My name is Bingjie Dong and I am 16 years old. I am an intern for Immigrant Social Services, Inc. (ISS). We are a non-profit dedicated to improving the conditions of underserved immigrants and their children in Manhattan's Lower East Side and Chinatown. Our offices are physically located on Henry Street in the Lower East Side. And through programs and services, we empower immigrant children, young adults, seniors, and families to develop and restore their agency to strengthen the well-being of our community.

ISSNY is a member organization of APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force. As such, we support the IRC Draft Map for Assembly District 65. Chinatown and the Lower East Side are and will continue to be a community of interest that deserves to be kept together.

I grew up in Chinatown/Lower East Side and am still a resident on Henry Street. Growing up in the neighborhood, I saw firsthand the importance of community through my experiences working at various community organizations. We are a community of interest with unique needs that deserves elected officials that are culturally competent and responsive to our needs when we ask for help. For example, there was a time, and even now, when the neighborhood needed an elected official to stand by the side of the community in order to resist the development of luxury towers currently being constructed. Instead, they turned a blind eye to protect themselves from the backlash from the richer class and in return leaving the neighborhood that they are supposed to represent to worsen. Issues unique to our community include gentrification - long-time residents are being pushed out of their homes due to increasing rent prices and exacerbating the housing problem. Some other issues are the lack of language access, the decaying air quality, and the overflow of trash on the streets. I point these issues out to highlight the complexity of this neighborhood and to reaffirm the importance of keeping Chinatown and the Lower East Side together so that our community members can have a voice. Thank you.