My name is Leon Goldenberg. I sit on numerous community and national organizations including Agudath Israel of America, COJO of Flatbush, and the Flatbush Jewish Community Council. The Orthodox community has been, for the last 20 years, disenfranchised. We have been packed and we have been cracked. We are packed in Borough Park where we hold 1 seat each in the City Council, State Assembly and State Senate. We are 400,000 strong in Brooklyn with another 100,000 – 150,000 in Queens. We have been chopped where we have no more than 13-15% in any one district outside of those three.

We are entitled to better representation as we are a community of interest which, and I don’t believe I have to explain to anyone on this commission, has specific needs. We need shuls, kosher food, schools all nearby and therefore, we live together. What we are looking for is critical mass in the Assembly, State Senate and in the US Congress where our concerns are heard and acting upon and not where we are spoken to nicely and then simply disregarded.

We have an extremely large community in need. We do support our own but we do need government help. This will only come with proper representation in the Federal, State and City government, where the issues that we care about so much are properly heard in the places like Albany, City Hall, US Congress. A place where they can hear us and appreciate that we are a minority community, discriminated against and unjustifiably hated by many as we make up 60% of all hate crimes in the entire United States even though we make up only 2% of the population and sadly, most of the hate crimes are targeted to the Orthodox community.

Thank you for your time.