

My name is Danielle Brecker, I live in the Dutch Kills neighborhood in Long Island City, Queens — Congressional District 12, State Senate District 12, and Assembly District 37.

I am a co-lead organizer of Empire State Indivisible. We see redistricting as an opportunity to enfranchise and engage more New Yorkers, especially those who have long been disenfranchised by gerrymandering.

When I testified to this commission in July, before the preliminary maps were released, I said, “redistricting should be fair, not politically driven; have the goal of enabling as much representation for as many people as possible; keep neighborhoods and communities together; and lead to more voter enfranchisement.”

At the time, I believed my testimony and the testimony of so many of my neighbors would be heard and incorporated in the maps to come and I hope that that can still be the case. But I have grave concerns about the two sets of maps proposed.

Initially I thought having two sets of maps was a good way to stimulate discourse, make changes together, and get to consensus. But after reviewing both sets of maps, they are both highly problematic and seemingly politically motivated. It feels as if the testimony of so many New Yorkers was totally disregarded.

My overarching concerns are that both set of maps, do not fix existing gerrymandering — instead it is ignored or made worse; neighborhoods and communities of interest are split — in some cases more so than currently; districts cut cross multiple boroughs or counties in no logical way; and certain incumbents are protected or hurt — even when it doesn't make sense based on census data target certain.

I will include specific examples with my testimony on Wednesday.