

Independent Redistricting Commission
250 Broadway, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

Testimony from Assemblymember Robert Carroll Related to the 44th Assembly District in Brooklyn

My name is Robert Carroll, and I grew up on East 4th Street between Albemarle Road and Caton Avenue at the border of Kensington and Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn. I was elected to represent the 44th Assembly District in 2016 and assumed office on January 1st, 2017. I am testifying to speak out against the removal of large portions of Windsor Terrace and Kensington from the IRC map of the 44th Assembly District and the smaller but significant portions of Ditmas Park and Prospect Park South that were also removed from the IRC map of the 44th Assembly District. The 44th Assembly District IRC map should not have removed portions of those neighborhoods from the 44th Assembly District because they split communities of interest and make the district less contiguous and compact. The IRC map draws portions of Windsor Terrace and Kensington into the 51st AD, which contains the entirety of the thriving neighborhoods of Sunset Park and Red Hook and those neighborhoods historically dominate that district. Without drawing the portions of Kensington and Windsor Terrace back into the 44th AD, these neighborhoods will be a small after thought in the 51st AD divided from that district by the hundreds of acres of Green-Wood Cemetery. The inevitable result of the IRC map is that the few blocks of Windsor Terrace and Kensington attached to the vast bulk of Sunset Park and Red Hook will be underserved. I have attached a map that differs from the IRC map and the current lines of the 44th Assembly District; but I believe the attached map is a more appropriate district because it is more compact, contiguous and ensures that communities of interest are kept together and not split apart. The map attached also represents the historical contours of the 44th Assembly District.

The IRC was correct in expanding the portion of Park Slope that is within the 44th Assembly District. The 44th has included portions/majority of Park Slope for over 50 years. It makes sense to have the majority of Park Slope in one Assembly District and the 44th AD is the correct district to place that neighborhood.

The IRC was also correct in eliminating the portion of Prospect Heights from the 44th Assembly District. The portion of Prospect Heights that is currently within the 44th Assembly District was added in 2022, and is not in fact connected to any other portion of the district but instead was connected through the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Prospect Heights does not share the same communities of interest, nor is it contiguous to most of the district. Prospect Heights shares no Community Boards, School Districts, or other significant governmental or community links with

any of the other neighborhoods that have historically been within the confines of the 44th Assembly District.

Finally, the IRC was incorrect to include portions of Carroll Gardens and Gowanus in the 44th Assembly District. Those neighborhoods have historically been a part of the 52nd Assembly District and share much more in common with Cobble Hill, Boerum Hill, Downtown Brooklyn and Brooklyn Heights than they do with Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington, and Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park. A swap of Carroll Gardens and Gowanus for the portions of Windsor Terrace, Kensington and Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park which were removed by the IRC, would create a more appropriate district. See attached map.

Since 1992 the 44th Assembly District has included all of Windsor Terrace and Kensington and large portions of Park Slope, Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park (sometimes referred to as Victorian Flatbush). These neighborhoods are linked via transit, schools, houses of worship, and parks. Further, these neighborhoods have worked together to downzone their neighborhoods, save supermarkets (the Green Beans not Walgreens campaign), create institutions (Good Neighbors of Park Slope, Park Slope Food Coop, Prospect Park Track Club, the multiple Prospect Park Little Leagues, Park Slope Food Coop, Windsor Terrace/Kensington Food Coop, Albermarle Road Association, the Father's Guild, Council of People's Organization, People In Need, Pakistani-American Youth Society, Pakistani-American Youth Organization, and many more) build new religious institutions, rename sections of neighborhoods (Little Bangladesh and Little Pakistan) and support schools. These neighborhoods deserve to have cohesive representation in the State Assembly. For instance, the Council of People's Organization ("COPO") along with other South Asian nonprofits fed tens of thousands of hungry Kensington and Ditmas Park residents during the pandemic. Under the IRC map the offices of COPO at 1077 Coney Island Avenue would be cut out of the 44th Assembly District. The IRC map in-fact cuts out the most important block of the Pakistani American Community in Brooklyn from the rest of the Pakistani Community that lives directly south.

Below I highlight the transportation, school, and religious links between the communities of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington, and Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park.

The neighborhoods of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington, and Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park are connected via numerous public transportation links and major arterial roads. This creates tremendous movement between these neighborhoods for schools, religious ceremonies, shopping and recreation.

Major Transportation Links between the neighborhoods:

The F/G runs through the middle of Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope making stops at Ditmas Avenue, Church Avenue, 15th Street, 7th Avenue, and 4th Avenue. The IRC cuts western portions of Windsor Terrace and Kensington into the 51st Assembly District which is primarily served by the R and N Line. These residents would be at a disservice; thus the current lines of the 44th AD for the neighborhoods of Windsor Terrace and Kensington are more ideal than the IRC map. The map attached expands portions of Kensington (from what is included in the 2022 44th AD) to what has historically been within the 44th Assembly District.

The B/Q Subway runs through Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park making stops at Church Avenue, Beverly Road, Cortelyou Road, Newkirk Plaza and Avenue H. The B/Q subway also services the eastern half of Kensington, especially those individuals in Kensington that live between Ocean Parkway and Coney Island Avenue. The IRC map eliminates parts of Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park and parts of Southern Kensington that use these transportation links. These communities should be grouped together and the attached map links those communities best, but the current 44th Assembly District lines are also an improvement to the IRC map.

Other transit links between our neighborhoods:

B16 connects Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park to Kensington/Borough Park.

B35 connects Ditmas Park/Prospect Park South to Kensington, as well as to the F/G at Church Avenue and the B/Q at Church Ave.

B61 connects Park Slope and Windsor Terrace

B67 connects Kensington, Windsor Terrace and Park Slope

B68 connects Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace and Park Slope

B69 connects Kensington, Winsor Terrace and Park Slope

B103 connects Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park and Kensington

Major Roadways that connect our neighborhoods:

Coney Island Avenue acts as a main corridor running from Bartel-Pritchard Square (where the road is called Prospect Park Southwest) all the way South through the 44th Assembly District and finally terminating in Coney Island. The road links all the historically connected neighborhoods of the 44th Assembly District: Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington and Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park. This connects residents to shopping, religious institutions, and schools on 7th Avenue, Prospect Park West, Church Avenue, Cortelyou Road, Newkirk Plaza,

and the heart of little Pakistan - Coney Island Avenue between Foster Ave and Avenue H. The IRC map divides the 44th Assembly District at Foster Avenue, severing the Pakistani-American community and cutting key social key social service providers, Makki Mosque, and Brooklyn's premier Muslim funeral home into a district that is predominantly orthodox Jewish. To make that community whole the 44th should continue to Avenue H as is indicated on the attached map.

Ocean Parkway and the Prospect Expressway also acts as a main corridor connecting Kensington from Avenue H all the way to Park Slope. The IRC map cuts out parts of southern Kensington. The map attached makes that community whole.

Schools:

Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington, and Prospect Park South/Ditmas Park are connected via numerous schools. I will highlight those schools where the IRC map divides school communities. The IRC should also be aware that Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, and the northern portions of Kensington are all within District 15. The IRC's elimination of western portions of Windsor Terrace and Kensington dramatically weaken school communities and make no logical sense since they are all within District 15.

The current IRC map divides the school communities of PS 154, PS 130, and PS 230; as well as cuts the Bishop Ford Academic Center that houses K280 (one of the largest 3-K and Pre-K Centers in NYC) and two middle schools (BUGS and New Voices). These school communities are cut in half because the IRC map incorrectly uses the Prospect Expressway as a border and thus divides large portions of western Windsor Terrace and Kensington from their neighbors. Both the current 44th AD and the map attached make these communities whole.

The IRC map cuts out the southern portion of the 44th Assembly District below Foster Avenue. This divides the Pakistani American community and will greatly impact the PS 217 school community, as well as the larger Pakistani American Community. The current 44th Assembly District and the map attached makes this community whole and is an improvement over the IRC map.

Further, the elimination of parts of Prospect Park South, in the IRC map, splits that micro neighborhood in two. The section of Prospect Park South between Church Avenue and Albemarle Road from Coney Island Avenue to Buckingham should be in one district. This area has a very active neighborhood association and is served by PS 139 and PS 217. The IRC map divides this neighborhood; both the map attached and the current 44th Assembly District makes the neighborhood whole.

Religious Institutions:

The IRC splits in half the congregations of many religious communities

By cutting the western part of Windsor Terrace and the western part of Kensington, Holy Name of Jesus, Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the Flatbush Jewish Center are divided. The current 44th Assembly District lines and the map attached keep these religious communities whole.

In western Kensington the congregations of multiple Mosques are divided by the IRC map; including Masjid Nur Al-Islam, Baitul Jannah Zane Masjid, Darul Jannah Masjid, the Brooklyn Islamic Center, and the Bangladeshi Muslim Center. The Bangladeshi community recently came together to rename the corner of Church and McDonald – “Little Bangladesh” the current Assembly District and the map attached keeps these religious communities whole while the IRC map divides them. The Bangladeshi community deserves to be kept whole.

In southern Kensington and Ditmas Park, the IRC map cuts out some of the most important Pakistani-American social service providers like COPO, as well as a mosque and funeral home that are integral to that community by drawing the 44th border at Foster Avenue instead of Avenue H. The current Assembly District Lines and the map attached are an improvement on the IRC lines because they do not divide the Pakistani-American community.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns. As someone who has lived in Kensington, Windsor Terrace and Park Slope my entire life, making sure that our community institutions, schools, houses of worship, and businesses have representation in the state Assembly is especially important to me. The map attached links all of these communities of interest and is an improvement on both the IRC map and the current Assembly District map.

Proposed 44th AD Map

