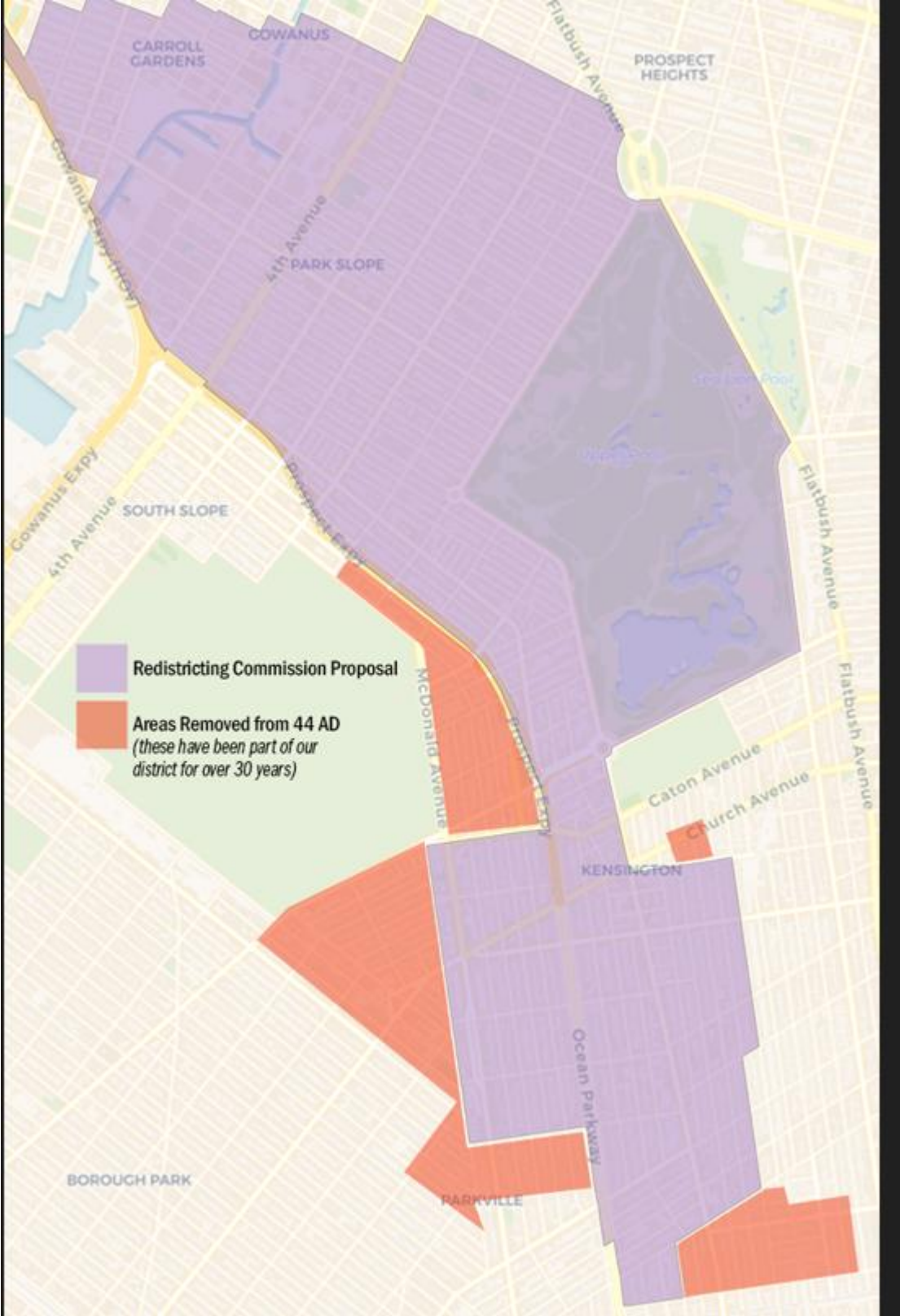


TESTIMONY OF FORMER ASSEMBLYMEMBER JIM BRENNAN TO NEW YORK INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION-CHANGES TO 44TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

My name is Jim Brennan and I was a member of the New York State Assembly representing the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Windsor Terrace, Park Slope, Kensington, Flatbush, Boro Park, and others for 32 years, from 1985 until the end of 2016. Before that I worked for my predecessor starting in 1981 and was familiar even with the pre-1982 district. I served in the State Assembly through the 1992, 2002 and 2012 redistrictings. The Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, and much of the Kensington area have been more or less intact going back forty, and to some extent, fifty years, in the same Assembly district regardless of the number of the district.

Here is the IRC Map for the 44th District, with changes from the current district:



As can be seen from the IRC map, Windsor Terrace and parts of Kensington have been broken in half in Assembly representation. One part of Windsor Terrace, between the Prospect Expressway and Prospect Park, is the 44th district, and the other part is in the 51st Assembly district, despite a large physical and geographic boundary, Greenwood Cemetery, separating the sliver of Windsor Terrace in the 51st District, from the rest of the 51st District, whose core is several miles away in the heart of Sunset Park. A part of Kensington south of the Cemetery that was in the 44th District is similarly put into the 51st District. This action will diminish meaningful Assembly representation by breaking up these areas.

The current Assembly district offers a coherent community of interest that the IRC should retain, and this element of your new map should be changed and the current district restored. The Frequently Asked Questions on your website states that a community of interest is:

A community of interest is a population which shares enough social and economic interests of importance that suggest said community should be included in a single district for effective and fair representation. These might include similar standards of living, shared methods and patterns of transportation, or similar economic and societal concerns. For example, the population of a rural area might have different shared interests from those living in an urban area, as might those living in an industrial area from the priorities shared by those living in a primarily agricultural area. Shared interests within a Community of Interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.

The Slope, Terrace, and Kensington areas have major shared transportation facilities, like the F and G train subway lines, the

Prospect Expressway, with entrances and exits into the adjacent residential areas, and shared zoning and land use density. Local residents have worked for decades on common concerns about assuring the areas stay in medium density zoning districts.

The zones of the local elementary and junior high schools would be split apart in terms of Assembly representation by the IRC plan. The Bishop Ford Educational Complex, a former parochial school now leased by the Board of Education as a huge pre-k complex, would be split off into the 51st Assembly district, despite the boundary of Greenwood Cemetery. P.S. 154, in central Windsor Terrace, and P.S. 130 and P.S. 230 would also have their Assembly representation split in half. Parents and families have a community of interest in their schools having coherent, unified Assembly representation.

I take note that the IRC plan for the Assembly districts in Brooklyn has uniform district populations of 134-135,000 persons. By contrast, the current Brooklyn districts have populations ranging between 128,000 and 141,000. It is appropriate for the districts to be more balanced in population.

It is my hope that the IRC will recognize the historical shared interests of the Assembly district and keep these areas of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, and Kensington intact in their representation. Thank you.

