Good afternoon and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify about redistricting. I’m going to focus my remarks regarding the west side of Manhattan and the current 10th Congressional District. The current 10th Congressional district, the west side of Manhattan Congressional district most closely aligns with map “J” in the Letters map, except that map “J” unfortunately excludes Morningside Heights from the west side Congressional district.

My name is Suzanne Jacobson and my relationship to the west side/ CD 10 is many years. I have lived on West 75th Street for over 50 years; my great Aunt lived on West 77th Street and my mother was born in Manhattan Valley. I am a former Democratic District Leader, a former member of the 20th Precinct Community Council and a mother of 2 daughters who attended local public schools. My many years of residency affords me a unique prospective of the West Side.

In an attempt to make this a cohesive Congressional District It is much easier to have a communities with shared interests and similar needs as one.

Upon looking at the entire West Side of Manhattan the Hudson River and Riverside Park is a natural boundary. On the east is Central Park. It is likewise interesting that our essential services: police, fire and sanitation departments are designed to cover large swarths of North South areas as are political lines for all elective offices. Transportation is another factor. Subways maintain this N/S configuration – never crossing Central Park. Most buses follow subway lines but are usually available at the corner. There are fewer buses running to the East Side, only running main streets. It is part of the west side psyche to hop on a bus traveling solely on the west side than to travel to the east side. The one difference is the number 7 bus which turns on Amsterdam Ave at W. 106 Street and traverses Manhattan Valley to points north.

Manhattan Valley an area beginning at West 100 St. to W. 110 Street – the route of the #7 bus is part of the West Side. In fact in the 80’s many West Siders moved into this area. It too is bounded by Central Park. Why cut it off from our area, Community Board 7. The community also is part of a Community of Interest with the Romulu Synagogue at 165 West 105 St. serving a congregation of many young people and the Harlem JCC at 318 West 118 Street.

The heavily Jewish Community of Interest is on the entire west side from Battery to 125th Street on the west side, comprises numerous Synagogues, day schools, at least one mikvah (ritual bath), eruv, the JCC at Amsterdam Ave and 76th St., The Center for Jewish History comprised of many organizations on West 16th Street. Just to name a few.

There are 2 school districts in this area (see map J): District #2 below West 60th Street, running down the lower west side and over to the upper east side and School District #3 which begins on West 60th Street and end on West 122nd covering the entire area including Morningside Heights and Manhattan Valley. Besides the many public, private and parochial schools, Universities as Columbia University’s elementary school offers seats to District #3 students.

Fordham University, another important school is nearby as is Barnard, Union College, and the Jewish Theological Seminary to mention a few. What an opportunity to have them in one Congressional District where collaboration, shared grants and research can be encouraged.

I look forward to seeing future draft maps more closely aligned to the current 10th Congressional district which includes the west side neighborhoods from the Battery, Lower Manhattan, Battery Park City through Tribeca, SoHo, Greenwich Village, West Village, Chelsea, Clinton, Hell’s Kitchen, Lincoln Square, Upper West Side and Morningside Heights to 125th Street.