

Testimony of Seymour (Sey) Schwartz

Re: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Public Hearing
February 16, 2023

Dear Commission Members:

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Seymour “Sey” Schwartz. I am a Queens civic leader, World War II veteran, and longtime resident of Briarwood, New York. I have spent many years advocating in the best interest of my community, serving for 23 years as President of the Briarwood Community Association. I am also an original founder and current Executive Secretary of the Queens Civic Congress, Vice Chair of NYC Community Board 8, member of the Queens College Advisory Board, and life member of the Disabled American Veterans.

Briarwood is a 100-year-old stable community of over 30,000 residents, with well-defined geographic boundaries. Geographically, Briarwood is roughly located east of the Van Wyck Expressway, west of Parsons Boulevard, south of Union Turnpike, and north of Hillside Avenue. Serving our community are a Briarwood Branch of the Queens Public Library, a USPS postal station, The Queens Boulevard pedestrian promenade, and the re-named “Briarwood” MTA subway station. Our central thoroughfare is host to a range of retail establishments to satisfy all the primary needs of our residents. Altogether, this has molded a cohesive, identifiable community of pride and identity living in harmony.

Throughout my years of service, I have engaged with countless elected officials, community leaders, activists, and everyday Briarwood residents to help Briarwood secure sufficient and equitable public funding and resource access. I come to you however, to raise awareness of the current fractured, handicapped nature of my community’s collective power due to redistricting. As you know, Briarwood is now divided into multiple New York State Assembly districts. Because of this, the public advocacy voice of Briarwood in Albany is weakened and less regarded, leading to fewer resources and opportunities.

I urge the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission to reunite our home of Briarwood, transforming it into one stronger, unified district within the confines of New York State Assembly District 25, thus allowing us fair and equitable representation, once and for all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Sey Schwartz