Good evening, Commissioners!

My name is John Scott and I am the State Committee Member for the 34th Assembly District which represents parts of Astoria and Jackson Heights, Queens. I wanted to thank you for listening to all our voices here in Queens tonight and for the opportunity to submit written testimony to you all.

In 2023 here in the state of New York, it is essential for our diverse communities to have representation that best serves them. And tonight, we heard voices from many communities across Queens County expressing their viewpoints on the draft Assembly District maps. One community we did not hear as much from is the large LGBTQIA+ (queer) community, which is well represented in the flourishing queer communities of Jackson Heights and Astoria. However, this is not wholly unsurprising since as queer people, we often struggle for proportional representation in our government.

In the United States generally, queer people are woefully underrepresented in our government. Queer people comprise only 0.19% of all elected positions, but we are 5.6% of the population[[1]](#footnote-1). Therefore, we would need to elect over 28,000 queer representatives nationwide to achieve proportional representation in government. Luckily in AD34, our LGBTQIA+ community is currently represented by a member of our community, something that would drastically change with the adoption of the IRC draft maps.

Changing the district lines of AD34 would split the queer community of Western Queens into two separate districts, therefore diminishing the voices of queer people in our government here in New York. However, it does not just stop at the LGBTQIA+ community, the impact of these new maps impacts everyone in our community of Astoria. The redrawn lines of AD36 include parts of Manhattan, which is drastically different from my Astoria neighbors across the East River. Additionally, these proposed new district lines greatly dimmish the voices of our Latinx neighbors in Jackson Heights by splitting the neighborhood up into several districts.

The 2022 Assembly maps allowed Western Queens to have diverse representation for multiple communities in our government. These maps better allowed queer, Latinx, and other groups to elect representatives to the Assembly that were a part of their communities and better able to serve them. Western Queens represents one of the most diverse places on Earth, and that diversity of people, cultures, sexual orientations and more should be reflected in our representatives in the way that it was in the 2022 election.

I urge the IRC to maintain the current 2022 Assembly maps, and reject these proposed 2024 drafted maps since they do not best serve the diversity we have in Western Queens, and Assembly District 34.

Thank you,

-John Scott

State Committee Member – AD 34

1. <https://victoryinstitute.org/news/new-lgbtq-gallup-data-reveals-enormous-gaps-in-lgbtq-political-representation-lgbtq-people-hold-just-0-2-of-elected-positions/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)