

Hi, my name is Kelly Li and I am currently a high school senior at Stuyvesant High School. I've been living in the Flushing community for the past 16 years. I'd like you to keep my community together during this redistricting process.

My community is best defined by its diversity. As a community of immigrants, the richness of all the different languages and cultures can be seen in every corner of the area: walking down the busy roads of Main St, sitting on a bench in Bowne Park, or riding the Q15 bus route. On the block where I grew up sits a Chinese deli, a Spanish bakery, and a Korean barbeque restaurant. But beyond the endless food options, my community is one with special collective values and needs.

Over the past year, I've participated in many volunteer projects concerning my community's welfare with local non-profit community organizations like the MinKwon Center for Community Action. Some of the issues I focus on were COVID vaccine registration, GOTV campaigning, and healthcare registration for undocumented immigrants. From these experiences, it has increasingly grown to my attention that my community has a clear need for language access. A Mandarin lady I registered for the vaccine had told me that she believes her next door neighbor also needs a vaccine appointment but with Bengali-speaking assistance. Yes, we may be a community of people from different parts of the world, speaking different tongues, and eating different types of food, but in the end we are still a community of people that looks out for one another. So in order to both preserve this supportive sense of belonging and advance language access in the district, it is crucial that we keep the community together.

Furthermore, my elementary and middle school are currently just out of the district boundaries even though they are both only a 10-minute walk from home. It seems unreasonable that every day, children around my neighborhood are traveling to another district to attend school in an area that is no different than our own. But with the Unity Map, which shifts the boundary northwards to include my school area and the growing Asian American population in proximity, Northern Boulevard and nearby neighborhoods would be kept more cohesive. As immigrants with similar experiences and backgrounds, we want to be grouped in the same community. By doing so, we can make sure that every member of the community can get their equal share of services and aid.

As a lifelong resident of the area, I understand that redistricting will impact my community for the next decade. Therefore, I sincerely hope that you would consider the Unity Senate Map which makes sure that our community gets its equal share of services. Thank you.