Testimony to Independent Redistricting Nov. 16, 2021

I am Ethel Tyus, Board member and General Counsel to the Crown Heights North Association and I appear today on behalf of my Crown Heights North community in South Central Brooklyn. The Crown Heights North Association, Inc. (CHNA) is a charitable organization founded in 2003 dedicated to the preservation of historic buildings in the Crown Heights North section of Community Board 8. CHNA is devoted to community revitalization, economic advancement, housing stabilization and cultural enrichment.

Crown Heights North Association's encompassing mission is to highlight the esthetically valuable legacy of the many historic buildings concentrated in the neighborhood and to preserve the area’s architectural heritage for posterity. I want to focus your attention on the way the area is fractured into multiple Assembly Districts, doglegged Senate Districts, and wrap-around Congressional Districts.

The Crown Heights North (CHN) community is comprised predominantly of peoples of African descent who share common histories, heritages, and nativities. More than 58% of the Community District population is of African descent, and nearly 21% have incomes below the poverty level. Currently, CHN is divided into two, arguably three Assembly Districts. Further we are divided into two Senate and two Congressional Districts. This is gerrymandering at its worst because it dilutes our voting power and renders us voiceless.

We are seeking to consolidate our voting power to:

* improve our poorly supplied and barely funded schools,
* provide at least one expertly staffed hospital within the Community District,
* nurture business improvement districts along the commercial strips, and
* manage the corporate real estate interests targeting the area for overdevelopment due to its rich supply of mass transit options.

The District lines we desire will provide a compact and contiguous area populated largely by peoples who share a common heritage, needs, and interests. It is our hope that these lines will provide us more power to effectuate the basics for a healthy, well-educated, and economically viable community, and not remain targets for displacement by gentrification.

The attached maps show our strong desire to in one of two Assembly Districts so that our chosen representative will be more attentive to our needs than he or she would be otherwise.