

# **Testimony for the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission**

November 16th, 2021

Thank you to the Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) for organizing this series of public hearings on the upcoming redistricting cycle.

My name is Amany Youssef . I'm a member of the Union of Arab Women of NYC. Union of Arab Women of NYC is a grassroots group that started in 2016 in south Brooklyn that aims to build a community of strong and empowered Arab women to resist oppression and fight discrimination in NYC.

Fair districts are the foundation for a fair political and social representation We don't often draw fair mapping districts that reflect the community's common needs. We need to get this right because if we don't our communities will live with the consequences for the next decade.

We've seen the impact of unfair redistricting on our communities. It has broken our communities into different districts that makes it very hard for our needs to be prioritized because our separation makes it harder to hold political weight. If we get broken up even further, then it will just continue to marginalize an already marginalized community. We have members from all over NYC and the potential for gerrymandering is a serious threat to our communities. Communities with common interests and needs have to stay together in order for their needs to be met. I urge you to keep the Arab and Muslim community together in South Brooklyn. We are already divided in terms of assembly, state and congressional, we can't afford to be divided any further.

Thank you for your time and I hope you truly consider the interests of the different communities who will be impacted by having their voices suppressed and separated in this crucial process