**Redistricting Testimony 2/15/23**

Good afternoon members of the NY State Independent Redistricting Commission. My name is Sewaa Codrington. I’m a long-term resident of Bedford-Stuyvesant, and I’m speaking on behalf of many other long-term residents of the community. Ireside in Assembly District 56. I’m a County Committee Member of the 44th E.D., President of the Macon Street & Tompkins Avenue Block Association and Cofounder & Director of KowTeff Cultural Arts Organization.

* Weeksville was one of the earliest settlements within the historic community of Bedford-Stuyvesant. There have been ongoing waves of people who have come and gone. However, the community of interest representing the descendants of Weeksville, Tompkinsville, Carsville & Clarksvillehave been in “Bed-Stuy” from the beginning and have ***remained*** - surviving ongoing tribulation and adversity.
* Currently, ***gentrification*** has had a major impact. A sizable number of the population have suffered displacement, forcing many to leave our beloved community. This has contributed to the decimation of the population of legacy residents in Bedford Stuyvesant. Nevertheless, the community of interest ***remains consistent and in plurality.***
* For over 70 years the community of Bedford-Stuyvesant has been ***intentional*** in its struggle for unity and self-determination. Our historical borders have constantly been shifted, resulting in the possible risk of a deterioration of political power and fiscal allocations for our long-term residents.

Many of us are in favor of keeping as much as possible the historical boundaries of Bed-Stuy intact. We are in favor of **the Current Boundaries Lines of AD 56** which contain the following borders: Nostrand Ave. & to Flushing Ave., Flushing Ave. to Broadway, Broadway to Howard Ave., Howard Ave. to Putnam Ave., Putnam Ave. to Ralph Ave., Ralph Ave. to Bergen St., Bergen St. to Utica Ave., Utica Ave. to Prospect Pl., Prospect Pl. to Troy Ave., Troy Ave. to St. Marks Ave., St. Marks Ave. to Kingston Ave., Kingston Ave. to Bergen St., Bergen St. to Nostrand Ave.

**We support this map because:**

* The residents of Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights share longstanding traditions, ancestry and our Weeksville history.
* Both communities have like-minded organizations created to preserve the legacy of homeownership such as The Brownstoners of Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights North Association.
* With the current boundary lines, as members of a community of interest, we will be ensured to a greater degree equitable representation and political power.
* The district is a major **cultural** center & global destination place for African Art and Culture.
* These lines will enable our community to better focus on our common issues such as:
* shopping areas and business corridors,
* transportation,
* community physical / mental / & emotional health
* NYCHA developments and other low-income housing complexes
* the needs of our houses of worship
* the needs of our schools, libraries, & senior services
* new issues of flooding and other impending issues resulting from global warming
* and the ramifications of gentrification on the long-term residents of our community

**We oppose the draft map drawn by the IRC because:**

* We will lose our relationship with our families & friends in Crown Heights who we have ties with, common interest and shared purpose for community development.
* We will lose longstanding allies in Crown Heights in small business development, arts, culture.
* It will reduce the already depleted Black population from 52% to 46%.
* It will attenuate the African Diaspora Voting Bloc.

Commissioners, I urge you to fulfill the ethical obligations to this community of interest in our ongoing struggle for equity and empowerment by maintaining the **current boundaries lines of AD 56.**  Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify today.