



**New York State Independent Redistricting Commission
Queens County Public Hearing**

**York College (CUNY)
94-20 Guy R Brewer Boulevard, Jamaica, NY 11451**

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Written Testimony

Good Afternoon Commissioners,

My name is Olivia Valwaa. I am a resident of South Ozone Park and a member of [Caribbean Equality Project](http://CaribbeanEqualityProject.org), a community-based organization in South Queens that empowers, advocates for, and represents Afro and Indo-Caribbean LGBTQ+ immigrants in New York City. We are a proud member of the APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force.

As an immigrant from Guyana, an Indo-Caribbean trans woman, and an asylum seeker, Little Guyana has been my home for the past 4 years. As a renter, access to affordable housing has become an increasing challenge for many low-income community members. I have witnessed how COVID-19 ravished my South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities due to a lack of resources.

I support the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission's draft map, AD 24, for Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park. I applaud the commissioners for listening to my neighbors, faith leaders, and community members whose collective voices are finally being heard. In 2020 and 2021, the South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities came out in record numbers to testify virtually and in person to advocate for justice for Richmond Hill through redistricting. I stand before you as an immigrant who will directly benefit from the resources my politically marginalized community of interest will achieve in the next 10 years, including housing relief and policies that center rent stabilization and prevention of landlord abuse, illegal threats of eviction, and tenant harassment.

Today, I am calling on the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission to vote on approving AD 24 because we deserve to be kept whole and protected under the Voting Rights Act.

Thank you for hearing our collective voices by drafting an equitable map that unites Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park into a single New York State Assembly District.

Sincerely,

Olivia Valwaa
Community Member
Caribbean Equality Project

APAVOICE Redistricting Task Force Map

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**SAME AS IRC
DRAFT AD 24**

Queens – Richmond Hill & South Ozone Park

IRC Draft Map Voting Age Population	Black	Hispanic	Asian	White	Native	Pacific
	20,696 19.1%	29,360 27.2%	37,528 34.7%	8,272 7.7%	5,752 5.3%	1,031 1.0%