



# Amariah

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## Teaching & Guiding in God's Promises

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

To whom it may concern,

In July, I submitted testimony to the Independent Redistricting Commission encouraging you to recognize the rapidly expanding Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish communities centered in Kings County and stretching through Queens County into southwestern Nassau County as you were preparing your first draft maps for public release.

I brought to your attention the vast number of schools, synagogues, small businesses, media outlets, and social service organizations that serve the Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish communities in these areas, and how each area has become more integrated economically, socially, and politically.

Today, I am writing to reiterate those points and to draw your attention to the election of New York City Councilwoman-elect Inna Vernikov, who just won in a landslide in New York City's 48th District. This demonstrates the growing electoral cohesion of the region's Orthodox Jewish and Russian communities and their ability to elect a candidate of their choosing, without regard to political party.

The strong biblical values shared by the Jewish and Russian residents of Southern Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau counties form the basis of our community of interest. This community of interest is further reflected in our language minority status, whose voting rights are recognized and protected in the state constitution.

I would like to commend the commission for the JFK5TWNS congressional map included in the Names Plan. This proposed map is a strong first step toward providing our community the representation it needs, and is entitled to, under the state constitution. \ Upstate, the commission's proposed SULORNGRCK congressional district would also be important progress for the state's Orthodox Jewish population, as it combines large and rapidly growing segments of the community in Orange, Sullivan and Rockland counties. As with the JFK5TWNS district, our community would constitute a steadily increasing proportion of this district over the next decade.

In addition, the BAYGRAVES and MADMID state senate districts included in the Names Plan help consolidate our communities in Madison, Midwood and Sheepshead Bay. Unfortunately, Manhattan Beach and Brighton Beach would be left underrepresented by being included in the STATENCONEY district instead of being linked with either BAYGRAVES or MADMID as they should be. In comparison, the Letters Plan unnecessarily divides our community between several different state senate districts and effectively dilutes our vote. This is similar to what the state did in the last redistricting, when Senator David Storobin won in almost a similar district of that of Inna Vernikov, but for the State Senate and by a small margin.



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For the State Assembly, both the Names Plan and the Letters Plan contain some proposed districts that reflect these priorities, and others that could be modified, to ensure the Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish community of interest is better represented.

Ten years ago, the creation of New York's 17th State Senate District was an important step to ensure the Orthodox Jewish community had a voice in Albany, but even the way that was done was in a way to minimize the legislative influence of the growing population of the Orthodox Jewish communities, and the cohesion it has with the Russian Jewish communities. This was expanded upon by the voters' decision to include protections for communities of interest and language minority groups in the 2014 constitutional amendment creating the Independent Redistricting Commission.

Now, the Commission has a responsibility to take the next step and provide the Orthodox Jewish and Russian Jewish communities with a voice in Congress, and more representation in Albany, commensurate with its growth.

Sincerely,

Nachman Mostofsky  
Executive Director & VP