

## Testimony to IRC Members of the Commission

RE: NY ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 44 – Kensington and Windsor Terrace

REPRESENTED BY ROBERT CARROLL

**My name is M.J. Rosenbluth and I reside in the Kensington neighborhood of Brooklyn. I am writing to express my feelings about the current unity and the proposed re-design of our 44<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.**

Kensington and Windsor Terrace have been served so well as neighbors and neighborhoods in the 44th AD, as they have been for many years, currently represented by Robert Carroll and, before that, by James Brennan.

**Your decision to put portions of Kensington and Windsor Terrace into different Assembly Districts (44 and 51) is an unsound one at so many levels.** It creates less-than optimal, DISUNITY, with random slices of our neighborhoods removed from generally-accepted boundaries. The plan divides two long-established communities - with common interests, demographics and a history of positive civic activism – on some of the most awkwardly-determined boundary lines.

Simply stated, it is contrary to many of the bedrock principles which should guide fair redistricting and good government.

Specifically, there should be NO DIFFERENCE in the current 44<sup>th</sup> AD, where the entirety of Windsor Terrace (on BOTH SIDES of the Prospect Expressway) should be included. We ask that you make Green-Wood Cemetery - along 20th Street and McDonald Avenue – to be the western border of the 44th AD, not the Prospect Expressway as in the draft plan, and Green-Wood Cemetery along McDonald Avenue and Fort Hamilton Parkway out to 39th Street be the northern boundary between the 44th and 51st ADs. That makes complete geographical sense!

**There is little to no justification for parts of Kensington (particularly the West Kensington blocks of Minna, Chester, Clara, Tehama, Louisa, etc. – just south of Green-Wood & Ft. Hamilton Parkway) and, in Windsor Terrace, on the remaining two-block, narrow stretch along the Prospect Expressway, to be cut out of the 44th AD.** Those two areas are tied inextricably to and maintain strong identities within the above neighborhoods. If anything, they will be an afterthought in the 51st AD, divided from that district by the hundreds of acres of Green-Wood Cemetery.

Sunset Park is the dominant 51st AD neighborhood. I strongly believe that Kensington (and Windsor Terrace) will become underserved. This belief is based on prior instances where elected legislators – with constituents “on the fringes” – barely, if ever, visited our neighborhoods, and their communications were directed primarily towards the greater portions of their Districts.

The proposed plan also dilutes the ability of vital neighborhood institutions to advocate on behalf of their respective constituents. Residents send their children, in common, to local elementary schools, like PS 230, PS 130 and PS 154. They attend several local places of worship, such as Immaculate Heart of Mary Roman Catholic Church (Kensington/Windsor Terrace), the Flatbush Jewish Center, (in Kensington), and at least two local Mosques (Kensington). It will be UNFAIR to all of the above, now wholly within the 44th AD, to have a fractured District, divided in two - between the 44th and the 51st AD. The growing South Asian community in Kensington would then have to **petition to two different Assemblymembers rather than having a reliable single point of contact.**

Historically, the entirety of the two cohesive, well-defined neighborhoods of Kensington and Windsor Terrace have been in the same Assembly District. This is true since at least the reapportionment following the 1970 census. The local Assembly District Office contact number has been the same since my family moved here in 1989, and the office IS HIGHLY RESPONSIVE to local needs.

In the 1950s, Robert Moses built the Prospect Expressway and inflicted a still-obvious scar on Kensington and Windsor Terrace. The people banded together and protested Moses' plan, but unlike more affluent neighborhoods, such as Brooklyn Heights and Greenwich Village, they lost, and the Prospect Expressway was built. Over time and despite this "Great Divide", the Kensington & Windsor Terrace communities became

closer neighbors, and over the following decades, they jointly fought and defeated repeated ill-advised rezoning proposals to permit large-scale manufacturing and residential overdevelopment in these thriving working class, residential neighborhoods.

**I ask that you keep the Kensington and Windsor Terrace neighbors unified and that they remain intact together, going forward in whole, not in part, in the 44<sup>th</sup> New York State Assembly District.**

Please make the boundary for the 44<sup>th</sup> AD, on the Kensington side, at 39<sup>th</sup> Street (near Green-Wood Cemetery), and Green-Wood Cemetery itself on the Windsor Terrace side, those additional blocks WEST OF the Prospect Expressway, as the boundaries between the 44<sup>th</sup> AD and the 51<sup>st</sup> AD.

Thank you for listening!

Respectfully,

M.J. Rosenbluth

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Resident, NY State Assembly District #44