



SAFEST

South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship & Training

TESTIMONY OF:

Mazeda Uddin – Founder and CEO

South Asian Fund for Education, Scholarship and Education (SAFEST)

NYS Redistricting Commission Hearing on February 16th, 2023

My name is Mazeda Uddin and I have been deeply involved in the community through service organizations including South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship, and Training (SAFEST), the South Queens Redistricting Coalition and Taking our Seat. It feels like years since this process began but those of us who stand for justice for our community are happy to be here and be on the record again.

Your December 2022 plan is a good start but does not complete the job of bringing justice to South Asian communities in Queens.

First, I want to thank you for the district that you drew centered around Richmond Hill. This district corrects an ongoing dilution of the South Asian community in that area. The elected officials who supported the current district lines should be ashamed of themselves. The current district lines of the 24th district are a self serving demonstration of the desire of those in power to stay in power.

The problem with your plan is that it does not do a good job in the area of Briarwood and Jamaica Hills in Queens. Your proposed districts 28, 29 and 32 splits the growing Bangladeshi community in this area. Our neighborhood boundaries are the Van Wyck in the West and 188th street in the West. It is possible to draw one district with Hillside Ave as the spine between these two East-West boundaries. That district would keep the Bangladeshi neighborhoods whole and together.

You have the chance to fix a terrible mistake and the media in the room need to amplify this message. Stop treating us as second class citizens. Stop using Bangladeshis as filler for districts that are not centered around our neighborhoods.

Thank you.

Mazeda A. Uddin, founder and CEO of SAFEST