

CRYSTAL D. PEOPLES-STOKES 141st Assembly District, City Of Buffalo

MAJORITY LEADER

January 9, 2023

Mr. Ken Jenkins Chair Attention: Submissions Independent Redistricting Commission 250 Broadway, 22nd Floor New York, NY 10007

Re: NYS Independent Redistricting Commission – 141st District, Buffalo, NY

Dear Chairman Jenkins:

I am writing to express grave concerns regarding the draft Assembly plan under consideration by the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission. It is my hope that the Special Master will not move forward with the recently proposed maps. My recommendation would be to maintain the map for the 141st District (AD141) previously voted on and approved by the state legislature.

While the City of Buffalo's population has recently grown for the first time in many decades, much of that can be attributed to the influx of immigrants and refugees, and many ethnicities, such as the Bangladesh relocating to Buffalo's East Side from New York City and elsewhere.

New York State is no stranger to America's long history of excluding people of color from the political process. New York and Michigan were the only two northern states named in violation of the Voting Rights Act. The proposed districts will only exacerbate existing challenges and decrease political participation.

AD141 has historically always centered upon working class African American and minority neighborhoods, referred to as Buffalo's East Side. As the current representative of AD141, and the Assembly Majority Leader - the first minority and first woman to hold the position in New York State's 235 years of history, I am also one of only four non-White members in Upstate New York. Ninety percent of the 43 Assembly districts west of the Hudson River lack racially diverse representation. Throughout all of upstate New York, the AD141 is the only majority minority district, with non-Hispanic Blacks currently accounting for 64% of the district's population. The Special Master's proposed maps would decrease this concentration to 53%, therefore reducing representation and voter impact.

Sincerely,

Honorable Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes

Majority Leader, New York State Assembly



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