



SOUTH QUEENS WOMEN'S MARCH
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Testimony for Independent Districting Commission, Queens Hearing, February 16, 2023
Christina Motilall, Member of South Queens Women's March

Hello distinguished members of the Independent Redistricting Commission. My name is Christina Motilall and I am a US Medical Lead for B2C Campus Communications Coordinator, and an active member of South Queens Women's March (SQWM), a local grassroots gender justice organization. Founded right before the pandemic hit, and inspired by global and national women's rights movements, SQWM amplifies the voices of South Queens' diverse women and gender-expansive people. We are an all-volunteer multi-generational, intersectional platform working to foster women's empowerment through dismantling norms, practices, and institutions that support patriarchy and gender injustice.

We take our sisterhood to the streets to unify women and gender non-conforming individuals in our community and connect them to the tools and resources necessary to empower their own lives and thrive. That includes fighting food insecurity and period poverty; tackling gender based violence via healthy relationships and art healing workshops, promoting empowerment through youth and prof development, and promoting civic engagement and building political power. To that end, SQWM is a proud member of APA Voice's Redistricting Task Force.

Much of our work is in the Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park neighborhoods. We renew the same calls we as an organization echoed for the past year: **please don't divide us - keep our communities of interest together**. If you take a look at the district lines at every level of government for these neighborhoods, you will see a blatant disregard for the natural communities of interest that exist. You will see lines that do not uphold the Voting Rights Act but instead run afoul of them. This is particularly egregious at the State Assembly Level where we were divided into at least 7 districts - Assembly Districts 23, 24, 27, 28, 31, 32 and 38. Things have gotten better since then and we know that the IRC has heard our voices. Your most recently released map uniting Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park's community of interest reflects that. We are so grateful for this. I submit this testimony in support of your map for Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park. It is critical that this map become the final map because it keeps us as close to whole as possible. I care about this community because this community represents family to me. Not only does this community represent a home away from home but it's also where many of my closest friends and family members reside. This community serves as a hub for my tradition and culture. This is where I would spend every weekend as I was growing up and now that I'm in my 30s I find myself here even more as I also volunteer in this community. It confuses me how I can have 2 aunts living across from each other, in the same neighborhood but belonging to 2 separate districts. It upsets me that the small businesses in this community that all share one mission of creating a home away from home for many West Indian/Caribbean New Yorkers are dispersed amongst different districts. This community

deserves to be one reflected as one district as we consider ourselves to be part of this ONE community. We deserve our voices to heard and respected as we speak from ONE community. We deserve our opinions on what goes on in this community to be acknowledged as we think as ONE community.

Thank you to the entire commission and your staff.

Christina Motilall