**Redistricting Testimony for the Independent Redistricting Commission**

Greetings to the members of the New York State Independent Redistricting

Commission and thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My

name is Michelle Akyempong and I am speaking as a Community Activist

involved in many Organizations on Staten Island and a labor leader for over 20,000

Social Service Employees across the five boroughs. I am a home owner for 22

years in the Arlington community which is located near Mariners Harbor on the

North Shore of Staten Island.

According to The Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College-

People of African Descent in NYC Report 2010-2019, Over the last decade, the

total population for people of African descent in NYC has increased from

2,192,344 to 2,195,000. Staten Island gained a significant headcount for people of

African descent throughout the decade in 2010-2014 there were 49,435 to 2015-

2019 -54,517 a difference of 5.082 and the second largest growth behind the

Bronx.

Communities of color here in Staten Island should not be disenfranchised nor

ignored as politically active voters any longer. As stated in previous testimony, I

agree The Federal Voting Rights Act protects voting rights for people of color and

New York State must pass a Statewide Voting Rights Act which contains the pre-

clearance provision into law.

The Commission’s proposed Assembly map will impact my community by

increasing the political power of black and brown communities and receiving the

resources and support services into the community. People of color will be able to

exercise their voting power and elect candidates of choice.

In conclusion, I support the proposed Commission’s mapping in my community

because we demand to be equitably represented and preserve communities of

color. Communities must maintain and increase political power and elect

candidates of their choice, who will represent our situations that need solutions,

amplify our voices, protect voting rights and advocate on behalf of the

constituents. We look forward to equitable representation for people of color on

the North Shore of Staten Island.

As a constituent of the 23rd State Senate and 63rd State Assembly districts I

appreciate the IRC’s recommended proposed map set forth.

Thank you again for your time and the opportunity to testify today.