**Testimony Presented Before the Independent Redistricting Commission February 15, 2023 Public Hearing at Medgar Evers College**

**Presented by Jennifer Faucher**

 **jenniferfaucher@aol.com**

My name is **Jennifer Faucher.** I am the District Leader and State Committeewoman for the 41st Assembly District. I am also a Member of Brooklyn Community Board 15.

I want to thank the Commission for providing me with this opportunity to talk to you about the 41st Assembly District.

I have lived in the Sheepshead Bay area for 50 years. Over those decades I have seen population growth and development. As District Leader I have many opportunities to attend events which are in recognition of several ethnic groups. This has allowed our community to grow in knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity to each other’s needs.

Although we are part of the great borough of Brooklyn within New York City, to many we are seen as a bedroom community. Many parts of the 41st Assembly District are not in walking distance to a subway station. Public transportation is challenging, but we push forward because of the attachment many have for the Community. Our civic and other organizations reflect the diversity within the 41st Assembly District. The Sheepshead Bay Y is a magnet that attracts many in the neighborhood to its activities and social events. The churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship are gathering places. It is for these reasons and more that residents continue to live in the 41st Assembly District for generations. Census figures released in 2022 show that an overwhelming percentage of the population in the 41st A.D. migrated in prior to 2016. Here is the data.

*Year Moved In by percentage of population:*

14% Before 1990

16% 1990 – 1999

25% 2000 – 2009

19% 2010 – 2014

21% 2015 – 2016

05% since 2017

Some of the Religious and ethnic groups encompassing our great District are: Orthodox, Hasidic, Sephardic and Secular Jews, Catholics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Muslims, Caribbean, African American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern North African (MENA), Asian, Turkish, Pakistani, Ukrainian, Russian, Belarusian, Italian, Irish and Others. If you walk our streets, you will find restaurants and grocery stores with the cuisine of these ethnic groups. Each bring their cultural value to our community.

The 41st A.D. also has a significant number of Senior Citizens and Retirees on fixed incomes. According to the census figures released in 2022, 16% of Seniors 65 and over live below the poverty level. Many are dependent on resources provided by the 41st A.D. As a community, we come together to sponsor food distributions, senior rate Metro Cards, tenant assistance and information coordinated through a tenant advocacy organization, with ties to the 41st A.D. There are senior centers and nursing homes that are currently within the 41st A.D. that will be tossed out, if this sweeping and senseless draft map goes into effect.

The 41st A.D. is a balance between private family homes and multi-unit.

55% are owner occupied and 69% are multi-unit, according to latest census data.

We are not a wealthy Assembly District. We are a district where the per capita income is $35,381, as reflected in the latest census figures. We are a district of middle class working families, retirees, union members, veterans and others. All have come together to form a community of interest.

**The Impact of Proposed Draft Map**

Just looking at the draft map, many are outraged. First because last year, new lines were drawn and implemented. As a result, polling sites were changed, election districts were changed and some were already moved to new Senate, Congressional and Assembly Districts. There was much confusion. This draft map is sparking much more than confusion. Constituents are outraged! The new lines drawn on this first draft map of the 41st A.D. are glaring. The surgical removal of huge neighborhoods and housing developments currently within the 41st A.D. would disenfranchise constituents. For example, our two NYCHA complexes, Nostrand Houses and Sheepshead Bay Houses are cut out of the district, but none of the surrounding resources are. The 41st Assembly district office, across the street, would no longer be their official resource. Instead, NYCHA residents would have to go to a district office a mile or more away. Many NYCHA tenants do not have cars. Many are Seniors and some have disabilities. It should also be noted that many are people of color. There are several other multi-unit complexes that would be similarly impacted throughout the 41st A.D. These lines were gerrymandered in a manner that weaves in and out of streets, cutting out certain housing developments using waterways and salt to connect new additions from other districts and leaving current residents isolated from their surrounding communities. The laws and regulations enacted states that: “Districts must consist of contiguous territory and shall be as compact in form as practicable.”

The 41st A.D. Map that is currently in place does meet those criteria.

The ballot access process is another area that brings the current 41st A.D. together. Our poll workers, many are Seniors on fixed incomes play a large part in Election Day operations in the district. At the same time, they are able to supplement their income to make ends meet. Several poll workers are also active in the community, as part of our community of interest.

Finally, I would be remiss, if I didn’t talk to you about the late Lew Fidler. He was a Former City Councilman, State Committeeman and District Leader of the 41st Assembly District. During his tenure, he made numerous contributions to the 41st Assembly District with his charitable acts of kindness. He made a difference in the lives of many in the community and brought people together as a result. His efforts continue to serve the 41st A.D. by way of the Lew Fidler Park that he fought for over a decade. The much-needed park and playground were finally completed and dedicated in his memory at the foot of Brigham Street and Emmons Avenue in October 2021. This special place within the 41st A.D. would also be removed if this draft map is enacted.

I urge the Commission to take the points made in my testimony into serious consideration before drawing final lines for the 41st Assembly District, which could do more harm than good. Please take this request from those who have boots on the ground.

The residents who are presently in the 41st A.D. are content with the lines as they were drawn last year. If it is not broken don’t fix it.