

Independent Redistricting Commission
Testimony

My name is Deborah Young, I am a resident of Crown Heights North, and I am the Co-Founder & President of the Crown Heights North Association. I also serve as the 2nd Vice -Chair of Community Board 8, Brooklyn New York. I acknowledge the work and energy put into past efforts on the congressional, state legislative and district levels to identify how boundaries were drawn. To that end we are at a pivotal point where we have an opportunity to look at how the boundaries were previously divided/ drawn and make conscientious decisions about, if what was done in the past remains currently relevant today. Certainly, it is understood that the census outcome has impact on the ultimate decisions about redistricting.

My testimony is not to focus on the more technical aspects of this process but to highlight how currently drawn lines have impact on the residents in Crown Heights North community. First and foremost, our representatives are hardworking, conscientious and fully engaged with their constituents and for that we are fortunate. Even with their attentiveness the division often causes dynamics albeit, not within their control. The undercurrents resulting from the multiple elected representation in CHN has proven not to be in the best interest of the community residents.

In summary how can our needs be adequately represented when we are divided between, 4 Assembly Districts, two State Senate Districts, and 3 City Council Districts. This schism impacts our ability to be represented in a cohesive manner and be civically engaged for common causes. We need to be joined in unison to foster our cultural, religious and other related commonalities.

I urge the commission to conscientiously review the current lines in Crown Heights North and make decisions that address and dispose of the highly divisiveness that results from the Crown Heights North community being so fragmented.

Thank you for your consideration to this request

Deborah Young

Good afternoon,

My name is Gail Muhammad, and I am a lifetime resident of Crown Heights and I have lived in Crown Heights North for 24 yrs. I am currently the 1st Vice Chair of Community Board 8, Vice President of the Crown Heights North Association, Inc. and President of the 1200 Dean Street Block Association, Inc.

My testimony is on behalf of the Northern Crown Heights community committee and block association members.

Crown Heights North (CHN) is nestled between Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights South. Many of our residents share cultural, educational, recreational and family values. Our main purpose for testifying is to ensure that the newly redrawn district lines separately reflect the issues facing CHN. Why do I say separately?

Currently CHN is represented by two (2) Congressional representatives, two (2) Senators and four (4) assembly members.

As you can see there are numerous elected officials representing CHN. Subsequently it is challenging to be represented in a cohesive manner.

The residents of CHN are seeking more political power and designated representatives for CHN.

We in CHN are overdue for being visible and being heard as it relates to redistricting in our community.

For too long, Crown Heights North has been the minnow in the whale's pond.

With the overabundance of representatives, other communities being larger than CHN, it has been difficult at best, neglected at worst, for us to be heard or represented on issues that affect us, Crown Heights North.

We no longer want to be put in the melting pot with the larger/different communities because our needs, requests and issues are different, and we want them addressed as such. districts. Not the small communities.

As such, we, the area of CHN, are requesting the impartial Commission redraw the lines to allow Crown Heights North to have fair, adequate and appropriate representation so that CHN will have specific elected persons to represent our issues, our needs and our community.

As we know, most elected officials tend to spend most of their time, political appearances, money, grants and efforts to assist in the majority/larger sections of their districts.

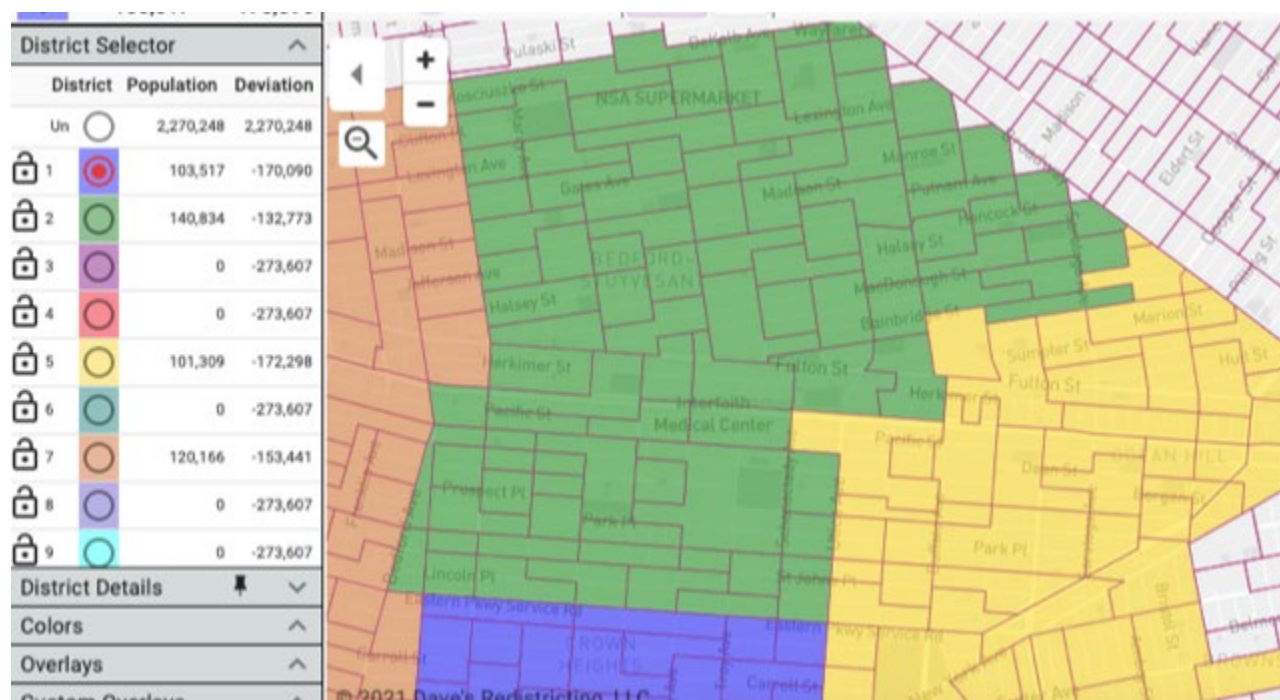
CHN, is requesting that the impartial Commission redraw the lines to allow Crown Heights North to have fair, adequate and appropriate representation. We, CHN want to reduce the current number of designated elected individuals to represent our issues, our needs and our community.

Gail Branch-Muhammad

Greetings Commissioners,

My name is Fior Ortiz-Joyner and I am a resident of Crown Heights North, Brooklyn. I am the President of my Block Association and an active member of the Crown Heights North community. Our community is divided between two Assembly Districts, two State Senate Districts and three City Council districts. This division puts our community at a disadvantage. As a community, Crown Heights North would like to remain intact and whole without the division it has been dealing with for many years. The first step to unifying Crown Heights North will be to redraw the Assembly District lines. The map below illustrates Crown Heights North as part of the 56 Assembly District. This map reflects a unified Crown Heights North with Atlantic Avenue to the north, Eastern Parkway to the south, Bedford Avenue to the west and Utica Avenue (from Eastern Parkway to Dean Street) to the east. Merging Crown Heights North into the 56 Assembly District (green area on the map) is suitable—Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights North have many comparable characteristics, including cultural attributes, similar housing stock with valued historic districts. The history and legacy of both communities is profound and recognized. An intact Crown Heights North will fit and work well within the 56 Assembly District. Redrawing the lines indicated in the map will empower both Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights North when it comes to fighting issues both communities have in common such as deed theft, the lack of low-income affordable housing just to name a few. I hope the Commission agrees with this map proposal and can make a recommendation for approval. I thank you for your time.

Fior Ortiz-Joyner



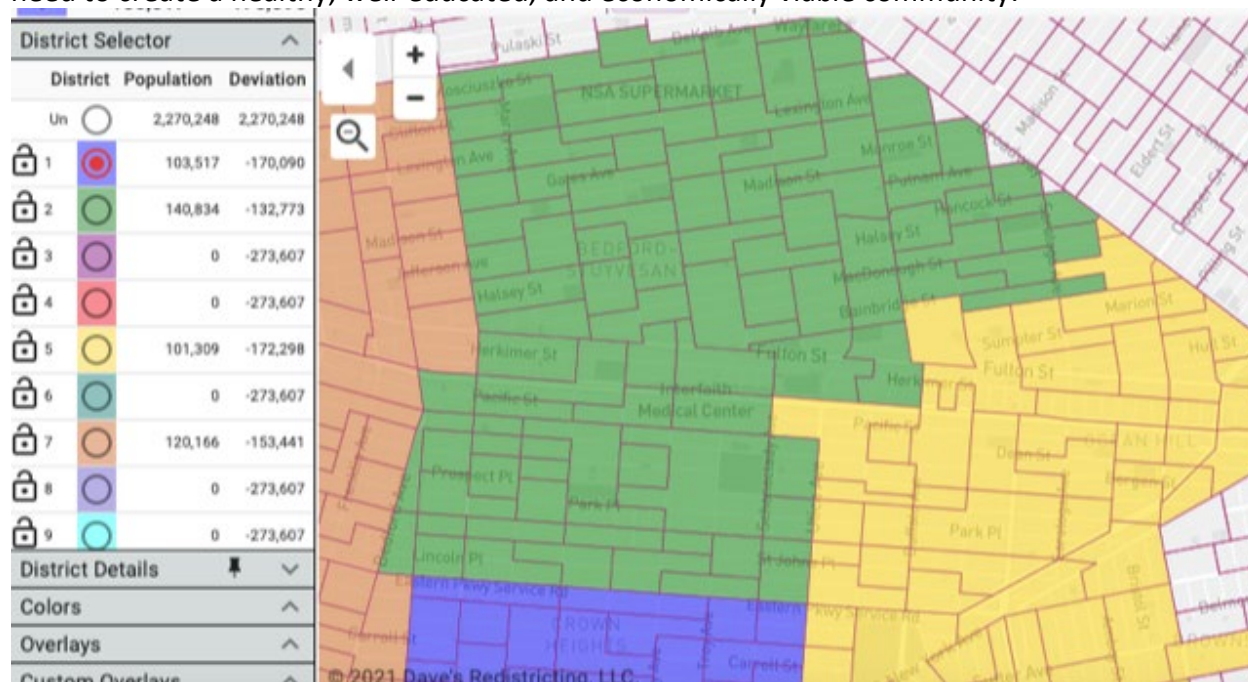
Testimony to Independent Redistricting Committee Sept. 15, 2021

I am Nizjoni Granville, and in September, I began serving as Third Vice Chair of Brooklyn Community Board 8. I have been a member of the Board since 1997.

For ten years, from 2009 to 2019, I served as Chairperson of CB8, an area that included Prospect Heights, North Crown Heights, and Weeksville, with a population of close to 100,000 residents. In 2019, the district lines that had been drawn in 2012 as the result of the 2010 Census, sliced up Community District 8 into three (3), arguably (4) Assembly Districts; two (2) State Senate Districts; and two (2) Congressional Districts. The fact that the Board and the residents it has worked hard to serve had to be heard by so many different elected officials in order to get the necessary action to resolve issues and concerns put our community at a distinct disadvantage.

As a community, Crown Heights North would like to remain intact without the past two decades of division. We want to be clustered with likeminded neighbors who are predominantly (58%) descendants of peoples of African descent who share a common heritage. Reducing the number of districts with regard to our Assembly and State Senate representation will allow us to live, work, and vote in a more cohesive environment.

I am clear that retention of the current district lines will only continue to accelerate our displacement by gentrification. The District Lines we desire will provide a compact and contiguous area populated largely by peoples who share a common heritage, needs, and interests. The new lines we propose will provide us with the voting unity and political power we need to create a healthy, well-educated, and economically viable community.



Testimony to Independent Redistricting Commission 9/15/21

I am Ethel Tyus, Board member and General Counsel to the Crown Heights North Association and I statement today on behalf of my Crown Heights North community in Central Brooklyn. The Crown Heights North Association, Inc. (CHNA) is a charitable organization founded in 2003 and dedicated to the preservation of historic buildings in the Crown Heights North section of Community District 8. CHNA is devoted to community revitalization, economic advancement, housing stabilization and cultural enrichment. CHNA is committed to working with elected representatives, government officials, Community Board 8, and various civic organizations to secure and maintain their support.

A major purpose of CHNA is to maintain an ongoing collaboration with community residents and business owners to stabilize and preserve the artfully designed and constructed buildings that are the architectural heritage of this Historic District, which is also listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Crown Heights North Association's encompassing mission is to highlight the esthetically valuable legacy of the many historic buildings concentrated in the neighborhood and to preserve the area's architectural heritage for posterity.

The Crown Heights North (CHN) community is comprised predominantly of peoples of African descent who share common histories, heritages, and nativities. The area is still comprised of distressed census tracts eligible for the State and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

Currently, CHN is fractured into multiple Assembly Districts, doglegged Senate Districts, and wrap-around Congressional Districts. We are seeking to consolidate our voting power to:

- improve our poorly supplied and barely funded schools,
- provide at least one hospital (preferably highly ranked) for the overall Community District,
- nurture business improvement districts, and
- manage the incursions of corporate real estate interests targeting the area for overdevelopment due to its rich supply of mass transit options by:
 - including many more deeply affordable housing units in any large developments, and
 - avoiding creating heat islands in an area where most residents cannot afford air conditioners.

The District lines we desire will provide a compact and contiguous area populated largely by peoples who share common heritages, needs, and interests. A proposed map is attached for your consideration. It is our hope that these lines will provide us more power to effectuate the basics for a healthy, well-educated, and economically viable community, and not remain targets for displacement by gentrification. Thank you for your attention to this request. I can be reached at 917 975-1775 or eetyus@gmail.com if you have questions.

[IRC 2021\AD56-CH Map 1.png](#)

September 15, 2021

Good Day Commissioners,

My name is Irsa Weatherspoon, a lifelong resident of Crown Heights and living in Crown Heights North (CHN) for last the 26 years. I am the Chairperson of Community Board 8 and a Board Director of Crown Heights North Association. I thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

For too long, we have witnessed the disfranchisement of communities of color that's been reflected in the lack of attention, services, funds and opportunities. Unfortunately, our community of CHN which is settled between Crown Heights South and Bedford Stuyvesant falls in that abyss of disfranchisement.

We are a working class community, whereby the majority of our residents are people of color that share the same family, educational, cultural and recreational values. People who have made their investment in this community and aspire to live a fruitful life, should be able to receive adequate services as well as have our needs met through adequate and fair representation of our elected officials.

CHN has been drawn and quartered. In the political landscape, we have 4 veins of representation that include 2 Congressional members, 2 State Senators, 2 City Council members and 4 Assembly members.

It is essential that CHN stays intact. We are seeking to acutely narrow the divide, so we can be the main thought and not the after thought, in receipt of whatever is leftover. This can be achieved by redrawing the lines of CHN for a more sustained and precise representation.

The request is that the CHN footprint be redrawn to reflect the boundaries as furnished in the accompanying map, so we may be afforded the full breadth of services and opportunities that only fair and adequate representation can provide.

Crown Heights Proposed Population - 140,834 (within the allowable 5% increase from the 134,675 population guideline)

Again, Commissioners thank you for your time.

Yours in Community,
Irsa Weatherspoon