I’m here to advocate for the Little Manila community in Queens—an enclave that emerged in the 1970s when Elmhurst Hospital recruited healthcare workers from the Philippines when there was a nursing shortage.

In Little Manila, we know that the emergence and resilience of our community is attributed to the same care laborers who have been negatively impacted by the effects of the pandemic. Not only are Filipinos overrepresented in healthcare worker deaths, but our elders have been impacted by the uptick in anti-Asian hate crimes.

The past decade, Little Manila has been divided between at least three State Assembly districts: 30, 34, and 39. This has diluted our voice and power, and hence, has stifled our ability to protect our community.

We have been advocating for the Filipino American community to be kept together. With the newly drawn maps, we see that the Independent Redistricting Commission recognizes the need for the Filipino American community in both Woodside and Elmhurst to be kept together, alongside other Asian Americans to create a new majority Asian district.

Today, I am advocating for the cementing of our community’s unification in the final maps. so that we—the multiple generations of Filipino Americans thriving in Little Manila—can be full participants in the democratic process.