**PLEASE KEEP ASSEMBLY MAP “AL” ATTACHED WHICH UNITES RICHMOND HILL, OZONE PARK & SOUTH OZONE PARK AS A COMMUNITY OF INTEREST**

**Map “AL” complies with the NYS, US Constitutions, Voting Rights Act, justice and fairness**

Most Honorable Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

I am Reena Prashad, a public-school teacher with extensive hands-on research and dedication to children and families in fragile communities of the City of New York. I have also taught the City’s forgotten adolescent population located in the facility of Riker’s Island correctional compound. Moreover, I have served on the New York State Education Department’s student equity exam board in addition to the NYS teacher certification exam committee.

Children and adolescents are the faces of tomorrow. But, despite those fundaments, the absence of our schools being united in a common school district in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and South Ozone Park, has caused them to exponentially lose out on a consensus curriculum of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), have access to common strategy, and greatly, the absence of teachers who both connect and understand the intricacy of heritage culture, their diversity, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, funding is being disseminated to other more prosperous communities that surround these communities, like Howard Beach and Glendale.

Thank you for agreeing on the bipartisan, consensus Assembly District for AD, Map “AL.” This is historic! For the first time, these diverse communities with so much more in common that they are united more than divided, will have a seat at the table. Our pleas and voices were ignored at the City Council, State Senate and Congressional levels. However, with your grace, we can finally have a voice in the State Assembly.

Beyond the fact that both Republicans and Democrats on this Commission agree on this map, you will have done the correct and right thing by the people of this community and as the words of our 40th President, Ronald Reagan, who believed and practiced leadership amongst people, “The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things; he is the one who gets the people to do the greatest things.” In light of this, this magnificent and unprecedented map complies with the recently released census numbers, which confirms a considerable increase in our numbers of South Asians and Indo-Caribbeans residing in Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park and Ozone Park. In Queens, our Asian population grew 29%, to nearly 706,000 out of 2.4 million residents, far outpacing the borough’s overall 7.8% population growth:

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2021/8/12/22622709/nyc-asian-surging-population-electoral-power>

Previously, we were sliced and diced into 7, then chopped to 4 different Assembly districts, as per attached map, making it difficult for our communities to coalesce around a representative focused on our priorities or receive services responsive to our medical, educational, vocational, economic, ethnic, religious, historical, racial, cultural, language, customs, dietary and/or other needs, as the last COVID-19 pandemic, during which we had the highest infection rates, painfully demonstrated:

<https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/covid-rates-soaring-in-south-queens/article_ce446f19-f242-5095-a7a1-5b3a321eba21.html>

Our growing numbers justify and mandate that you swiftly approve and pass this State Assembly district for the benefit of this entire, hardworking, law abiding, essential workers and tax paying community.

America’s founding fathers believed in the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is here that this council uphold this promise of The American Dream to all communities of people, this includes us. We have no voice, public office or representative located here to serve us, and any other decision by your respected Commission will not only further the dilution and suppression of our voices, progress, assimilation, issues and problems, but will also abrogate your duties and responsibilities, while annihilating our rights, entitlements and needs.

Consequently, in accordance with justice, the Voting Rights Act and the NY and US Constitutions, and because these districts share common established ties of common interest and association, that it is only right that you keep our neighborhoods and communities intact- as a whole, as is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Reena Prashad