



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIR
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE
Rules

HELENE E. WEINSTEIN
Assemblywoman 41st District
Kings County

February 15, 2023

Ken Jenkins, Chairman
Charles Nesbitt, Vice Chair
NYS Independent Redistricting Commission
250 Broadway, 22nd floor
NY, NY 10007

Dear Chair Jenkins and Vice Chair Nesbitt,

I write to express my opposition to the proposed changes put forth by the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC).

Diverse constituencies, like those historically represented by 41st Assembly District, provide those who represent them the opportunity to appreciate, and advocate for, any number of issues directly tied to specific racial, ethnic, religious or socio-economic make-up.

The IRC's proposal consists of:

- The conspicuous elimination of the 41st district's northern half – home to a thriving Black/Caribbean community living in modest single-family homes, represented by two active organizations: the Flatbush Flatlands Civic Group and Nieuw Amersfort Community Association. Now, instead, splitting them into the far ends of three (3) different Assembly districts.
- The surgical excision of the NYCHA Sheepshead Nostrand Apartments - a housing project of close to 5,000 primarily black and elderly residents, fraught with issues and needs, both on the individual and development-wide levels. These constituents who for decades have had the convenience of a NYS Assembly District Office – predating my representation – right across the street, will now be exiled to the far end of the newly proposed 45th Assembly District.
- The division of the Fraser Square community – nestled within the area north and south of Fraser Square Park on Kings Highway at East 34th Street – which has long been represented solely by the 41st Assembly District and the eponymous civic association, who have worked in concert to preserve and improve the quality of life for these homeowners. The new lines break up the organization's constituency, also placing them into three (3) separate Assembly Districts.
- The addition of the Gerritsen Beach and Marine Park wetland bounded neighborhoods, ignoring the unique ecological, legislative and economic interest these communities have

in common with the adjacent communities of Canarsie and Mill Basin to the north. Disrupting this unified legislative voice will no doubt confuse matters when it comes to interacting with City, State and Federal agencies working to maintain the balance between the needs of the wetlands and the communities who make it their home.

Overall, this sweeping shuffle will constitute a massive 17.5% reduction in the district's black constituency, and a nearly 20% increase in its white population; effectively resetting the clocks on this historically "majority-minority" district.

The fallout is a diaspora of roughly 24,000 black and Caribbean constituents, who must now integrate into the 42nd, 45th, 58th, and 59th Assembly districts; in the process losing a long-held seat at the table; the definition of disenfranchisement.

Furthermore, the IRC ignores the 41st Assembly District's distinct curvature, which follows a nearly three mile stretch of Kings Highway; constituting roughly half of the Avenue's span through the borough of Brooklyn. Much of this road is populated by high rise apartments; uniting these buildings with the shared tenant-centric interests of multi-level housing found all along Nostrand and Ocean Avenues.

There is no advantage to the IRC's reapportioning strategy, which seemingly only results in creation of a largely homogenous 41st Assembly District, now no longer truly representative of the diverse fabric of the City it is part of.

With the understanding that redistricting is a complicated and nuanced process, I urge the IRC to consider these concerns and work on a final map that preserves the historically represented character of the 41st Assembly District: a true community of interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helene E. Weinstein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Helene E. Weinstein
Assemblywoman, 41st A.D.