

November 10, 2021

To members of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission:

My name is Daniele Gerard. I was born and raised in New York City, and have lived uptown and downtown, on the East Side and on the West Side. I first bought an apartment on the Upper West Side in 1996. I have been a member of Three Parks Independent Democrats since 2004, and on the Board of Directors since 2006. I am a civil rights lawyer for children.

I am submitting this second round of testimony because I believe it is of the utmost importance to keep Morningside Heights with the Upper West Side as part of the 10th Congressional District. This is for several reasons that cannot be adequately covered in three minutes, so I will focus on just a few of them that make sense based on the way our communities were formed and historically on how the district has always been drawn.

First, I have a strong preference for the Letters Maps over the Named Maps. This is so because Maps J and H acknowledge and respect the West Side as an easily identifiable historical, social, and political entity. The Named Maps consistently break apart historic communities and political entities and would unacceptably harm communities of interest.

As I previously testified in July 2021, the West Side, including Morningside Heights, has shared community facilities such as:

- Subways, with their shared impact on transit and community;
- Elementary and Middle School Zones;
- Contiguous waterfront parks from the Battery to Riverside Park, including Hudson River Park, which runs from Chambers to 59th Street;
- Hudson River environmental issues are common along the entirety of the West Side, including impacts of natural disasters; and
- Community Boards 1, 2, 4, and 7 are almost wholly in a single Congressional district and should remain that way.

Second, in culture and character, Morningside Heights, particularly around Columbia, has more in common with the Upper West Side than with other parts of Manhattan. Columbia University is a premier educational institution and community of interest that should be in one congressional district. Morningside Heights should be in Map J and not Map Q.

Third, Congressman Nadler has more than ably represented the district for decades. There is no reason to dilute our voices when we call on our elected officials to pursue policies that will help everyone in our communities, as Congressman Nadler has always done.

Please maintain the lines of the 10th Congressional District and keep our communities intact.

Thank you for your consideration,

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