

May 4, 2022

Honorable Patrick McAllister
Acting Supreme Court Justice
Steuben County Supreme & County Court
3 East Pulteney Square
Bath, New York 14810

Special Master Jonathan Cervas
Institute for Politics and Strategy
Carnegie Mellon University
Posner Hall 386
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Dear Judge McAllister and Special Master Cervas:

We write to you to respectfully request that you consider our attached testimony regarding New York's 8th Congressional District as you undertake the process of drawing new maps.

As you know, the New York Independent Redistricting Commission held in-person and virtual meetings throughout the state to hear from New Yorkers on how they should draw their maps. Over a period of six months, the Commission held 24 meetings spanning over 40 hours of testimony in 10 different regions of New York state including one in each borough of New York City. The Commission also accepted hundreds of pages of written testimony from those who could not attend meetings. During this process, everyday New Yorkers, concerned citizens, community groups and other interested parties advocated for their neighborhoods to ensure the maps for the next decade would authentically reflect the needs of their communities. We were among this group of concerned citizens who participated in this process to ensure our concerns were acted upon.

We all testified to the importance of keeping the current communities encompassing New York's 8th Congressional District intact in any new map. The 8th Congressional District links the predominantly Black neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill to Bedford-Stuyvesant and then takes in the Black working-class neighborhoods of Ocean Hill, Brownsville, East New York and Canarsie. It then follows the Jamaica Bay coastline picking up the neighborhoods of Bergen Beach, Mill Basin and over to Coney Island. As our attached testimony will show, these neighborhoods are all connected by a number of shared communities of interest from commercial corridors, to police precincts, to transportation hubs, to public housing, to climate

change resiliency and more. Keeping these neighborhoods connected will allow us to effectively advocate for our common needs at the local, state and federal level.

To our knowledge, you are new and largely unfamiliar with the New York City electoral landscape and therefore must be made aware of several historical facts as you begin this endeavor. Kings County has a long history of white machine politicians drawing electoral districts designed to divide the Black community and keep power for themselves. (In fact, until 2013 when the Supreme Court defanged the *Voting Rights Act*, Kings County was subject to the Section 5 preclearance provision.) For decades, despite a large Black population in Kings County, Black New Yorkers were kept from political power through racial gerrymandering. Things have improved, but we still have a long way to go. The current 8th Congressional District, aptly nicknamed “the Chisholm District” after the legendary Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, owes its existence to hard-fought victories in Court and the blood, sweat and tears of a generation of civil rights activists. In its current form it is one of two Black-majority *Voting Rights Act*-protected seats in Kings County. In addition, the Coney Island portion of the 8th Congressional District was a long-sought goal of civil rights groups, who in 2012 finally achieved connecting the public housing developments located on Coney Island with those located throughout Central Brooklyn, giving a voice to a long-neglected part of the city.

The initial draft maps (the “Names” and “Letters” maps) created by the Commission in 2021 were not acceptable. We took that as our call to action, posting flyers on community bulletin boards and posting on social media, gathering in church basements and gathering online. Together, we developed a guiding set of principles for how the 8th Congressional District should be drawn and made a plan to get that in front of the Commission. We went to multiple public meetings and submitted reams of testimony. In the end, we were heartened to see that the Commission found our testimony persuasive as the maps created by both Democratic and Republican commissioners (as well as the state legislature) incorporated many of the changes to the 8th Congressional District we recommended.¹ That allowed us, as “regular” citizens, to know that our testimony had made a difference not only to the Commissioners but to all our neighbors who will have better and more just representation for the next decade.

We respectfully ask that you listen to us as well.

New York City Councilmember Crystal Hudson, 35th Council District

¹ However, unlike every other map submitted on the communities of interest of New York's 8th Congressional District including maps submitted by Common Cause New York, The Empire Center, the Unity Map Coalition, and others, the map submitted by the Republican-appointed Commissioners seems to have intentionally drawn the residence of Hakeem Jeffries, our longtime Representative, out of the district by one block, in an apparent act of partisan aggression. This type of blatant partisanship has no place in the redistricting process.

Al Vann, Former New York City Councilmember, 36th District. Former New York State Assemblymember, 56th District.

Walter T. Mosley, Former Assemblymember, 57th District.

Pam Lockley, President, Linden Plaza Tenants Association, East New York

Pervez Siddiqui, Community Board 13 Member, NY-08 Pakistani Community Leader

Nancy Pascal, Civic Leader, Fort Greene Resident

Nadine Dabney, Civic Leader, Coney Island

Roger Gendron, President, New Hamilton Beach Civic Association, Howard Beach

Dr. Claudia V. Schrader, Kingsborough Community College

Chaplain Gil Cygler, Jewish Community Leader, Bergen Beach

Joanne Weiss, Former Community Board 13 Chair, Coney Island

Lucina Clarke, Civic Leader, Canarsie

Cynthia McKnight, President of Community Education, Council District 13

Dr. Kim Best, 79th Precinct Community Council President, Bedford-Stuyvesant

Dionne Brown-Jordan, District Leader, 46th Assembly District

Marilyn Mosley, Civic Leader, Fort Greene-Clinton Hill

Topic: Redistricting Host: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission

Date: Thursday, July 29, 2021

Time: 2pm Location: Virtual

My name is Crystal Hudson, and I am the Democratic nominee for New York City Council's 35th District, which encompasses the neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. I would like to thank the Independent Redistricting Commission and Chair David Imamura for holding this public hearing and for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

I am a third-generation Brooklynite and the daughter and granddaughter of Jamaican and Honduran immigrants. My mother served as a nurse for more than 30 years at Harlem Hospital and raised me in the same Prospect Heights community her father laid roots in when he brought her from Honduras, by way of Jamaica. I now live in the home my mother worked hard to buy many years ago, and I have now planted roots of my own right here in Central Brooklyn.

My story is not unique. The 35th District is home to many folks like me from various backgrounds – from multi-generational Caribbean immigrant families and the Lubavitch community in Crown Heights to long-time Black American families in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill – who have deep ties to these communities. Many of these residents live at the five NYCHA developments in the district: Atlantic Terminal, Lafayette Gardens, Ingersoll Houses, Farragut Houses, and Walt Whitman Houses — the last three of which used to be one development called Fort Greene Houses. These developments serve as much of the cultural fabric of the 35th District. In the advent of mutual aid during the global COVID-19 pandemic, they are now spaces where folks from diverse backgrounds join together in community, serving the community, and connecting so many people from across the 35th district.

These folks are the reason the 35th District is so special. They're also the Black retail owners and restaurateurs who set up shop along Fulton Street, Washington Avenue, Nostrand Avenue and more; the families that come out every year to the West Indian Day Parade along Eastern Parkway; and the ones who come out in droves each year to the Brooklyn Academy of Music to enjoy Dance Africa. Our district is also home to newer, white Brooklynites who want to plant roots in a diverse community and contribute to its growth and prosperity. Diversity and history – in particular Black history and culture – is what makes the 35th District so unique.

While the bulk of the Councilmanic district lies in the 43rd and 57th Assembly districts and the 20th and 25th Senatorial districts, it also spans across parts of five community districts (CDs 2, 3, 6, 8, 9), five Assembly districts (ADs 43, 50, 52, 56, 57), three state senate districts (SD 20, 21, 25), and two congressional districts (NY-8, NY-9). At its core, however, are the historically Black neighborhoods of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and

Bedford-Stuyvesant. In fact, the entirety of District 35 was once predominantly Black. But over the past two decades, gentrification has overwhelmed our district. With an influx of new homeowners who purchase brownstones from Black and brown families who can no longer afford the costs associated with increased property taxes, overall maintenance and upkeep of owning historic homes, and simply living in the neighborhood, we have seen longtime residents pushed out. New residential developments have also gone up throughout the district, with taller buildings replacing older brownstones or commercial property and providing housing options for wealthier residents – as our district’s affordable housing options remain woefully inadequate. As a result, we have more people moving into our district who are typically whiter and wealthier while we have seen longtime residents of color forced out of their homes. And with one of the highest eviction rates in Brooklyn – at 92.4 per 10,000 residents in Crown Heights South compared to 5 per 10,000 in Park Slope/Gowanus – we have quite literally seen folks forced out of the very neighborhoods they were raised in, set roots in, raised their own families in, and started businesses in.

As the commission considers new boundaries for legislative districts, I urge you to prioritize diversity and ensure Central Brooklyn retains its unique characteristic as home to a myriad of Brooklynites from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds as it has for generations. The Councilmanic district has been home to the Chabad headquarters since 1940 and the West Indian American Day Parade since the 1930s. Our community is centered around numerous iconic community and cultural destinations – from Fort Greene Park in Fort Greene to the Brooklyn Museum in Prospect Heights to Medgar Evers College in Crown Heights. These hubs serve the numerous communities I will represent, and provide unique community services from recreation to culture to education. I urge you to ensure the 35th Council District and its related Assembly and Senate districts retain the diversity and community hubs that our residents pride themselves on

Walter T. Mosley

Thank you for providing me with the time to offer my perspective on the decennial redistricting process. My name is Walter T. Mosley and I served as the Assemblyman for the 57th District of New York. My district consisted of the Brooklyn communities of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill and parts of Prospect Heights and Bedford Stuyvesant. The goal of the redistricting process is to ensure that we have political maps that amplify the voice of every community and authentically reflect the needs of our people. To accomplish this, communities must be bound together in accordance with their shared interests. Today, I would like to talk about the communities of the New York 8th (NY-08) congressional district that I had the privilege of representing in several different capacities over the course of my career. For decades, the predominantly African-American neighborhoods of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill have been linked together as one "community of interest" within what is currently the 8th congressional district. They are served by the same community board, the same police precincts, the same school district, the same bus and subway lines, the same firehouses and the same central commercial corridors on Fulton Street and Myrtle Avenue. The civic, professional, spiritual and commercial life in these communities revolves around these shared institutions, transportation hubs and commercial centers.

This "community of interest" is also deeply connected with the historically African-American community of Bedford-Stuyvesant. These three neighborhoods are all linked by Fulton Street, the center for commerce in the community. The people in these communities' access downtown Brooklyn, the transportation hub of the Barclays Center and Manhattan through the A and C subway lines. School District 13 includes the neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant. It is evident that these communities are inextricably tied together.

The district also encompasses Ocean-Hill Brownsville, East New York and Canarsie in south east Brooklyn. These are also predominantly working-class Black neighborhoods, traditionally protected by the Voting Rights Act. They continue to have shared needs such as access to the same bus and subway lines and other public services such as fire departments and hospitals. In addition, all of these neighborhoods share two of the primary issues that currently face working class families across Brooklyn: access to well maintained and affordable housing and public safety concerns related to policing and rising gun violence. As "communities of interest," these six neighborhoods have benefited from existing within the same congressional district for approximately five decades. Falling in the same congressional district enhances their efficacy and allows their shared priorities to be communicated to elected officials and for those officials to effectively advocate to meet those common needs at the local, state and federal level. Preserving this connectivity would not only fulfill the legal objective of preserving "communities of interest" and continuity of representation, but also provide these neighborhoods with the leverage they need to continue to address historic inequities, close the wealth gap and grow their economic base.

The 8th district also includes the southern coast of Brooklyn, including Mill Basin, Brighton

Beach and Coney Island. These neighborhoods contain significant concentrations of public housing in Brooklyn and will continue to benefit from remaining within the current lines of the 8th district along with other communities of interest where the issue of underfunded public housing is such a critical need. The 8th district contains one of the largest concentrations of public housing in the country, and NYCHA developments have a long and unfortunate history of being underfunded and neglected by officials that do not represent these families in their communities. The residents of these developments should remain within the current 8th congressional district as one unified community of interest in order to have efficacy and a seat at the table. There is currently legislation pending in the Congress that could potentially provide significant funding to NYCHA to address the backlog of maintenance in public housing developments. It is now more critical than ever that this community remains together and the voices of these constituents are heard in the most effective way possible. Maintaining the current lines of the NY-08 from Fort Greene to Coney Island is the best way to achieve this result.

Finally, as you go through the process of making a final recommendation, I exhort this commission to make sure you are listening to the voices of the community, including local organizations and faith leaders as well as educators and activists. These are the people doing the work, day-in and day-out to nurture and grow our communities. Their judgment is sound, their intentions are righteous, their motivations are true. If you listen to these voices, they will tell you what should already be readily apparent: the neighborhoods of the NY-08 must remain intact and in a similar configuration to the current lines.

Dr. Al Vann

I stand before you today to offer my perspective on the decennial redistricting process and the community of Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn. The primary goal of redistricting must be to draw maps that authentically reflect the communities that shape our state and the shared priorities that bind them together. Here in New York, redistricting must be a comprehensive process that yields accurate representation for our people and empowers New Yorkers to reach their maximum potential and thrive in their communities. It is a process that should bring to life the notion of representative democracy in the 21st century.

Today, I would like to talk about the communities of the New York 8th (NY-08) congressional district. This is where I was born. It is where I grew up. It is where I had the honor of serving as an Assemblyman and then a member of the City Council. It is where I have pursued my career as an educator and helped found a community college. I've been empowered by this community throughout my entire life and care deeply that the hard-working people in this district have every chance to thrive. To that end, the 8th district is bound together with adjacent neighborhoods that share both communal interests and public services. We are served by the same community board, police precincts, school district, bus and subway lines, firehouses and the same central commercial corridors on Fulton Street and Myrtle Avenue. This district is my home, and it is critically important that my fellow community members are empowered by the redistricting process so that we can continue to benefit from leadership that will best embody and serve the community for years to come.

The current lines of the NY-08 congressional district accomplish this goal. My home, the primarily African-American community of Bedford-Stuyvesant, is part of this district along with the communities of Fort Greene and Prospect Heights. These three neighborhoods are all connected by the commercial corridor along Fulton Street and the same mass transportation systems along the A and C lines. School District 13 includes the neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights and parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant. These are predominantly Black neighborhoods that are protected under the Voting Rights Act. When I served as the Chair of the New York State Black and Puerto Rican Caucus in the Assembly, we challenged the reapportionment process successfully and created this VRA protected congressional seat in Brooklyn. So, I understand the significance of protecting this district and preserving the communities of the 8th congressional district.

Bedford-Stuyvesant, Fort Greene and Prospect Heights are working class, blue-collar communities that share modes of transportation, public services and issues with respect to affordable housing and public safety concerns such as rising gun violence. As "communities of interest," these neighborhoods have benefited from existing within the same congressional district for approximately five decades. They should remain together during the redistricting process. Preserving this connectivity would fulfill the legal objective of preserving "communities of interest" and the continuity of representation.

The current lines of the 8th district also include East New York, Canarsie and the southern coast of Brooklyn, including Coney Island. The working-class New Yorkers in these neighborhoods face the same issues regarding housing, schools, transportation and public safety that the rest of the NY-08 communities are confronting on a daily basis. Additionally, the 8th district represents one of the largest collections of public housing developments contained in a single congressional district. By keeping these developments in a single congressional district, the voices of our people are amplified and their constitutional rights are protected. The current lines of the 8th district give these residents a voice, and new lines that exclude any of these neighborhoods from the 8th district would weaken and dilute that voice and hurt our community.

Finally, it is essential for the proposed map to take into consideration the expressed concerns of the people of Bedford-Stuyvesant, including myself and others. The people of central Brooklyn are optimistic by nature, trained to "make a way out of no way." They require a democratic process that rewards that optimism and perseverance. To fulfill this promise, the neighborhoods of the 8th congressional district must remain intact.

Keeping our community together will allow each individual to maximize their voice in our democracy and elect leaders whose values are consistent with that voice. For the reasons set forth above, I strongly urge the commission to keep the communities of the NY-08 together in a similar configuration to the current lines. I'm grateful for the opportunity to submit my input this critical topic. Thank you.

Joanne Weiss Testimony

As a lifelong resident (79 years) of Coney Island, I have seen many politicians, both good and bad, come and go. All of them have left their mark on this community.

Hakeem Jeffries, our current Congressman from the 8th Congressional District has become a real friend to the residents he serves. Since his election in 2013, he has served the constituents of his District well as a tireless advocate for social and economic justice. His District which covers parts of Brooklyn and a section of Queens, is large and very diverse and he works well with all of them. Working class New Yorkers, like those who reside in our community, face the same issues of housing, schools, transportation and public safety that the rest of NY-8 communities are confronting daily.

Additionally, this community of interest faces the unique reality of being a coastal community confronting issues of climate change and public transportation challenges. This coastal section of the district should be kept intact to lift up these issues with the urgency that the community deserves.

Hakeem works hard for the people who are still feeling the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, to improve the economy, bring back the "middle class" and protect our health care for everyone from the youngest to the oldest, not only in his district, but for the country.

He works hard when he's in Washington, while keeping in close contact with his constituents. He invites and welcomes them to his "State of the District Address" in January, and during the Summer he greets his constituents in person outdoors at "Congressman on the Corner".

In this time of change, he is the one constant our community needs. He is looked up to by all who meet him. He is a trusted public servant and someone who makes his constituents feel comfortable and secure.

We need Congressman Jeffries to remain as our representative in the 8th Congressional District.

Members of the Commission

My name is Lucina Clarke and I am a resident of Canarsie since 1996. Canarsie is a very diverse and unique community that embraces many cultures and nationalities of people. We are a community that thrives for excellence in service and commitment from our Congressional representative.

The primary goal of redistricting must be to draw maps that authentically reflect the communities that shape our state. Binding communities together allows each individual to maximize their voice in our democracy and elect leaders whose values are consistent with that voice. Today, I would like to talk about the communities of the New York 8th (NY-08) congressional district especially Canarsie where my mother, my husband, and I reside and raise our children and grandchildren. I am an immigrant and proud to live in a community that is united, accepting and embraces other cultures and nationalities.

We are a group of voting people who are concerned about our neighborhoods and Canarsie is my home and is a place that I want to see improved however not by taking away what is important to us as a community.

Canarsie is in south east Brooklyn and part of the New York 8th (NY-08) congressional district. Once again, we are, as well one of the predominantly Black neighborhoods, protected by the Voting Rights Act. But equally important, we are a working class, blue-collar community that share modes of transportation, public services and issues with respect to affordable housing and public safety concerns such as rising gun violence. As “communities of interest,” our neighborhood within the NY-08th congressional District have benefited from existing within the same congressional district for approximately five decades. They should remain together. Preserving this connectivity would fulfill the legal objective of preserving “communities of interest” and continuity of representation. Canarsie faces the unique reality of a coastal community confronting issues of climate change and public transportation challenges. This coastal section of the district should be kept intact to lift up these issues with the fierce urgency that the community deserves.

Finally, it is essential for the proposed map to take into consideration the expressed concerns presented by prominent clergy members, civic leaders, community activists and service providers from Canarsie and the surrounding communities on the map. These stakeholders, the shared needs of their members and constituents and their shared values will undoubtedly lend powerful credence to what should be readily apparent: the neighborhoods of the NY-08 must remain intact.

For the reasons set forth above, I strongly urge the commission to keep the communities of the NY-08 together in a similar configuration to the current lines.

Pervez Siddiqui

It is my understanding that one of the results of the 2020 census was to recognize the migration of the citizens of this country to various areas, to identify their ethnic backgrounds, their ages, their gender, in other words to get a snap-shot of the citizens and the areas in which they currently (as of 2020) reside.

The 8th Congressional District, represented by Hakeem Jeffries, is 27,000 people over the maximum for a congressional district in New York State. The current district is composed of many different neighborhoods ranging from African-American neighborhoods like Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights and parts of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Ocean-Hill, Brownsville, East New York and Canarsie to Mill Basin, Brighton Beach and Coney Island which have a diverse population of recent immigrants from Russia, Pakistan, Mexico as well as long-time African-American residents to Howard Beach in Queens, a middle class, predominantly white community.

The communities comprising the 8th Congressional District have common needs, facing outdated roads, antiquated infrastructure, lack of beneficial public transportation, public housing issues, gun violence, and poverty.

The predominantly African American area towards the northern area of the district deserves to be kept together as a portion of the 8th Congressional District. The overall problems facing the citizens of this area, like a lack of affordable housing, the dramatic increase in gun violence and overall crime must have the attention they deserve through continuous and unified representation and not diluted by being separated into different districts. In addition, this is an area of working-class New Yorkers, sharing transportation and shopping locales.

While the issues listed above are real concerns for the areas of Mill Basin, Brighton Beach, Howard Beach and Coney Island, those residents are facing additional issues vis-à-vis climate change. The devastation brought by Superstorm Sandy and now Hurricane Ida, result in frequent episodes of flooding. To effectively implement solutions to the problems the oceanfront areas face, it is important that these areas are considered as a group and can similarly benefit by unified representation.

And there are other issues to realize. The common interests of the Brighton Beach and Coney Island communities are religion, language, culture, food, housing, senior services, shared places of worship, and health care. This is the unique Muslim population of Brooklyn, concentrated in the southern most portion of Brooklyn and needs to be kept together, not distributed as part of a Democratic plan to take away a Republican holdout.

Gil Cygler

My name is Gil Cygler and I am a life long resident of Congressional District 8 living currently in Mill Basin with prior residence in Georgetown.

I am a member of the Community Board, President of my Synagouge, involved in the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce interacting with local business, the JCC of Canarsie, a social service organization serving those in need living within Congressional District 8, the Boy Scouts and other community-based groups.

The communities of Mill Basin, Sheepshead Bay, Coney Island and Manhattan Beach share both commonality of geography and community. These communities would be best served by common representation.

In geographical terms the southern Brooklyn communities along the water have shared common and similar impacts inflicted by various storms from Sandy in 2012 to Storm named Ida in 2021. Common representation allows communities experiencing similar hardships to collectively turn to their elected representatives to have their voices heard and their needs and districts understood.

In terms of residents/ constituents, the neighborhoods of southern brooklyn have the greatest number of Russian speaking residents allowing the elected representation to employ Russian speaking staff which would not be possible had the community been separated among different congressional districts. Moreover, these communities house the largest number of Holocaust survivors anywhere in New York City and the entire country which allows these residents to have a common voice in Congress

Pamela Lockley Testimony,

As mentioned in the Housing Testimony, NY-08 has the 3rd largest public housing population in New York; where public housing constituents make up a larger share of this district than most other districts in New York.

In addition to a large number of public housing constituents, NY-08 also has over 6,000 Mitchell Lama (private multifamily) housing constituents, whose rents and housing regulations are governed by NYCHA's sister city housing agency: Housing Preservation and Development –“HPD”.

In addition to city agency supervision (NYCHA and HPD), HUD finances NY's Public Housing, and NY-08's Mitchell Lama developments through HUD's 236 mortgage subsidy program.

The current congressional district lines put NY-08's HUD- funded NYCHA and Mitchell Lama developments at an advantage: cohesiveness and shared interests. While they appear different, one type of housing is public; the other is private, many of the challenges and struggles faced by the residents are the same. Keeping the current district lines will continue to benefit the multifamily housing residents living in NY-08.

Scattering the NYCHA and/or Mitchell Lama developments in NY-08, will have a devastating effect on the residents' quest for better living conditions, safety, and financial accountability.

Pamela Lockley

November 14, 2021

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 13

1201 Surf Avenue – 3rd Fl., Brooklyn, NY 11224
(718) 266-3001 FAX (718) 266-3920
<http://www.nyc.gov/html/bknbc13>

Nov. 15, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Community Board 13 lies within the 8th Congressional District. Hakeem Jeffries, our current Congressman has become a real friend to the residents he serves. Since his election in 2013, he has served the constituents of this district as a tireless advocate for social and economic justice.

He is aware of the issues our community face, the location of the new ferry, environmental issues surrounding Coney Island Creek, the traffic issues we face daily as a peninsular community and other issues which are specific to our community.

He continues to work hard for our community which is still feeling the impact of the COVID 19 Pandemic. He is working to improve the economy, bring back the middle class and push for continued funding and maintenance of the many NYCHA housing complexes in our community.

He is working tirelessly to improve and protect our health care for the youngest to the oldest residents of his district and the country.

In this time of flux, he is the one constant our community looks to. He is a trusted public servant and someone who makes his constituents feel comfortable and secure.

We need Congressman Jeffries to remain as our representative in the 8th Congressional District and we request the lines for our district to remain the same.

Sincerely,

Lucy Acevedo
Chairperson

Eddie Mark
District Manager

New York State Redistricting Commission

Good evening to the members of the Redistricting Commission and thank you for permitting all of us to testify today.

My name is Dr. Kim Best, newly appointed as Chief Apostle of the Chaplaincy in the Northern eastern part of the United States. I am a long-time resident of the Bedford Stuyvesant community and have been an advocate there for 53 years.

Bed-Stuy as it's fondly known is a historic neighborhood nestled in New York-08 with one of the largest known brownstone communities; attracting people from across the country and the world as newcomers to our district.

Bed-Stuy has always been thought of as a village, big enough to welcome all newcomers and small enough to work with everybody from one block to another. As a result of this small community feeling; white and Asian parents send their children to the local schools that are predominately black without fear or consequence. These parents also shop in the nearby

supermarkets and utilize the mass transit systems, like the B25 bus and the #2 and #3 trains religiously. Yes, we even share the same transit problems which has helped to bind us politically.

Christian and Asian parents, Jews from both Israel and Russia have been appointed to Community Board #3 by the local Councilman and the Borough President on a regular basis, demonstrating that race, religion, or gender is not a concern for the community or the local politicians.

Newcomers to the Bed-Stuy community are also diligently attending Block Association meetings and Precinct Council meetings at the 79TH Precincts, bordering the communities of Bedford Stuyvesant and Fort Green/Clinton Hill. Attending meetings are crucial to many issues related to gun violence and safety demonstrating that people who live in a community together understand the value of working and voting together, in order to politically strengthen their voice, one neighborhood at a time.

Neighborhoods in the southern end of NY-08 like Mill Basin, Bergen Beach, Marine Park, Plumb Beach, Manhattan Beach, Brighton Beach and Coney Island have all been struggling in the aftermath of Hurricane

Sandy.

Major problems along its costal region is due in part to climate change and Hurricane Sandy. Heavy flooding continues to persist in most of these neighborhoods because their common enemy has been the water and the lack of real services from government at the local and federal levels. These neighborhoods have the same problems, fighting to save lives, homes, and financial stability in their respective neighborhoods.

Heavy Flooding continues to persist which means these community leaders will continue to fight this issue with support from people who live next door to them.

Finally, my concerns about pairing elected officials in the same district should be avoided whenever possible. Pairing would create contests between incumbents and set off a war between neighboring elected officials.

The purpose of the Redistricting Commission is to balance power, giving no advantage to any one group or party. In other words, balancing power without

favoritism is extremely important to this process.

I hope that the Commission feels the same way.

I am testifying in support of keeping NY-08 intact, so that many of the ongoing problems will continue to receive support from people with the same persistent problems in order to bring closure to flooding along the coastal region of southern Brooklyn.

Thank you.