February 5, 2023

**Subject Line: Opposition to the State proposal for Redistricting Roosevelt Island**

To: Members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Thank you for considering Roosevelt Island’s needs when determining the redistricting map for New York State’s Assembly. **I adamantly oppose the current proposal which removes Roosevelt Island from Manhattan’s District 76 and places it in Queens District 36 as this would violated NYC Human Rights Law and equitable access for disabled individuals.**

New York State’s redistricting rules require that districts must consist of contiguous territory and shall be as compact in form as possible.

1. Our Manhattan Island’s contiguous territory is Manhattan, not Queens.
2. The proposed change to our district is sprawling, not compact.

The commission must take into account the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, towns, and communities of interest.

1. Roosevelt Island is being severed from long established communities of interest. Our political subdivision is not being respected.
2. The City Charter of New York City recognizes Roosevelt Island as a Manhattan community.

The Constitution of New York State specifically provides two State legislators for each district, a Senator and an Assembly Member. Roosevelt Island, a Manhattan community, has a unique form of local governance.

**Furthermore, as a severely disabled veteran who receives 100% of my extensive hospital and community based medical care at the Margaret Cochran Corbin Campus of the VA New York Harbor at 23rd St in Manhattan, it is imperative to me that my disability support services, dependent on my residence in Manhattan are continued.**

1. I worked specifically with the NYC DVS and HPD to access affordable housing in 2021 that would keep me in my borough of residence (Manhattan) to maintain my extensive medical and support services when I moved to affordable housing here in 2021.
2. Transport to the Manhattan VA, PCA services at my home, social services, pharmacy courier services, and Access-A-Ride services are all dependent on my residence in Manhattan since they are borough-specific.
3. Access-A-Ride services, for example, do not permit taxi authorizations across borough lines. Changing Roosevelt Island to Queens would eliminate the option for necessary taxi authorizations for medical appointments and tests in Manhattan.
4. Having to change offices for federal, state and city disability support services from Manhattan to Queens would be devastating to me as I am already well established in Manhattan services and offices. Having to move borough would be administratively and logistically impossible for me.
5. Public transport options for the disabled to Manhattan are extensive (ferry, tram and subway). Given my mobility and vision issues, having accessible transport to known offices and locations is necessary for my survival – asking me to re-register with Queens based with limited transport options would be devastating to my ability to function independently.
6. In emergencies, I can currently be taken to Manhattan hospitals that partner with the VA or to the VA itself – there are no existing partnerships with Queens based hospitals which would be detrimental to my care in an emergency, especially with complex medical needs.

The needs of the severely disabled must be taken into account – preventing my access to needed medical and social services that are currently allocated based on my residence in Manhattan would be life limiting and present barriers to Section 504, Americans with Disabilities Act and NYC Human Rights Law compliance. As a result, I must strongly object to this.

Very respectfully yours,

///signed///

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