick in Brooklyn.

## **Congressional Plans**

### ***Relevant Demographic Changes***

Queens is currently dived between seven Congressional districts with only one (District 6) entirely within the borough. District 3 is a North Shore Long Island district and extends into the far northeastern portion of Queens bordering Nassau County. District 3 grew slower than the NYC-based districts and is now 5% under the new target population. Districts 5 through 7 are relatively close to the 26-district target population while Districts 8 and 12 are actually over-population due to rapid growth, and District 14 is 3.6% under due to slower growth.

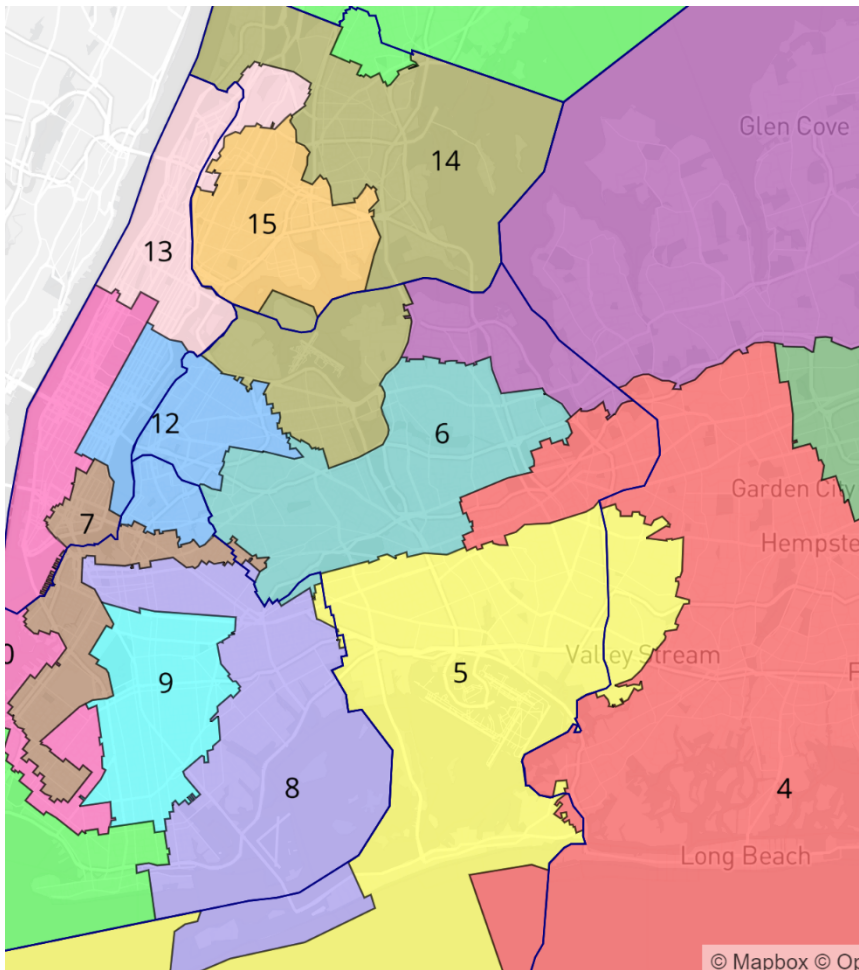
Current District 5 is a VRA district covering the southeast Queens Black communities and extends into Elmont-Valley Stream and Inwood in Nassau County (not to be confused with the Inwood neighborhood of northern Manhattan.)

Current District 6 is drawn to connect the majority-Asian neighborhoods of Flushing and Elmhurst and was drawn last cycle as the first plurality-Asian district in New York. With no incumbent running for office, the seat was won by Grace Meng in the 2012 Democratic primary and Congresswoman Meng became New York's first Asian-American Congress Member.

Current District 7 (as explained in Brooklyn memo) is drawn to unite Latino neighborhoods and on the Queens border, and District 8 is one of the two VRA districts for the Black community in central Brooklyn. The district currently includes Howard Beach in Queens but this could easily be revisited in the new plan since current District 8 as drawn is actually over-population. Current District 12,

including Manhattan’s East Side, Greenpoint-Williamsburg in Brooklyn and Long Island City and Astoria in Queens, is also over-population. Finally, the current District 14 spans Queens and the Bronx and is a highly diverse district with significant Black, White, Asian, and plurality Latino population as currently drawn. Due to the cumulative population shifts in Long Island and NYC to meet the new target population, District 14 is likely to be pushed slightly north to take in more of the Bronx and perhaps part of southern Westchester County (New Rochelle most likely) and less of Queens.

**Congress: Proposed Democrats’ Plan “Letters”**



As described numerous times in earlier discussions, “Letters” is much more of a “least change” map for NYC Congressional Districts than the “Names” plan is. However, the plan makes many questionable decisions, especially in regards to the districts that cross between Queens and Long Island and Brooklyn.

“Letters” proposes both the new District 3 and District 4 to cross from Nassau into Queens when it is easily possible to only have one of the two districts pair Queens neighborhoods with Nassau. As drawn here with small bits of Queens appended to districts that are vast majority based in Nassau, it makes it more likely that these Queens neighborhoods would have difficulty gaining attention from these Nassau based representatives.

District 5 is drawn very close to the current district, however, the Letters plan strangely proposes to split the Rockaway peninsula between Districts 5 and 8 – a clearly unnecessary division of a community of interest.

District 6 looks like “least change” at first glance but taking a closer look, the lines proposed here in Elmhurst and Woodside clearly divide the Asian community that is kept together in the current District

6. Note that the NH Asian VAP here would actually drop from 43.8% in the current district to 41.5%, a surprising decision.

As we discussed in our criticism of the proposed District 7 from the Brooklyn discussion, above-- District 7 as proposed here would drop most of Bushwick, Ridgewood, Cypress Hills, and Woodhaven and instead take in more of the Lower East Side, Brownstone Brooklyn, and Sunset Park. These changes would have the effect of making the district plurality NH White VAP and reducing the Hispanic/Latino VAP from 37% to less than 26%. Asian representation would be increased from 20.5% in the current district to over 24% here. But this district as drawn would clearly reduce the opportunity of Latino communities in Brooklyn and Queens to elect a representative of their choice and would also leave neighborhoods like Bushwick and Ridgewood with divided representation. Such a result is unacceptable.

District 12 here takes up some additional Queens neighborhoods but in a sloppy way that divides the Asian community in the Elmhurst area (as mentioned above). And District 14 shifts further into the Bronx – but also in a sloppy way that divides the Black community in the Wakefield area that should really be held together in District 16.

Overall, “Letters” appears sloppy and numerous significant improvements could be made in order to better follow neighborhoods, communities of interest, and keep together Black, Latino, and Asian communities.

***Congress: Proposed Republicans’ Plan “Names”***

“Names” yet again proposes a drastically different map that shows no deference to the existing districts (many of which have cores that have been in place for decades and have histories that intimately relate to struggles for civil rights and political representation).

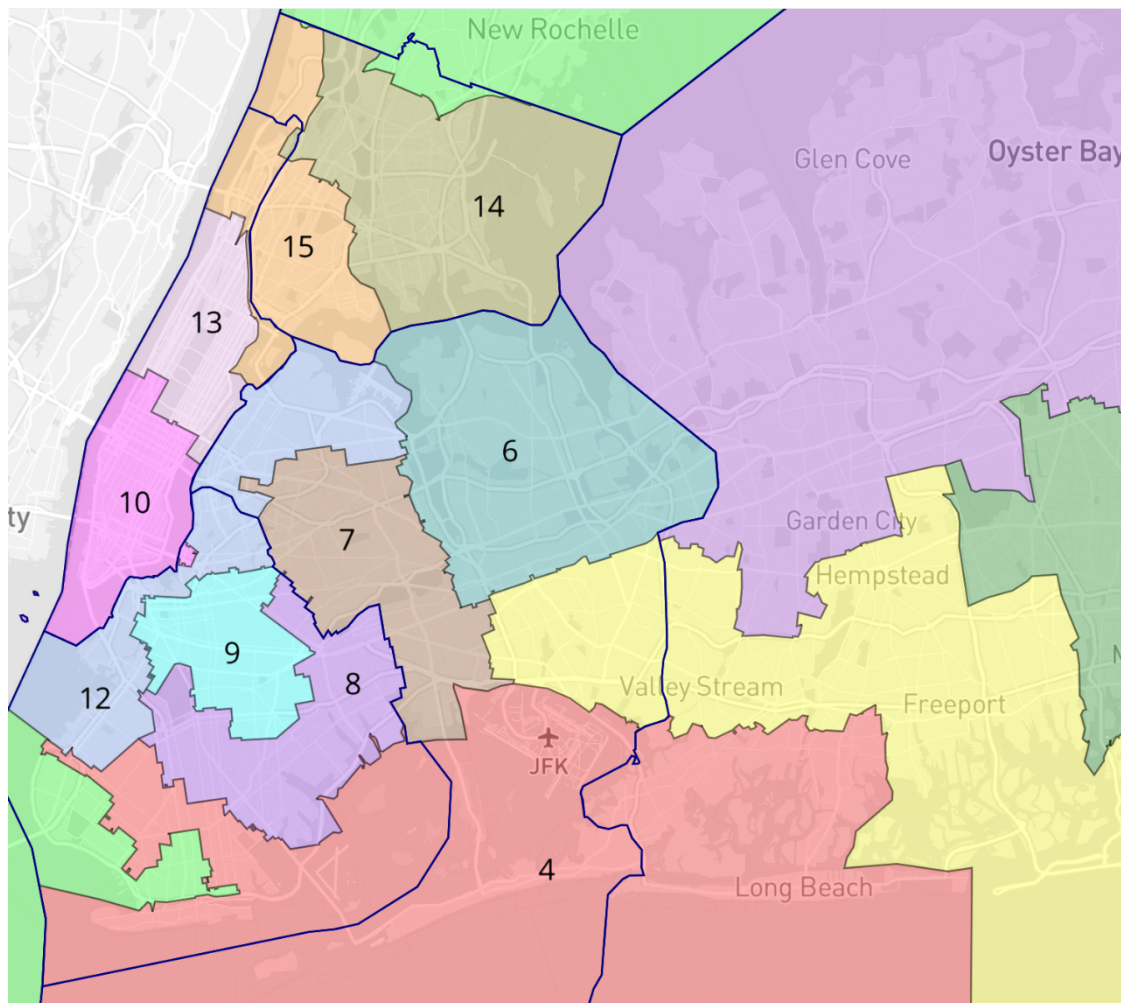
“Names” District 5 would take the core of Southeast Queens and draw it together far into Nassau County to the Hempstead-Freeport area. While a plurality Black district on paper, this is a questionable combination that separates parts of the Southeast Queens black community from the district and may reduce that community’s ability to elect a representative of their choice, instead combining a portion of the community with Hempstead, Freeport, and Lakeview where there is little existing connection.

Connected with this proposal, the Names map would also draw a sprawling new south Nassau-Rockaways-South Brooklyn District 4 that would bring together disparate populations across three counties. This district would be majority White and appears intended as a political gerrymander to maximize Republican opportunities.



“Names” District 6 keeps this district entirely within northeast Queens. Although 45% NH Asian VAP, it inexplicably separates the Chinese communities in Flushing and Elmhurst --- and is also only possible to draw this way because of the novel crossings between Nassau and Queens in the Districts 4 and 5.

“Names” also vaporizes the current District 7, instead drawing it as a plurality Latino district entirely within Queens including the neighborhoods of Howard Beach, Ozone Park, Richmond Hill, Woodhaven, Ridgewood, Middle Village, most of Forest Hills and Rego Park, Elmhurst, Sunnyside and Woodside, and parts of Corona and Jackson Heights. At approximately 35% Latino VAP, 27% NH Asian VAP and 27% NH White VAP, it is entirely unclear how this new district arrangement would actually perform. Moreover, when looking at 2019 CVAP, the district’s electorate is clearly plurality NH White, and looks like an unlikely configuration to elect a Latino representative, to say nothing about the way it divides numerous neighborhoods.



Eliminating the configuration of the current District 7 opens up the possibility to draw a District 10 entirely within Manhattan and a District 12 along nearly the full length of the East River from Astoria to Sunset Park. With an NH White VAP plurality and a population increasingly trending that way, this

District would also be unlikely to be an effective share for Latino communities to elect a representative of their choice.

Finally, District 14 here is bounced entirely out of Queens into the east and north Bronx. The proposed Districts 14 and 16 here again split the Black community in Wakefield-Mount Vernon just like the Letters Plan.

While “Names” is certainly creative, it does not reflect the way communities interact and organize in New York City and should probably be discarded in favor of a map that is more similar to the current districts but drawn to avoid the sloppy mistakes of the “Letters” plan.

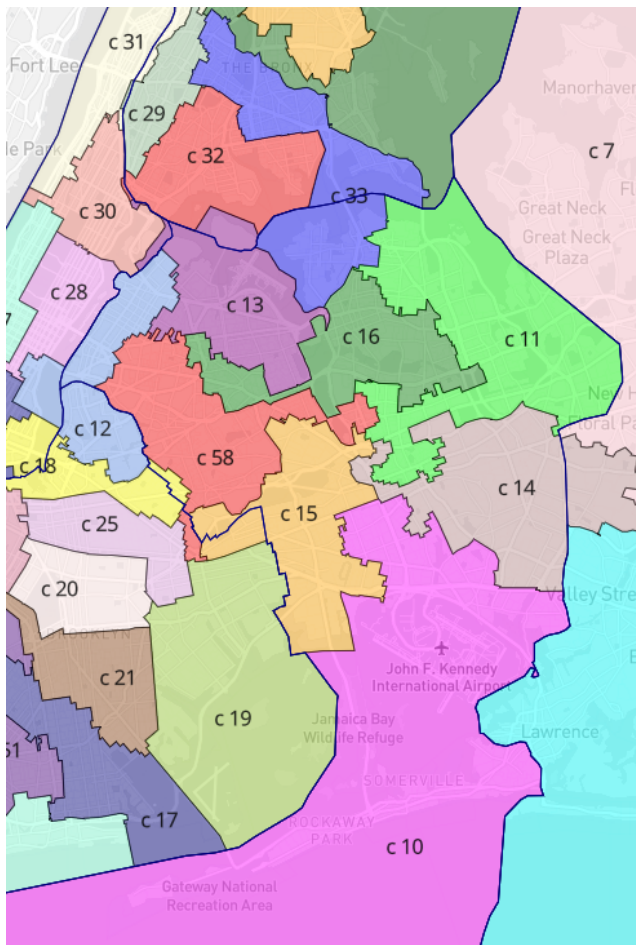
## State Senate Plans

### Relevant Demographic Changes

Queens currently has seven State Senate districts drawn entirely within the borough borders. Due to population growth and the systematic overpacking of New York City Senate districts in the 2011 Plan, all of these districts with the exception of 13 are overpopulated in excess of 5%. Any new plan for Queens can no longer draw seven Queens-only districts and some county border crossing is now necessary to recalibrate district populations.

### State Senate: Proposed Democrats’ Plan “Letters”

The “Letters” Plan maintains much of the basic structure of the Senate Districts in Queens, including



the cores of 10, 11, 13, 15, and 16, but proposes significant changes in Western Queens. District 10 and 14 are maintained as majority/near majority NH Black VAP districts, with 14 proposed to cross into Elmont/Valley Stream in Nassau. There may be merit to this proposal as the overlapping Congressional District 5 already makes this same crossing.

District 15 maintains much of its core in Ozone Park and Forest Hills but loses the Rockaways to District 10. It is drawn as a district centered on Woodhaven, Ozone Park, and Richmond Hill – neighborhoods that have traditionally been diced up by Senate and Assembly Lines and where an increasingly vocal South Asian and Guyanese community is advocating for better representation. The proposed 15 here also add Cypress Hills in Brooklyn – which is more typically joined to Bushwick in legislative district lines.

District 12 in “Letters” becomes a Triboro Queens-Manhattan-Brooklyn district centered on the

growing neighborhoods of the East River waterfront. This clears the way for a totally new district to fall in the central Queens neighborhoods of Sunnyside-Woodside, Middle Village, Ridgewood, and Glendale (District 58 in this map, “A” in Letters). While this newly proposed district has a clear central Queens core, it has two strange appendages sticking off its south and east sides that contributed to the wholly unnecessary division of communities. The southern tail even extends, inexplicably, into Bushwick in Brooklyn.

Finally, one must note the bizarre proposal for the District 33 equivalent (“X” in Letters), which is completely redrawn to snake across the Bronx east-west and extend into College Point in Queens. This is a strange proposal when a new District 33 could easily be drawn compactly within its current northwest Bronx area. In the “Letters” Plan, “X” marks the spot for a strange district that spans multiple communities and multiple boroughs with little apparent rationale. Overall “Letters” advances some ideas that might be of merit but is again plagued by sloppy execution in some respects. Queens residents should offer input on whether some of the new combinations of neighborhoods proposed here make sense as communities of interest or not.

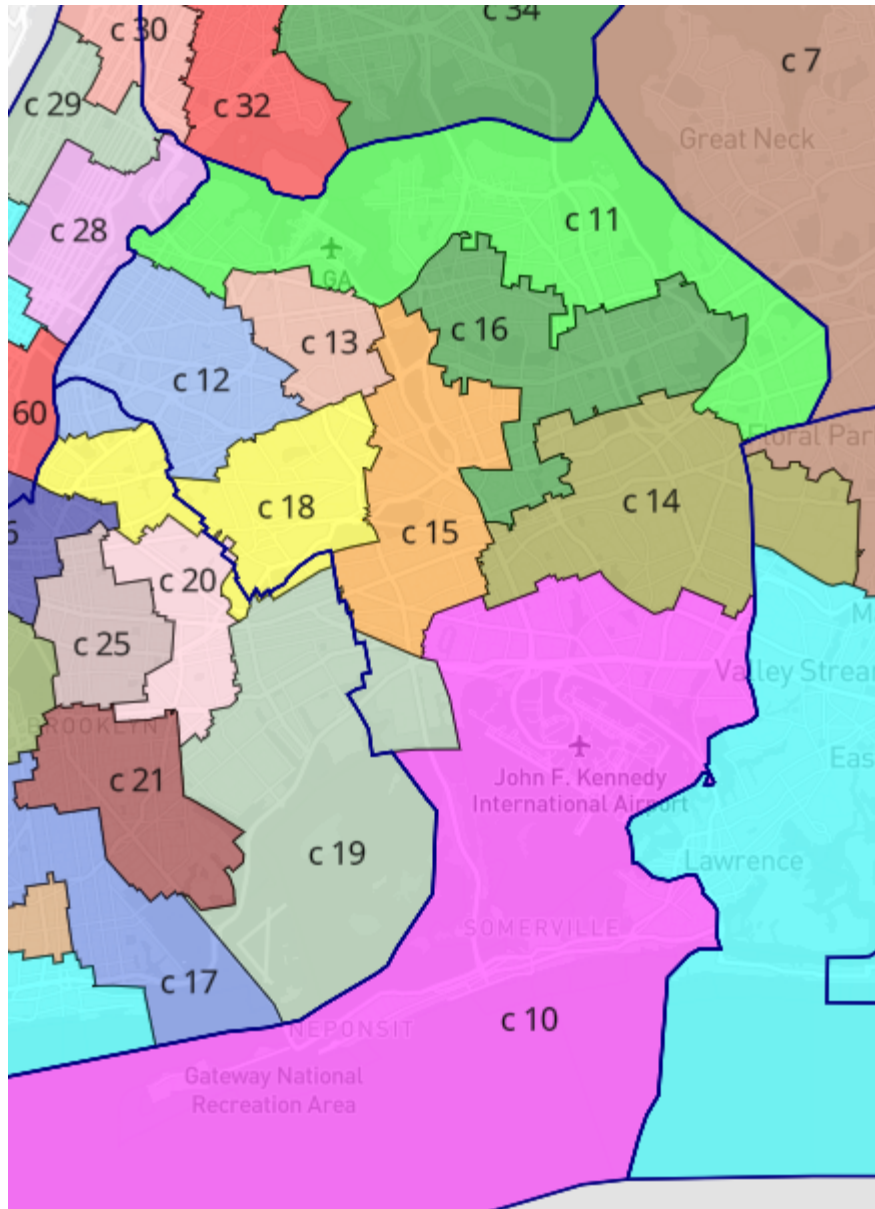
### ***Congress: Proposed Republicans’ Plan “Names”***

“Names” does not stray radically from the current senate lines and proposes some different potential scenarios for Queens.

The VRA-sensitive Districts 10, 13, 14, and 16 keep most of their current cores, with the proposal to add Elmont to District 14 like we see in “Letters.” However, “Names” divides Flushing from Elmhurst District 16, repeating the same issue we see in the “Names” Congressional map.

Like in “Letters”, the Rockaways go wholly within District 10 and District 15 shifts to become a Ozone Park-Richmond Hill-Woodhaven core – this is a credible proposal for this area that the affected communities should compare to “Letters” and offer feedback.

District 11 in “Letters” is drawn to an NH White VAP plurality instead of an Asian plurality and combining northern Astoria in with northeast Queens would unacceptably isolate that area within the district.



Instead of adding a new district within Queens like “Letters,” “Names proposes to bring much of District 18 into Central Queens. But it does this in a way that transforms a district that was drawn majority Latino VAP last cycle into a White plurality – an undesirable result.

Alternatively it is possible to draw a District 18 that is reinforced as majority Latino VAP by including more of Bushwick, Cypress Hills, less of Williamsburg, and potentially adding Woodhaven.

District 12 as proposed here is closer to the current district lines but adds Greenpoint in Brooklyn.

And important question for residents of Sunnyside and Woodside is whether they see themselves as more of a community of interest with Long Island City or the neighborhoods to the south (as drawn in Letters)



## **State Assembly Plans**

### ***Relevant Demographic Changes***

Queens is currently divided between 18 Assembly districts, all of which are entirely within the borough. Despite Queen's population growth, the 18 districts are, as a whole, nearly balanced in population because they were drawn to nearly -4% deviation per district in the last cycle. However, District 37 which covers Long Island City, Sunnyside, and Ridgewood, has become far overpopulated due to the new development in Long Island City. District 32 is also just over the legal +/- 5% population deviation. So some rebalancing will be necessary especially in Western Queens.

Southeast Queens has four VRA-sensitive assembly districts for the Black communities in that area. Other than maintaining at least one majority Latino district in the Corona area and one Asian majority district in Downtown Flushing, the VRA landscape of the rest of Queens is less clear as Asian and Latino communities have grown in recent decades and like in the case of Corona and Elmhurst, may sometimes compete for favorable district lines. There is clearly the opportunity to strengthen the districts for Asian and Latino representation with maps drawn for a high number of influence districts.

The current district lines have been the subject of some criticism for the ways in which they divide some neighborhoods that are home to the borough's growing Asian communities. This is particular the case in Elmhurst (divided between 34, 35, and 36) and Richmond Hill (divided between 24, 31, and 38). The long strung-out shapes of District 24 and 27 in particular make it difficult for nearby communities to organize together. We would expect that the final maps would address these issues, creating opportunities for both Asian and Latino voters to achieve representation of their choice.

### ***State Assembly: Proposed Democrats' Plan "Letters"***

We note that "Letters" makes no effort at low deviations, using the full +/-5% range.

"Letters" keeps many of the current cores but completely abandons any attempt at keeping districts contained within Queens, especially along the Nassau border where four districts are proposed to cross. The plan combines Southeast Queens with Elmont-Valley Stream in drawing three NH Black VAP majority districts, one at 42%, and one at 38% (31) that includes the Nassau County community of Inwood.

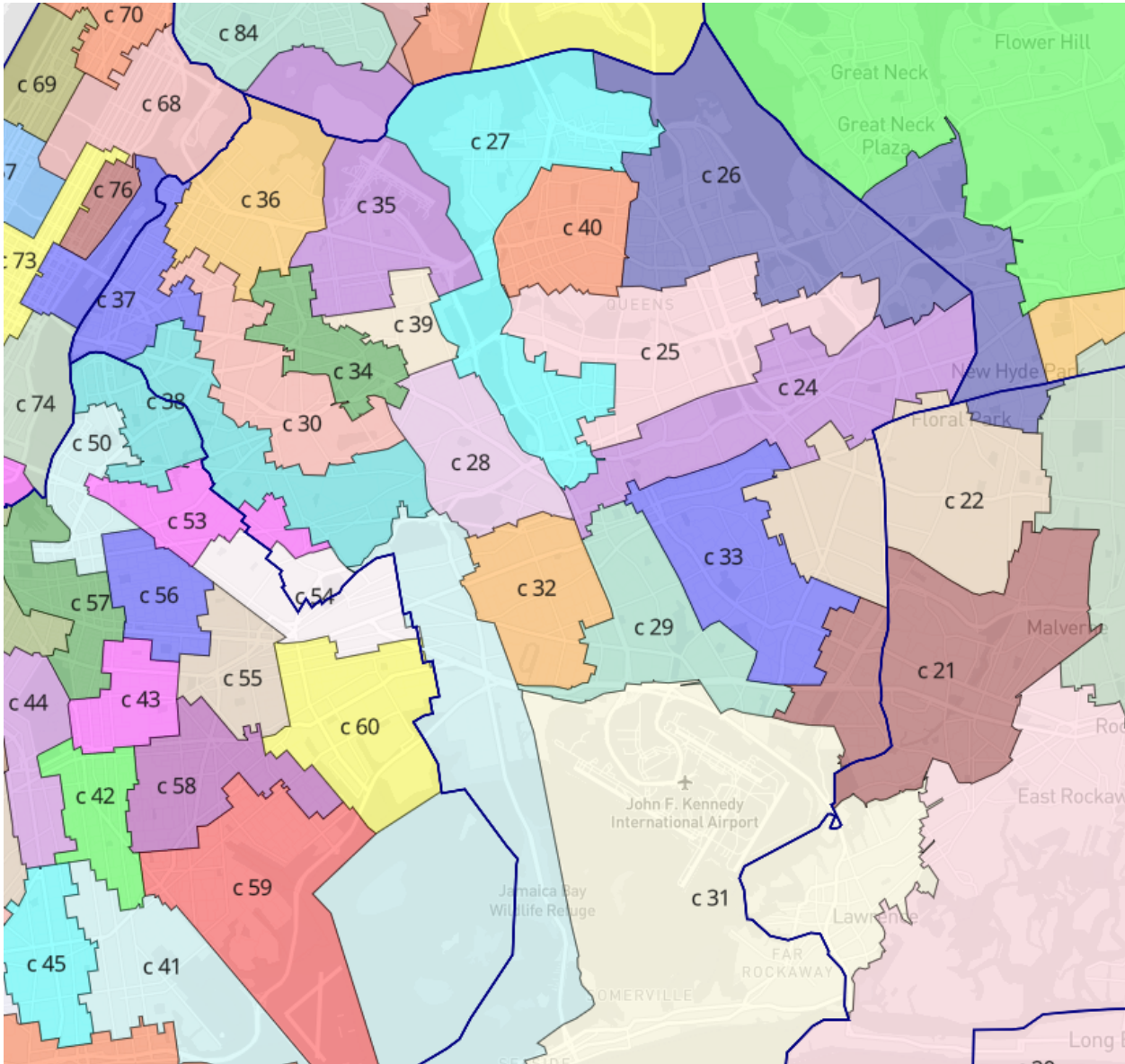
Shifting these districts east allows a compact District 32 to be drawn for Richmond Hill and Ozone Park, which would answer that community's longstanding criticism of the lines in that area.

"Letters" also redraws District 34, 35, and 39 to keep the Asian community in Elmhurst together in District 34, creating a third Asian majority assembly district in Queens.

The Plan proposes to solve District 37's overpopulation by drawing it into Manhattan's East Side. Districts 53 and 54 are also drawn cross Brooklyn-Queens at Bushwick-Ridgewood, which helps reinforce their Latino VAP. However, this leave a District 38 equivalent short of population and the

awkward solution here is to draw in Greenpoint and parts of Williamsburg in Brooklyn with a district that extends deep into Middle Village – not exactly a community of interest.

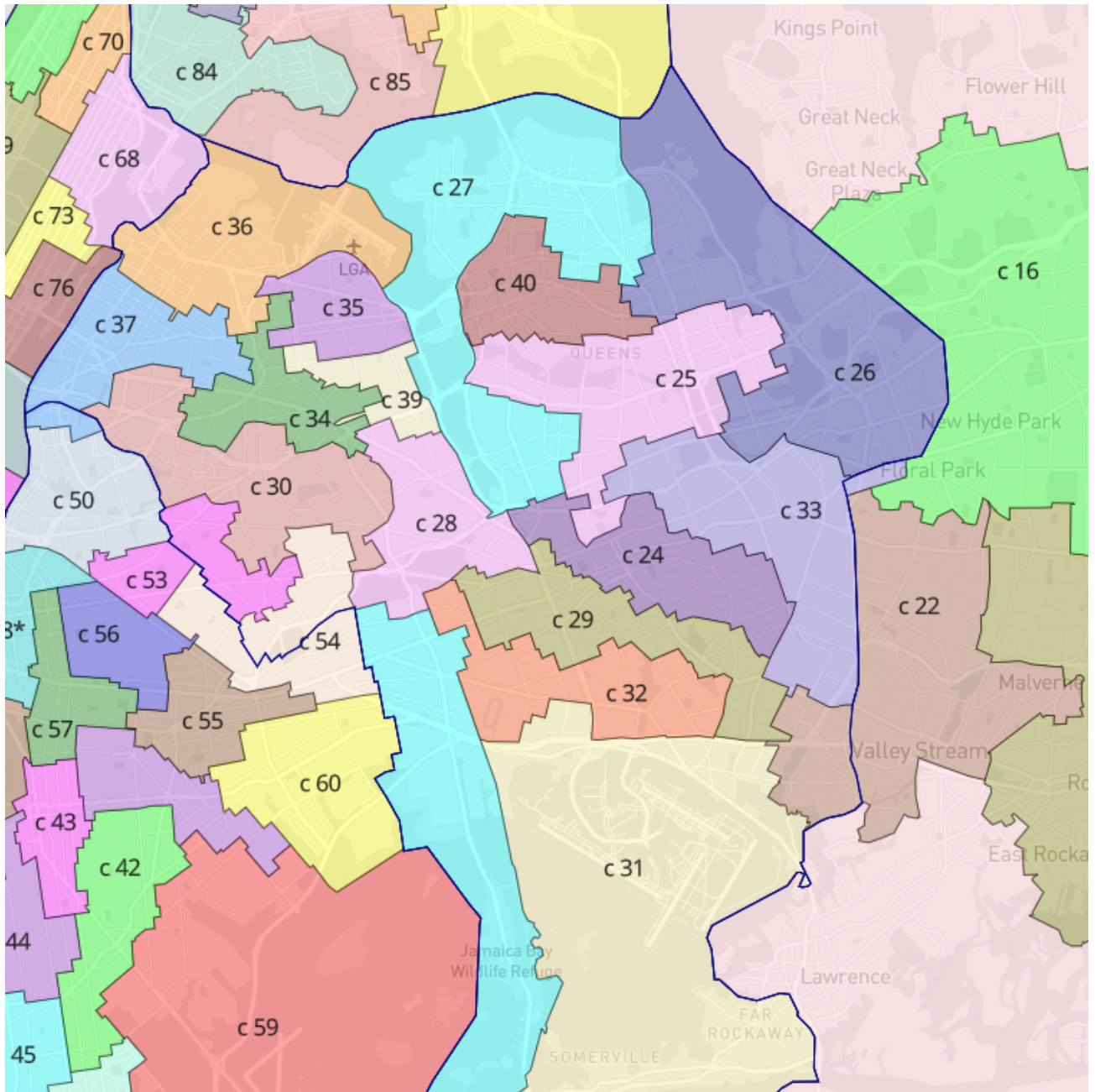
But “Letters” proposes some significant improvements and Queens residents should offer input on whether some of the new combinations of neighborhoods proposed here make sense as communities of interest or not.



**State Assembly: Proposed Republicans' Plan "Names"**

"Names" for the Assembly in Queens looks similar to "Letters" in some areas (such as Districts 34, 35, 39, and Districts 27, 25, and 40, 53 and 54) but very different in others.

A very different configuration is proposed for Queens here and one that draws only three solid near-majority NH Black VAP districts despite utilizing the crossing to Elmont-Valley Stream. The proposed Districts 29 and 32 here seem to serve no one well as they both break up the Richmond Hill-Ozone



Park area and draw substantially weaker NH Black VAP pluralities than prior districts.

District 37's overpopulation issue here is solved by drawing the district more compactly on Long Island City and crossing to just a smidge of northern Greenpoint. A potential alternative to address the overpopulation in both District 37 and 50 may be to draw a district that is roughly equally divided between Greenpoint and Long Island City – both areas face similar challenges of rapid high-rise development and infrastructure strain and may be a more coherent community of interest than other potential combinations.

Queens residents should offer their criticism of these plans and the current lines and bring forth new ideas for better representation.