

**NORTHERN MANHATTAN IMPROVEMENT
CORPORATION
(NMIC)**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY to the
NYS Independent Redistricting Commission

SUBMITTED BY:
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Greetings. My name is Maria Lizardo, and I am the Executive Director at Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (hereafter, "NMIC"). On behalf of NMIC, we thank you for allowing us this opportunity to submit testimony.

NMIC is a community-based settlement house founded in 1979. We currently have three physical locations including 2183 Amsterdam Avenue NYC 10033 and 45 Wadsworth Avenue, NYC 10033 in Manhattan (State Senate District 31, Assembly District 72, and Congressional District 13) and 8 Clinton Place Bronx, NY 10453 in the Bronx (State Senate District 33, Assembly District 86 and Congressional District 15). NMIC has grown into a leading multi-service agency with a staff of over 150 employees, primarily serving community members residing in Upper Manhattan and the West Bronx. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of the people in our community on their paths to secure and prosperous futures. Our legal, organizing, and advocacy services include immigration legal services, housing court representation/eviction prevention, counseling for immigrant communities and mental health support services. Our education and career services provide the community with the additional tools necessary to build secure and prosperous futures. We also offer weatherization services to improve the housing stock throughout Upper Manhattan. Community members receiving our services are also able to connect with our Connections to Care mental health services if the need arises. NMIC does not charge any fees for services and serves low income and immigrant persons and families.

Since 1979, NMIC has been providing key social services to a primarily Latinx community with 78% of our clients being Hispanic and 64% are Spanish speakers with 92% of them residing in Manhattan and the Bronx. These stats are reflective of the current community and the current redistricting maps being proposed will divide the community and distill the political power that this community has been building. As we look at our communities, we see the need to preserve a community of interest that is reflective of the community members that reside there. We acknowledge the importance of building political power for groups that have traditionally been marginalized and not represented in the political process. Redistricting that results in cracking, leads to a reduction of voting power for a certain community or party, and in this case, the Latinx community. Reducing the influence of the Latinx community in portions of Upper Manhattan and the West Bronx, decreases their opportunity for appropriate representation in all levels of government. Redistricting needs to take into consideration the contributions made

thus far and looks to expand these contributions in the future. I am including a proposed map that is more reflective of the community and how the district should look if we want to solidify the Latinx community and its access to representation and political power.

Latinx individuals represent nearly 1 in 5 New Yorkers, yet lack meaningful representation across the state of New York in congressional and legislative bodies, drawing these lines must ensure that the Latinx community is rightfully accounted for to ensure access to candidates of choice that represent their community's interests and needs.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

