

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON DEMOGRAPHIC  
RESEARCH AND REAPPORTIONMENT

PUBLIC HEARING  
CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

Bronx Community College  
Gould Memorial Library Auditorium  
2155 University Ave  
Bronx, New York  
Thursday, September 8, 2011  
10:00 a.m. to 2:23 p.m.

Committee on Redistricting, 9-8-2011

TASK FORCE MEMBERS:

SENATOR MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO, Co-Chair

ASSEMBLY MEMBER JOHN J. MCENENY, Co-Chair

SENATOR MARTIN M. DILAN

ASSEMBLY MEMBER ROBERT OAKS

DEBRA LEVINE

ROMAN HEDGES

WELQUIS LOPEZ

LEWIS HOPPE

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2 (The public hearing commenced at 10:00  
3 a.m.)

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER JOHN J. MCENENY, CO-  
5 CHAIR, NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON  
6 DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND REAPPORTIONMENT: Good  
7 morning, and welcome to the Bronx Community  
8 College in the Bronx community, who is hosting  
9 this public hearing of the New York State  
10 Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research  
11 and Reapportionment.

12 The purpose of our meeting today is  
13 obviously to listen to the community as to their  
14 thoughts of the current districts which are  
15 already drawn and now obsolete, and how they  
16 would like to see the new districts for the New  
17 York State Assembly, the New York State Senate,  
18 and the House of Representatives in Washington.  
19 What do they feel would be most representative  
20 and serve well the people of their community?

21 We have well over 60 people signed up--  
22 once again. We had a very good hearing with 40  
23 people testified over in Queens yesterday. We  
24 will be back to do the other three boroughs two

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2 weeks from now. What you're witnessing is a part  
3 of the first phase of information gathering,  
4 which is--at this point, 12 public hearings  
5 across the state from Buffalo down to Long  
6 Island, and people talking conceptually the  
7 changes that they would like to see that they  
8 feel would be most in compliance with the law--  
9 the spirit of the law, the state constitution,  
10 and all of the other restraints that we have to  
11 make sure that we deliver good government to our  
12 people.

13 We would ask that as you come forward to  
14 testify, we remind you that this is televised.  
15 It goes on the website. People who obviously  
16 can't make it here during the day, people who  
17 want to watch it in detail can watch this on the  
18 LATFOR website. LATFOR is the abbreviation for  
19 the Task Force.

20 Now, we are joined today--and I'll let  
21 my fellow members speak in a moment. I am Jack  
22 McEneny. I am the co-chair from the--from the  
23 New York State Assembly. To my right, Roman  
24 Hedges is the Citizen Participant--also from the



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2 Assembly. And not with us today, the first  
3 meeting that he's missed, is normally a colleague  
4 from the New York State Assembly, Robert Oaks  
5 from Wayne County. The group is bipartisan. It  
6 comes out 50/50 Democrat and Republican, 50/50  
7 Senate and Assembly. And I will turn it over to  
8 my co-chairman, Senator Mike Nozzolio who will  
9 introduce his members representing the Senate,  
10 and make whatever remarks he feels are  
11 appropriate.

12 SENATOR MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO, CO-CHAIR,  
13 NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON  
14 DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND REAPPORTIONMENT: Thank  
15 you very much, Assemblyman. Good morning ladies  
16 and gentleman. I'm Mike Nozzolio. I probably  
17 represent the 54th Senatorial district and  
18 prouder to be a member of this Task Force and co-  
19 chair with Assemblyman McEneny.

20 That on my immediate left is a colleague  
21 representing on the Task Force, Senator Martin  
22 Dilan. An individual who is not here yet, as a  
23 citizen member, is Welquis "Ray" Lopez. And that  
24 also here is the Executive Director of the Task

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2 Force, Debra Levine.

3 The Task Force, as Assemblyman McEneny  
4 said, its mission, it's fiduciary and ethical  
5 obligation is to go into the state and every  
6 corner of the state and hear what people have to  
7 say about redistricting. And specifically about  
8 what types of community of interests they wish to  
9 see reflected in redistricting for the Congress,  
10 the State Senate, and the State Assembly.

11 That this is our eighth hearing, Jack,  
12 and that there will be another four hearings  
13 after this, and that we will have another dozen  
14 hearings after all that, to continue to take  
15 testimony. And our goal has been to make this  
16 the most open and transparent process possible.

17 Emphasizing again--we are being  
18 recorded. That your testimony in its entirety  
19 will be recorded and placed on our LATFOR website  
20 for anyone to view. We ask you who have--those  
21 of you who have written testimony, to submit that  
22 written to us for the record. And that entirety  
23 of written testimony will be submitted and be the  
24 volume of background that we are collecting. And

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2 feel free to summarize that testimony and  
3 emphasize the key points that you wish to--the  
4 Task Force to focus on.

5 Without further ado, I know Senator  
6 Martin Dilan, who has been at every hearing, and  
7 worked very hard, also would like to say a few  
8 words.

9 SENATOR MARTIN M. DILAN, NEW YORK STATE  
10 LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH  
11 AND REAPPORTIONMENT: I would just like to say  
12 good morning to everyone. And I really look  
13 forward to listening to your views regarding what  
14 you feel your State Assembly and State Senate--  
15 and especially your Congressional district should  
16 look like in the--in the future. So I'm here to  
17 listen to you and [foreign audio]. Thank you.

18 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you, Senator  
19 Dilan. Mr. Hedges, do you have any comments  
20 you'd like to make? Thank you, we will begin  
21 the--taking the testimony here. Our first  
22 testifier is a good friend, a co-leader with me  
23 on the Senate Crime--Victims Crime and  
24 Corrections Committee, Gustavo Rivera. Senator--

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2 thank you very much for being this host Senator  
3 of this meeting today, and that it's always good  
4 to see you.

5 SENATOR GUSTAVO RIVERA: Same here,  
6 Senator. Do I need to turn this on? I don't  
7 know if it's on. Hello? Hello? Yes, I guess  
8 it's on. Good morning, Senator Nozzolio, Senator  
9 Dilan, Assembly member McEneny, Mr. Hedges, and  
10 Ms. Levine. Welcome to the Bronx and welcome to  
11 the 33rd district. We're right in the middle of  
12 it. This is the district that I represent very  
13 proudly.

14 My testimony has already been submitted,  
15 but I am going to read it into the record, if you  
16 will permit me. My name is State Senator Gustavo  
17 Rivera, and I represent the 33rd Senate District  
18 located in the northwest Bronx. The district  
19 includes the neighborhoods of Fordham,  
20 Kingsbridge, University Heights, Riverdale, Van  
21 Cortlandt Park, Bedford Park, and East Tremont.

22 I have lived in the 33rd Senate District  
23 for the last 11 years, in Kingsbridge, on the  
24 corner of University and 195th Street. And last

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2 year I was elected by my neighbors to represent  
3 them in the State Senate. According to the 2010  
4 census, I now represent 314,246 Bronxites, who  
5 live in the 33rd Senate district.

6 Before I continue my testimony, I want  
7 to say that I believe that New York State should  
8 be undertaking this process with an independent  
9 redistricting commission, that can draw fair  
10 lines without partisan gerrymandering, that  
11 reflect the neighborhoods and communities that we  
12 as New Yorkers call home. While the legislature  
13 has yet to pass the independent redistricting, I  
14 will continue to push to make independent  
15 redistricting a reality in New York.

16 In the absence of an independent  
17 commission, I believe it is important that  
18 members of the community testify before New York  
19 State Legislative Task Force on Demographic  
20 Research--LATFOR, and that the Task Force create  
21 opportunities to listen to the community at times  
22 accessible to the majority of individuals--most  
23 of whom work during the day. And it is for that  
24 reason that I recommend that your next round of

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2 hearings take place in the evening, so that more  
3 of my constituents, other Bronxites and other New  
4 Yorkers are able to attend.

5 Obviously, everyone here today  
6 understands the importance of the Task Force  
7 undertaking and how critical it is to involve the  
8 community before drawing lines that will have an  
9 impact for the next decade. I am here today both  
10 in my capacity as State Senator representing the  
11 district that we are sitting in right now, and as  
12 a ranking member, as Senator Nozzolio mentioned,  
13 of the Crime Victims Crimes and Corrections  
14 Committee.

15 And I want to take a moment to advise  
16 that this Task Force follow the decision--follow  
17 the law to count incarcerated individuals in  
18 their home communities during the redistricting  
19 process. In my district alone, there would be  
20 1,219 individuals that should be counted in their  
21 homes in the Bronx, rather than an upstate jail  
22 or prison. Counting these individuals in the  
23 Bronx means counting them in the neighborhoods  
24 they are coming home to, when they are released

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2 in the next few years, and ensuring that their  
3 interests are properly represented.

4 As State Senator, I represent the 33rd  
5 Senate District here, a contiguous state--a  
6 continuous Senate district in the northwest Bronx  
7 that runs almost the extant of the Grand  
8 Concourse. There are natural borders created by  
9 Harlem River to the west and the Botanical  
10 Gardens, Bronx Zoo, and Fordham University to the  
11 east. There are entire commercial districts and  
12 small business hubs contained in the 33rd Senate  
13 district in Tremont, Fordham, Kingsbridge, and  
14 along Jerome Avenue, and Gun Hill Road.

15 Technically, the 2010 census tells us  
16 that the 33rd Senate district is 65% Latino, 25%  
17 African American, and 10% white. But communities  
18 of interest are not only formed around ethnic or  
19 racial groups. For example, in the 33rd Senate  
20 district, they emanate from the economic,  
21 recreational, and educational anchors that  
22 attract individuals from not only the Bronx or  
23 New York, but from throughout the world to this  
24 area. There are economic anchors like Montefiore

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2 Medical Center, Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, and St.  
3 Barnabus Hospital, that provide jobs to Bronxites  
4 living in the 33rd Senate district. Our  
5 recreational anchors in the district, like  
6 Williamsbridge Oval Park, Bedford Park--in  
7 Bedford Park, and St. James Park in Fordham, are--  
8 --or on the edge of our district, like the  
9 Botanical Gardens or the Bronx Zoo--define so  
10 much what it is like to live in our  
11 neighborhoods.

12 I am also fortunate to have several  
13 colleges and universities that serve as  
14 educational anchors, in the 33rd Senate district,  
15 including Bronx Community College--in which we  
16 are today, Lehman College to our north, and  
17 Monroe College on Jerome Avenue. These ins--  
18 institutions are not only--are not only providing  
19 an education for countless Bronxites that live in  
20 this area, but they are a cultural and ed--  
21 community center, providing access to knowledge  
22 and opportunity.

23 These anchors, in many ways, shape and  
24 define communities of interest, in the 33rd



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2 Senate district. There may be some areas where  
3 there is greater concentration of African  
4 Americans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, West  
5 Africans, Garifuna or Albanians, for example.  
6 But more frequently than not, individuals are  
7 brought together through shared interest and  
8 shared experiences to become a community.

9 In the 33rd Senate district, community  
10 members have come together around issues of their  
11 economic interest, their quality of life, and  
12 educational opportunities for the young people of  
13 the northwest Bronx. Hospitals--being the  
14 largest economic engine in the district--means  
15 there is a real shared interest in ensuring that  
16 they have the funding to continue operating and  
17 thriving in the northwest Bronx, and that these  
18 hospitals are able to serve the very communities  
19 they are situated in.

20 The residents of the 33rd Senate  
21 district live in diverse neighborhoods like  
22 Bedford Park that has a sizeable Latino, black,  
23 and white population, and live in the same  
24 buildings, such as Amalgamated housing, where

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2 large Jewish, Latino and African American  
3 communities are represented.

4 These shared experiences mean shared  
5 housing concerns, and concerns about the quality  
6 of public education in the area. That is why  
7 voters in this district have been able to come  
8 together to build coalitions and to come together  
9 as a community, to coalesce around the goal of  
10 electing representatives who they feel represent  
11 their interests and the interests of the  
12 district--as well as then removing a  
13 representative when the voters felt he was no  
14 longer serving the interests of the community.

15 I am asking today that these communities  
16 be kept together around the economic,  
17 educational, and recreational anchors that bind  
18 them together. In addition--in addition to  
19 looking at the changing demographics, I believe  
20 we need to take a look at the neighborhoods--the  
21 anchors that make up and define the 33rd Senate  
22 district, and keep the communities that have  
23 formed around them together.

24 So again, I thank you for giving me an

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2 opportunity to be here with you today, and I'm  
3 looking forward to the rest of the hearing.  
4 Thank you.

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you,  
6 Senator. Are there any questions or comments  
7 from the panel?

8 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you, Senator.  
9 Very good to see you again. I appreciate your  
10 advocacy for your district, thank you. Our,  
11 first witness. . .

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Nelson Castro,  
13 Assembly member.

14 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Why don't you go  
15 ahead, Jack, and introduce him.

16 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: I noticed my  
17 colleague, Assembly member Nelson Castro.  
18 Nelson? Did you--did you want to make an opening  
19 remark? Then proceed, please.

20 NELSON CASTRO, ASSEMBLY MEMBER: By the  
21 way, thank you to--thank you for coming to my  
22 district. So, good morning. I--I'm going to  
23 read this testimony, which is basically geared  
24 towards the creation of a new congressional

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2 district--not a new congressional district, but a  
3 congressional district that would actually  
4 include the upper Manhattan area and the west  
5 Bronx area.

6 As you know, my name is Nelson Castro,  
7 and I am representing myself. Please allow me to  
8 thank you for the opportunity to appear on record  
9 supporting this, the creation of a congressional  
10 district that will allow residents of northern  
11 Manhattan and the west Bronx communities to have  
12 a fair representation in turn of the cultural,  
13 linguistic, and socio-economic background.

14 During the last four decades, upper  
15 Manhattan--as documented by the Census, that has  
16 been a stronghold for a vibrant Latino community,  
17 as portrayed by the professional business and  
18 community and faith-based organization and  
19 educational institution in this area.

20 In the last two decades, there has been  
21 a spill of residents from the upper Manhattan,  
22 relocating into the west part of the Bronx, me  
23 being one of the examples. The 2010 census data  
24 clearly track this movement. This shift is

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2 practically visualized as we witness the increase  
3 of public transportation within this contiguous  
4 communities at the main connection point between  
5 upper Manhattan and the west Bronx.

6 Being the BX-12, BX-3, who actually move  
7 people--thousands of people on a--on a daily  
8 basis from upper Manhattan to--into the Bronx,  
9 and vice versa. As well as the numerous tax  
10 bases that actually service our community.

11 And I don't know if you remember, last  
12 year when we--well two years ago, when we had  
13 actually--one of the proposals on the table was  
14 to toll the bridges, the East River bridges--that  
15 we opposed to tolling the 207th Street Bridge,  
16 because it's basically a street--a high street  
17 that actually connects two communities.

18 So that was the argument back then and  
19 that argument is so ever present now in this--in  
20 this redistricting hearing. We're talking about  
21 two communities that, you know, now have the same  
22 businesses--both on one side and then the other.  
23 I know of people that actually come to school  
24 here at Bronx Community College that live in

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2 Washington--in Washington Heights, and vice  
3 versa. People that live in the Bronx and go to  
4 Bronx--City College. So, this has been a  
5 community of common interests. We want to keep  
6 it that way.

7 We want to have one congressional  
8 representative, because, you know, if I--if I am  
9 going to the doctor in the--in the northern  
10 Manhattan area, and I see the developments that  
11 one congressional member is doing in that--in  
12 that particular area, and yet I do all my stuff  
13 in Washington Heights. Let me tell you, there  
14 have been cases--many, numerous cases, of people  
15 that actually have registered--live in--live in  
16 the Bronx, but they continue to be registered in--  
17 -in upper Manhattan. And they continue to do  
18 every bit of business in the northern Manhattan  
19 area. And yeah, they live in the Bronx.

20 And we're at a disadvantage here in the--  
21 -in the west part of the Bronx. Therefore we  
22 should definitely consider combining both  
23 district--the upper Manhattan area and the west  
24 Bronx area into one congressional district.

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2 Thank you very much.

3 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

4 The next testifier, Burnell Arthur Richardson

5 [phonetic]. Burnell Arthur Richardson? Jay

6 Sevino [phonetic], or Sevinno. Jay Sevinno?

7 Alonso de Castro? Good morning.

8 ALONZO DE CASTRO, PRESIDENT, EAST OF

9 LACONIA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, CO-PRESIDENT,

10 NORTHEAST BRONX COMMUNITY COALITION: Good

11 morning.

12 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Morning, Excuse me,

13 Mr. Castro.

14 MR. CASTRO: Sure.

15 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Mr. Castro--before

16 you speak, I'd like to recognize the arrival of

17 the citizen member of the Task Force, Welquis

18 "Ray" Lopez. That Ray has been attending all of

19 the hearings, and is the--one of the citizen

20 representatives of the Task Force. Thank you.

21 MR. CASTRO: Good morning. My name is

22 Alonzo de Castro, and I am co-president of the

23 Northeast Bronx Community Coalition, and the

24 President of the East of Laconia Community

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2 Association.

3 My family and I have resided in Bronx  
4 County for over 50 years. I have been involved  
5 in the political process for over 25 years,  
6 having served as state committee man and district  
7 leader.

8 I thank you for the opportunity to speak  
9 to you today on my community, and our need to  
10 have a congressional district that meets the  
11 needs of my community, and the community of  
12 residents that share my experience as residents  
13 of the Bronx, New York City, and southern  
14 Westchester. Today, I am here in support of  
15 district lines for the Senatorial and Assembly,  
16 as represented by Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson,  
17 and Assemblyman Carl Heastie. With respect to  
18 district lines, I urge your committee to strongly  
19 consider the natural relationship that exists  
20 between my neighborhood in the Bronx, with the  
21 adjoining communities in Manhattan and  
22 Westchester.

23 I support the drawing of a congressional  
24 district that recognizes these areas as one,



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2 formally acknowledging a relationship that  
3 already exists. I urge you to do so with the  
4 following principles in mind. A district that by  
5 nature flows from southern Westchester to  
6 northern Manhattan, to the African American  
7 sections of the Bronx, best represents how our  
8 communities can continue to have representation  
9 that best understands our struggle, one that has  
10 been chronicled in history, and more importantly,  
11 one that undoubtedly continues today.

12 The after-effects of slavery and Jim  
13 Crow have lingered, causing our people and our  
14 children to still lag behind the majority  
15 population and achievement, advancement and  
16 economic development. We sorely need  
17 representation that not only understands these  
18 issues, but can actually personally articulate  
19 them in the halls of Congress.

20 The principle of communities of  
21 interest, by definition, states that a community  
22 must be recognized as distinct by those outside  
23 of the community. There is no doubt that the  
24 general population acknowledges the black

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2 community as one distinct community.

3 Moreover, as those who have self-  
4 identified themselves as African Americans, or  
5 black, there is more than ample self-recognition  
6 as one community, as witnessed by the United  
7 States census. The black community is one  
8 community.

9 Lastly, as one community, we are  
10 effected by government action to our benefit--and  
11 even sometimes to our detriment. The community  
12 of interest principle, as traditionally defined--  
13 more than aptly applies to the black communities  
14 of northern Manhattan, the Bronx and southern  
15 Westchester.

16 Please allow me to speak on this in  
17 practical terms. As the President of the  
18 northeast Bronx Community Coalition, I have on  
19 several occasions coalesced with groups in my  
20 adjoining areas to advocate for better services.  
21 We have consistently joined with residents,  
22 clergy, and business owners from these areas for  
23 better transportation, youth services, senior  
24 services, and housing. We have fought for youth

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2 services most recently, calling for the  
3 development of a community center to meet the  
4 needs of the children from the surrounding areas  
5 because we are all facing the same issues: higher  
6 than average crime, lower than average education  
7 attainment, and increasingly diminished job  
8 opportunities.

9 Attached to my testimony is what I and  
10 my constituents believe would bring the fairest  
11 representation possible. In addition, with all  
12 due respect to my Latino brothers and sisters,  
13 I've included proposals for the 14th district and  
14 the 16th district--which protects and presents a  
15 similar outcome for the Latino community.

16 I cannot stress more the importance of  
17 having a minority district that shares common  
18 political, social, and cultural interests. Our  
19 analysis indicates that we have an opportunity to  
20 have representation that represents our common  
21 interests from northern Manhattan to southern  
22 Westchester. And we can bring about fair  
23 representation and meet the goal of communities  
24 of interest. We urge you to consider our

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2 proposal strongly.

3 In conclusion, this country of ours is  
4 now witnessing at some states in this union  
5 passing laws inhibiting citizens from exercising  
6 their right to vote. As you draw the lines for  
7 Congress, the Senate, and the Assembly, I  
8 respectfully remind you of the Civil Rights Act  
9 of 1965 as it applies to Bronx County. Thank you  
10 very much.

11 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
12 much. Nestor Montilla? Nestor Montilla.

13 NESTOR MONTILLA: Yes, I'm here. Thank  
14 you. Mr. Chairman Nozzolio, Mr. Chairman,  
15 McEneny, and members of this Task Force, my name  
16 is Nestor Montilla. I'm a property owner here  
17 right just across the street on Horizon Avenue  
18 [phonetic]. But I'm here representing the  
19 National Dominican American Council. It's a  
20 civic community engagement initiative, composed  
21 of local councils and the United States.

22 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Excuse me, Mr.  
23 Montilla, there's a lot of echo. Would--I don't  
24 know if you back up a little bit.

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2 MR. MONTILLA: All right.

3 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Let's try that  
4 and see how that works.

5 MR. MONTILLA: The National Council  
6 actually joins other--

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
8 Thank you, that's better.

9 MR. MONTILLA: --organizations--that  
10 sounds better? Leaders and community based  
11 organizations in the U.S. advocating for the  
12 socio-economic and political development of our  
13 communities in areas concerning education,  
14 economic development, health, immigration, and  
15 community empowerment.

16 My remarks today express the position on  
17 recommendation of the National Dominican American  
18 Counsel. Our position is that we are endorsing  
19 and supporting the community's efforts to have a  
20 new Latino congressional district created, a  
21 district that would reflect the ever-growing  
22 Hispanic population of the state of New York.  
23 Our recommendation is a map proposal, I have  
24 submitted already for your consideration.

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2 Mr. Chairman and members of the Task  
3 Force, as we prepare to testify before you today,  
4 we spent many weeks trying different ways to draw  
5 the map proposal that you have in front of you,  
6 that you will have access to. It is a Latino  
7 majority congressional district, in essence, a  
8 re-drawing of congressional district 14. The  
9 proposal, which is 60% Latino, encompasses Latino  
10 neighborhoods from El Barrio in Manhattan to the  
11 west and north of the Bronx and to the south of  
12 Yonkers.

13 This map indeed reflects the growth of  
14 the Latino population in these neighborhoods, and  
15 also reflects their common interest and  
16 peculiarities, including common language,  
17 culture, a way of life, place of work, and  
18 basically where they practice their religion and  
19 go about doing their lives.

20 As we kept trying--drawing sample maps,  
21 we were pleasantly surprised to find out that it  
22 didn't matter how you draw it, we could always  
23 end up drawing a majority Latino congressional  
24 district. You could draw east to west, north to

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2 south, and it didn't matter the direction we  
3 took. The main reason for this is the increasing  
4 number of Latinos in the city. We are here. We  
5 are not an invisible population any more. We are  
6 here.

7           Despite our number, however, Mr.  
8 Chairman, our community has not been able to  
9 garner the respect or representation that we  
10 deserve. For instance, this last decade, the  
11 Hispanic population of New York, as validated by  
12 the 2010 census, indicates that in New York City,  
13 the Hispanic population is larger than the  
14 Italian, Irish and Jewish population combined.

15           In the state of New York alone, the  
16 Hispanic population grew by 19.2%, which  
17 indicates that the time to draw more than a few  
18 Hispanic congressional districts is overdue. It  
19 is a fact that Hispanics are under-represented in  
20 New York State. It is a fact that Hispanics are  
21 under-represented in New York City. And I'll  
22 tell you that the recent growth of the overall  
23 New York State population, which is 19.2% , as I  
24 said, one could conclude by looking at these

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2 numbers from these percentages and growth of the  
3 Hispanic community, that we merit proportional  
4 political representation.

5 If you take into consideration--if you  
6 take under consideration the fact that the New  
7 York City Latino community alone makes up  
8 approximately 30% of the entire city population,  
9 and the recent growth of the overall New York  
10 State population, which is like I said, 19.2%,  
11 again--it merits proportional political  
12 representation.

13 So, we in the Latino community have been  
14 challenging the U.S. census population numbers,  
15 because traditionally, without exception, the  
16 census has been under accounting our community  
17 for as much as 10%. Added to this undercount  
18 percentage, is the fact that mainly Latinos who  
19 were born in the U.S.--and particularly in New  
20 York City, list themselves as either Caucasians  
21 or African Americans. This is due to the fact  
22 that Hispanics reflect a rainbow of colors. Yet  
23 we are not categorized by the U.S. census as a  
24 racial group--but rather, as an ethnic group.



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2 So whether you are Dominican, Columbian,  
3 Ecuadorian, Mexican, or Puerto Rican, we are  
4 Hispanics, Hispanic Americans, primarily sharing  
5 a common language and a common heritage. So the  
6 importance of creating a new congressional  
7 district as the one we are proposing to you  
8 today, would encompass not only 60% of the Latino  
9 population, but also would bring a greater  
10 understanding of the cultural sensitivity, and  
11 meet present social and community needs that are  
12 particular to the New York Latino community, such  
13 as bi-lingual education, immigration, affordable  
14 housing, job opportunities, and among many other  
15 important matters--additional federal funding for  
16 our schools, our hospitals, and Latino  
17 organizations.

18 Approving our proposal would guarantee  
19 full representation and--about to finish--and  
20 also will guarantee full respect for all Latino  
21 workers or taxpayers, our children, the elderly,  
22 youngsters, men and women, families, and all  
23 people residing in our community today. So  
24 please approve this map and give our community a

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2 voice in Washington D.C. We urge you to afford  
3 our community the opportunity to ensure fair  
4 representation. Thank you.

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
6 much.

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER WELQUIS "RAY" LOPEZ, NEW  
8 YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON DEMOGRAPHIC  
9 RESEARCH AND REAPPORTIONMENT: I want to ask a  
10 question. Mr. Montilla? Hello?

11 MR. MONTILLA: Oh, yeah.

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: I want to ask  
13 you--first of all, I want to say--I apologize to  
14 all of you for being late. [Foreign audio].

15 MR. MONTILLA: That gives all New  
16 Yorkers trouble, right?

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: [Laughs] Are you  
18 going to be submitting a plan or a map?

19 MR. MONTILLA: Sir, I'm sorry--

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: [Interposing] I  
21 said if--are you going to be submitting a plan or  
22 a map?

23 MR. MONTILLA: We did--I did already. I  
24 turned it in at--

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: [Interposing]  
3 Okay, because it looks like we haven't received  
4 it, that's why.

5 MR. MONTILLA: --the front desk, and I  
6 also sent it by email as--following the  
7 directions that you put on the website.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Okay, great.  
9 Thank you, appreciate it. Thank you very much.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: As I'm sure,  
11 everyone understands the growth of the state of  
12 New York to 19.2 million people was not the same  
13 rate of growth as other areas of the country.  
14 And because of that, every single congressional  
15 district which we now have, does not qualify to  
16 be a congressional district.

17 They're short people, some of them  
18 70,000 people short, others as little as 10,000.  
19 The new districts will have to be exact. When we  
20 deal with the State Assembly and the State  
21 Senate, the courts have given us leeway, two,  
22 three, four percent--even up to five percent  
23 above or below the norm. But when we draw a  
24 congressional district, it is to the person as

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2 far as possible, so that even constitutional  
3 prohibitions on splitting towns, for example, not  
4 relevant here but certainly throughout much of  
5 the rest of the state, all that goes out the  
6 window in favor of the federal. So the new  
7 number is 707,717 people. So it's a--the  
8 congressional districts will be much larger than  
9 what we are used to. Could we call Haile Rivera?

10 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Before our next  
11 speaker, Senator Dilan and I would like to thank  
12 Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson for being here  
13 today. Senator Thompson, it's always great to  
14 see you, Ruth. And that I thank you for your  
15 continued input. I believe this is the second or  
16 third hearing you've attended. And I appreciate  
17 that very, very much.

18 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Mr. Rivera?  
19 To be followed by Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson.

20 HAILE RIVERA, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE  
21 DIRECTOR, HANDS ON NEW YORK LINKED WITH  
22 DOMINICANOS UNIDOS DE NEW YORK: Her first,  
23 right?

24 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: No--you.

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2 MR. RIVERA: Me first? Well, I'll be  
3 short, because I didn't actually--I didn't bring  
4 my speech today, as I wanted to prepare--have  
5 more time to prepare it. But I do, just for the  
6 record, want to state that as a resident of this  
7 district, of the 33rd Senate district, and the  
8 86th Assembly district, I am very proud to have  
9 my representatives here. And I will stand for  
10 the record behind my State Senator Gustavo  
11 Rivera--no relation, by the way. But I will  
12 stand behind his statement of his speech today,  
13 and for the future I will submit the record as  
14 far as where we want to proceed with the  
15 district. Thank you.

16 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
17 much. Senator?

18 RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON, SENATOR: Thank  
19 you and good morning. I did not come prepared to  
20 testify, as I have at each of the hearings. I've  
21 come to lend support and legitimacy to this  
22 process, and to ensure that people from the  
23 community have as much time as possible to  
24 express their concerns.

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2 I do appreciate you coming to the Bronx  
3 and allowing the people here and in lower  
4 Westchester to have the opportunity to share with  
5 you some of the concerns that they have. And  
6 certainly I want to be sure that we all go on the  
7 record, indicating that this is not a perfunctory  
8 process, but that the--that the voice of the  
9 people will in fact be heard. And so therefore  
10 it is very important that as many people as  
11 possible do speak.

12 And then given the opportunity to allow  
13 us to understand and know, as we get to the final  
14 stages of drawing the lines, where people really  
15 are. So I thank you very much for the  
16 opportunity this morning.

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you,  
18 Senator. The Reverend Bill Marzel [phonetic], or  
19 Mizel? Reverend Bill Mizel? Pete--oh, I'm  
20 sorry. Barbara Stronczer?

21 BARBARA STRONCZER, PRESIDENT, BEDFORD  
22 MOSHULU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION: Good morning. My  
23 name is Barbara Stronczer, and I'm here on behalf  
24 of the Bedford Moshulu Community Association. I

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2 am their President. We are a not for profit  
3 grass roots community organization located in the  
4 Bedford Park area of the northwest Bronx. We  
5 meet each month and work to improve the quality  
6 of life in our neighborhood. All of our members  
7 are volunteers.

8 Bedford Park is a multi-ethnic community  
9 with a strong and varied housing stock. Six  
10 story rentals, private homes, and coops encompass  
11 the area. Our area includes Fordham University  
12 and the Botanical Gardens to the east, Lehman  
13 College to our west, and Montefiore Hospital to  
14 our north. We are also fortunate to have the  
15 beautiful parklands of Moshulu Parkway running  
16 through our neighborhood.

17 We are not here to complain about our  
18 elected officials, since they have been  
19 responsive to community requests. We are here to  
20 ensure that the proposed redistricting will  
21 enhance our ability to work together as a  
22 community.

23 Unfortunately, our area has been the  
24 victim of partisan gerrymandering during the past

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2 ten years. Moshulu Parkway encompasses three  
3 assembly districts. One piece of Moshulu Parkway  
4 is aligned with a major piece of Riverdale.  
5 Another section of Moshulu Parkway is cast off to  
6 a section of Morris Park in the east Bronx. A  
7 third section of Moshulu Parkway is joined to the  
8 south with the 78th Assembly district.

9 It has been impossible for the residents  
10 of Bedford Park and neighboring Norwood, whose  
11 composition and needs are very similar, to work  
12 together for improvements in our area. Since we  
13 represent a very small portion of these three  
14 assembly districts, we are often overlooked for  
15 funding and capital improvements in the area.

16 We are requesting that an independent  
17 nonpartisan committee be established to redraw  
18 the lines in our community. We feel strongly  
19 that Bedford Park and Norwood should be  
20 represented by the same elected officials. The  
21 district needs to be co-terminus and not cobbled  
22 and divided as done ten years ago. This current  
23 division has led to a divided approach to issues  
24 and problems in the area.



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2 We are in favor of Governor Cuomo's  
3 demand for independent redistricting. We feel  
4 strongly that unless a non-partisan committee is  
5 established for this task, that our community  
6 will again be sliced and diced to the detriment  
7 of our local needs and concerns. I thank you for  
8 this opportunity to speak and represent my  
9 community.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
11 much. We'll try Reverend Bill Mizell? Pete  
12 Healy [phonetic]. Is Pete Healy here? Maria  
13 Teresa Feliciano.

14 MARIA TERESA FELICIANO, PRESIDENT,  
15 DOMINICAN AMERICAN NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE: Good  
16 morning.

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Good morning.

18 MS. FELICIANO: Is this close enough? I  
19 don't get it. Good morning, Co-chairman  
20 Nozzolio, McEneny, members of the Task Force.  
21 I'm Dr. Maria Teresa Feliciano. And on behalf of  
22 the Dominican American National Roundtable, a  
23 National Organization advocating for the rights  
24 and interests of over two million Dominicans in

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2 the United States, including the large population  
3 of Dominicans in New York, I would like to thank  
4 you for the opportunity to address the Task Force  
5 regarding the redistricting of New York's  
6 Legislature and Congress.

7 We understand the task at hand is New  
8 York's constitutional process of adjusting the  
9 lines of its legislature and Congress to comply  
10 with one person, one vote requirements for fair  
11 representation in any legislative body across the  
12 country. As indicated by co-chair Senator  
13 Nozzolio, at the August 4th hearing in Albany,  
14 this Task Force's job is to carry out this  
15 responsibility governed by Civil Rights Law,  
16 Voting Rights Law, and the concern that New  
17 Yorkers be properly represented. This, while  
18 seeking to reflect the will of the electorate,  
19 provide minorities with appropriate  
20 representation, and keep communities of interest  
21 together.

22 In carrying out your mission, we would  
23 like you to consider the following; according to  
24 the 2010 U.S. census, there are 50.5 million

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2 Latinos in the United States, composing 16% of  
3 the total population. Latinos increased by 15.2  
4 million or 43% between 2000 and 2010, which  
5 accounted for over half of the total population  
6 growth that occurred in the United States over  
7 the past ten years.

8 In New York, for example, Latinos  
9 accounted for one out of every two individuals  
10 added to the total adult population in the state.  
11 Latinos make up 19.2% of the state's total  
12 population and has grown to approximately 30% of  
13 the New York City population. This not taking  
14 into account the traditional 10% undercounting of  
15 the U.S. census, which fig--whose figures, by the  
16 way, we are currently challenging.

17 If not for the growth of the Latino  
18 population, I could say New York State could  
19 probably be losing three congressional districts  
20 instead of two. As a note of interest, when you  
21 combine the Latino population of three large  
22 cities of Los Angeles, Miami, and San Antonio, it  
23 is approximately the same size as the New York  
24 City's. The Latino congressional representatives

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2 in these cities are basically six, yet New York  
3 is represented by only two Latino congressional  
4 members who have been serving for the past 25  
5 years.

6 The new New York Legislative map must  
7 reflect the state's changing demographics. The  
8 emergence of Latinos as the largest minority in  
9 the state requires the creation of majority  
10 Latino districts or Latino opportunity districts,  
11 that will allow us to elect candidates of our  
12 choice in numbers commiserate with our  
13 population.

14 We propose a map of a majority Latino  
15 congressional district--which I have submitted  
16 online, that will unite the communities of  
17 interest of El Barrio, Washington Heights,  
18 Englewood, and the Bronx; a district that would  
19 have 60% Latino population. It will be comprised  
20 of communities that share places of work, places  
21 of worship, shopping centers, socio-economic and  
22 educational interests, as well as challenges.

23 These maps--these maps are for the Task  
24 Force the opportunity to add one of the needed

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2 five Latino congressional districts, and uphold  
3 the spirit of the Voting Rights Act. It is  
4 evident that the biggest challenge facing this  
5 Task Force, in its attempt to provide fair and  
6 accurate representation to all New Yorkers, is  
7 the drawing of maps that will result in the  
8 number of additional congressional and senatorial  
9 majority Latino districts needed.

10 That the explosion of the Latino  
11 population in New York be accurately and fairly  
12 reflected in its legislature. In a democracy,  
13 the principal of one person, one vote, is a  
14 sacred concept. It should apply in New York.  
15 And ensuring a greater voice for Latinos in the  
16 house of power. We look forward to working with  
17 the Task Force to contribute in your effort to  
18 make sure that New York achieves fair and  
19 constitutional redistricting. Thank you.

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: So this is the  
21 map that you submitted, not for district 15,  
22 right?

23 MS. FELICIANO: Yes, sir. The district  
24 14, 15, and 16--we have submitted online.

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Okay, thank you.

3 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
4 much.

5 MS. FELICIANO: Oh, I'm sorry. One more  
6 observation, is it possible that Task Four  
7 schedules a meeting in the evening, at some  
8 point? We understand that many individuals are  
9 unable to take off from work and--

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
11 Well, we actually have 14 more meetings  
12 scheduled, one in the Bronx. And we could  
13 certainly consider that. Senator Rivera also  
14 mentioned it. It was also mentioned yesterday in  
15 Queens. Now I would--I would point out that in  
16 Queens we had 40 people testifying. Here we have  
17 63. If we were to start--oh, we're up to 66 now--  
18 -and growing because we don't turn people down  
19 when they show up at the door.

20 So I would caution--and we will  
21 certainly listen to those requests, but if we  
22 give people time to get home from work--because  
23 that's what we're being told, there are people  
24 who are out working, they can't handle this,

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2 etcetera, and we were to start at 6:30, then what  
3 time would these people get home? It was a four  
4 and a half hour meeting yesterday, because we  
5 also had--was it seven hours? Yeah, yeah, I'm  
6 sorry, it was seven hours, which means people  
7 would be going home at 3:00 in the morning.

8 MS. FELICIANO: Well, you would be  
9 pretty much--like in Lee, Massachusetts. The  
10 hearing began at 6:30 and ended at 1:45. But  
11 that was a meeting allowing for people who can  
12 take off from work and are able to--

13 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: [Interposing] Your  
14 suggestion is very well taken and we will try to  
15 accommodate it. I think that that's certainly a  
16 concern that we've tried to address by televising  
17 these hearings. That you are on video, as  
18 everyone who is speaking is on video. And that  
19 certainly we welcome people to submit written  
20 testimony at their convenience through the  
21 website--the LATFOR website. And this is as good  
22 a time as any to cite that. Debra, what's the  
23 name--the address?

24 ASSEMBLY MEMBER DEBRA LEVINE, CO-

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2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE  
3 TASK FORCE ON DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH AND  
4 REAPPORTIONMENT: Info@Latfor.state.

5 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: LATFOR--

6 MS. FELICIANO: [Interposing]

7 Info@LATFOR.state.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LEVINE: You can call  
9 the Task Force at 212-618-1100 and we'd be happy  
10 to assist you in--

11 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: [Interposing] And  
12 that again is also for the record, any one  
13 viewing these proceedings, if you want to get to  
14 the LATFOR website, help us as a community  
15 advocate, to get citizens that are interested to  
16 look at the LATFOR website, to provide written  
17 testimony.

18 It doesn't have to be anything real  
19 formal, just people's thoughts. Emails are  
20 welcome. And we're trying to use the technology  
21 we have available to enhance citizen  
22 participation. So rather than even having to go  
23 to a hearing, someone can sit at their computer  
24 and indicate exactly what they are thinking. And



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2 that will be part of the official record of these  
3 proceedings. So help us get that word out, and  
4 we'll do all we can to accommodate the requests  
5 that you've made.

6 MS. FELICIANO: Thank you.

7 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: We would also  
9 point out that individuals who are working are  
10 represented here by the very groups that are  
11 testifying. Our assumption is that they are well  
12 networked into the people that they represent,  
13 when they speak for those individuals. And we  
14 are blessed by having a great many citizen  
15 groups, neighborhood groups, people who represent  
16 disenfranchised minorities, etcetera. Could we  
17 call Gregory Lobo Jost?

18 GREGORY LOBO JOST, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
19 UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING PROGRAM: Hi,  
20 good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to  
21 testify here today in the Bronx. My name is  
22 Gregory Lobo Jost. I am the deputy director of  
23 the University Neighborhood Housing Program,  
24 which is a non-profit affordable housing group

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2 that came out of community work in the northwest  
3 Bronx. And I'm also--mostly speaking on behalf  
4 of myself. I am a Bronx resident, as well as  
5 working in the Borough.

6 And while I support redistricting reform  
7 and independent redistricting, my hope right now  
8 is that, you know, whoever is drawing the maps  
9 does their best to keep real neighborhoods  
10 intact, along the lines of what both Senator  
11 Gustavo Rivera and Barbara Stronczner were saying--  
12 --just reiterate a little bit of what they say.

13 I live in the Norwood section of the  
14 Bronx, which is actually one of the neighborhoods  
15 that's very easy to draw its borders. And I  
16 worked in the Fordham Bedford section. And as  
17 was mentioned, you know, I cross Moshulu Parkway;  
18 I cross through three different assembly--state  
19 assembly districts in about six or seven minutes  
20 on my way to work. And if I continued another  
21 couple of minutes I'd be in a fourth assembly  
22 district.

23 And, you know, that--that--it really  
24 depends, though. It's a real contrast for us.

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2 So that--with our State Senate district--the 33rd  
3 district, we really feel like it's a great  
4 representation of common neighborhoods with  
5 common population demographics, places where  
6 people are--a real neighborhood feel. And the  
7 feeling feels really empowering.

8 While with our Assembly districts, it  
9 just feels like we're split up and the places of  
10 power of where the majority of people in those  
11 districts are--is far away. And we have no  
12 connection to those neighborhoods at all. And  
13 so, just from that sense--I really hope that the  
14 new districts that are drawn can model on more of  
15 what the 33rd Senate district is like, and keep  
16 real neighborhoods intact.

17 I know there's some other Senate  
18 districts that are completely not keeping  
19 neighborhoods together. They go around--that are  
20 not even contiguous in the Bronx, I think it's  
21 the 34th Senate district doesn't connect in the  
22 Bronx, there's two parts, but they go through  
23 Westchester. I'm just advocating for the point  
24 of view of keeping neighborhoods together. So I

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2 brought--you know, there's--I brought along a  
3 map. I make maps a lot, and I put them into the  
4 packet, but basically they're just showing, like,  
5 it's a neighborhood map from the Department of  
6 City Planning.

7 I don't think these are the perfect maps  
8 of what neighborhoods are. It's kind of  
9 subjective, but I think it's great to have  
10 participation by all of us in the community,  
11 citizens groups, neighborhood groups,  
12 individuals, and it would be great to have more  
13 input in terms of--not just at this stage, but  
14 maybe after some of the district maps are drawn,  
15 if they're in draft form and we can make  
16 comments--I think it would be great. Maybe we  
17 could be able to have some input on maybe saying,  
18 like, all right, these two neighborhoods, you  
19 know, they're--the demographics are what they  
20 are, but, you know, there's no historical  
21 connection. There's no real connection between  
22 those neighborhoods. And, you know, in addition-  
23 -that--that's really my main point.

24 I also support, you know, keeping the

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2 population deviation low. And really the whole  
3 point of counting prisoners in their home  
4 districts as well. But my real point is just  
5 that it would be great to have--for us to have  
6 more input on keeping neighborhoods intact in the  
7 new districting. Thank you.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.  
9 Assembly districts are 128,787. If your  
10 neighborhood is larger than that, some of it will  
11 wind up going to another district. If it's  
12 smaller than that, you'll have to absorb another  
13 district. And that's the hard part of  
14 redistricting, trying to keep neighborhoods  
15 together. One person, one vote makes that  
16 difficult on many occasions.

17 Ted Jefferson [phonetic]? Ted  
18 Jefferson? Phillipe Feblez [phonetic]? Phillipe  
19 Feblez? Rosa Ayola [phonetic]? Rosa Ayola? We  
20 will go back over this list and call any name  
21 where a person wasn't here--didn't get here yet.  
22 And we would hope that in all cases when we see a  
23 name, that something will be submitted in--in  
24 writing, if at all possible, as well. Cecilia

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2 Baez? Good morning.

3 CECILIA BAEZ: [Testimony read by  
4 Yudelka Tapia] Good morning. My name is not  
5 Cecilia Baez. My name is Yudelka Tapia. And I--  
6 when I came in, it was up to the 70 number and I  
7 have to go to work, and I know that she's not  
8 coming today. So I took her space. And I am  
9 Yudelka Tapia. And I have lived in this  
10 community for more than 20 years.

11 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Who's space is  
12 that that you were taking?

13 MS. YUDELKA TAPIA: Cecilia Baez--the  
14 one that--the name that you called.

15 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Oh, okay--

16 MS. TAPIA: [Interposing] She's actually  
17 working; she couldn't be here.

18 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Sure.

19 MS. TAPIA: When I came today, the list  
20 was up to the 70 numbers.

21 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Sure.

22 MS. TAPIA: And I also have to go to  
23 work.

24 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Yeah.

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2 MS. TAPIA: And I didn't want to miss  
3 the opportunity to--

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
5 Yeah, very good.

6 MS. TAPIA: --testify today.

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Okay.

8 MS. TAPIA: So I took her space. But my  
9 name is Yudelka Tapia. I am the elected district  
10 leader for the District 86, and a resident of the  
11 33rd district. And I've been living in this  
12 community for more than 20 years. And I've been  
13 a community advocate for the more than 20 years  
14 that I've been living in the Bronx. And I thank  
15 you for the opportunity to address you, regarding  
16 covering the current district impasses.

17 We understand that one of the biggest  
18 issues facing this Task Force is to ensure the  
19 Latina populations are well represented in all  
20 levels of government. Despite the status as the  
21 largest minority group in the United States,  
22 Latinos are dramatically under-represented in  
23 elected office. Although approximately 50  
24 million Latinos in the United States live, making

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2 up 17% of the nation's population, out of 535  
3 members of Congress, only 28--5% is Latino. This  
4 pattern of under-representation extends to the--  
5 to the state level also. In New York, only 2 out  
6 of 29 Congressional seats are Latino. A very  
7 small percentage of the Senate and the Assembly  
8 are Latino.

9 We are grossly underrepresented at all  
10 level in New York. The redistricting process  
11 forces this Task Force the opportunity to create  
12 at least one additional congressional district,  
13 where our community can elect a candidate of our  
14 choice. Such map would unite the communities of  
15 Washington Heights and the Bronx, and provide us  
16 the opportunity of a Latino majority district. I  
17 ask that you consider giving us this map. Thank  
18 you very much.

19 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you. Before  
20 calling our next witness, we'd like to  
21 acknowledge the presence of the Honorable Bill  
22 Perkins, New York State Senator. Senator, it's  
23 very good to see you. And thank you for  
24 attending today's proceedings. As a courtesy to



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2 our elected officials, if you would like to speak  
3 now or at some other time at this proceeding,  
4 please let us know. Good to see you, Bill.

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

6 Wilson Terrero?

7 WILSON TERRERO: Good morning. This is  
8 not going to be the first time you're going to be  
9 hearing from me, if you go to Westchester County.  
10 Good morning everyone, elected officials, members  
11 of the Task Force. My name is Wilson Terrero,  
12 I'm a council member of the city of Yonkers,  
13 representing the second council district. I live  
14 at Ox Street, Yonkers, New York. Thank you for  
15 the opportunity to address this body regarding  
16 the redistricting process.

17 We understand that your job is to adjust  
18 the lines of the New York State Legislature, as  
19 well as the Congress. To comply with one person,  
20 one vote requirement, for fair representation in  
21 all legislative bodies. It is evident, based on  
22 the census figures, that the biggest task facing  
23 this Task Force in its attempt to provide fair  
24 and accurate representation to all New Yorkers,

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2 it is the drawing of a number of additional  
3 Congressional and Senatorial majority Latino  
4 districts that will reflect the explosion of  
5 Latino population in New York. You have the  
6 challenges of insuring that Latinos are  
7 accurately and fairly reflected in this  
8 legislature.

9 Drawing the legislative maps with  
10 majority Latino population should be simple. One  
11 only has to look at the map to see where Latinos  
12 are concentrated. One congressional district,  
13 including the population of Washington Heights,  
14 the Bronx, the Yonkers--stands out.

15 I request that this Task Force give us  
16 such district that it brings together those--  
17 these communities of interest who share places of  
18 worship, shopping malls, places of work, and  
19 socio-economic interest, and allow us--and allow  
20 us to elect a candidate of our choice. Thank you  
21 for your time and consideration.

22 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
23 much, Councilman. Paola Martinez. Good morning.

24 PAOLA MARTINEZ: Good morning. Good

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2 morning, members of the Task Force. My name is  
3 Paola Martinez, and I live at 2289 5th Avenue,  
4 Apt 2S, New York, New York, 10037. I thank you  
5 for the opportunity to address this body  
6 regarding the current redistricting process.

7 I request that in drawing the new  
8 legislative districts in the state of New York,  
9 you can see that the rapid growth of the Latino  
10 population, the emergence of Latinos as the  
11 largest minority in the state, as per 2010  
12 census--requires the creation of majority Latino  
13 districts, or Latino opportunity districts that  
14 will allow us to elect candidates of our choice  
15 in numbers commensurate with our population.

16 I submit that in drawing the new  
17 legislative maps, you do not look at the  
18 residence of incumbents, or at the party makeup  
19 of these streets, or attempt to manipulate the  
20 numbers of districts for any party, or to secure  
21 unwarranted privileges of Legislative membership  
22 for yourself or others. For the lines to be  
23 fair, you must be blind to incumbents, party  
24 membership, and adhere to sensible standards.

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2 I ask you to give--I ask you to give us  
3 a map, that joining the Latino population of  
4 Washington Heights and the Bronx, provide us with  
5 the opportunity of electing a congress member of  
6 our choice, by giving us a majority Latino  
7 district. Thank you.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
9 much. Idelsa Mendez?

10 IDELSA MENDEZ: Good morning, members of  
11 the Task Force, my name is Idelsa Mendez and I  
12 live on 430 East 138th Street. I thank you for  
13 the opportunity to address you regarding the  
14 redistricting process.

15 The redistricting process has historic--  
16 historically protected incumbents including  
17 carving down competitive incumbent's homes out of  
18 the districts, and discouraging competition in  
19 the electoral process. The 2010 election, New  
20 York State had one of the lowest rates of voters'  
21 participation in the nation, as voters have  
22 become disenfranchised with the process. And  
23 part of it has to do with the redistricting  
24 issue.

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2 Reapportionment only comes once in a  
3 decade. And the public perception regarding  
4 redistricting is that New York legislators choose  
5 their voters. This commission is the only  
6 legally mandated process at this time, and I  
7 appreciate that this is a very complex process,  
8 that there is a lot that you have to consider.

9 I am requesting that in the end you make  
10 the right judgment calls and maybe voters will -  
11 - representation by voting. Latino voters and  
12 population of New York clamor for fair  
13 representations, for the conditions to be created  
14 that mean elect candidates of our choice.

15 Our growth calls for congressional  
16 district joining our Washington Heights and Bronx  
17 community, that will lead to the election of a  
18 Latino Congress member. We have only two out of  
19 29 Congress members; 19% of the population should  
20 have five. I ask the Task Force to uphold the  
21 spirit of the 1965 Voter Right Law, that we might  
22 have just representation. Thank you.

23 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
24 much.

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Let me ask you a  
3 question.

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Yes. Ray?

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Okay, let me ask  
6 you a question. Are you going to be submitting a  
7 plan or a map of the district?

8 MS. MENDEZ: Yes, we are in the process  
9 of submitting the map as well.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Yeah, I  
11 encourage everybody that when they come and speak  
12 and talk about a hope that they can, you know, do  
13 it, all right?

14 MS. MENDEZ: Oh, okay.

15 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Thank you.

16 MS. MARTINEZ: Thank you.

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

18 Rafaela Zapata?

19 RAFAELA ZAPATA: Good morning. Before I  
20 start, I would like to make an observation. I  
21 think--I see that it is a gender disparity in  
22 your Task Force. We need more women representing  
23 our communities.

24 My name is Rafaela Zapata and I live in

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2 East 149th Street in Yonkers. I thank you for  
3 the opportunity to address you regarding the  
4 current redistricting process.

5 I ask you today that in carrying out  
6 your duties, you avoid pitfalls of the last  
7 redistricting process in 2010, and produce maps  
8 that will accurately and fairly reflect the New  
9 York population and allow just representation.  
10 That at the end of the process we, the people,  
11 don't come to you and rightly accuse you of  
12 having manipulated the system that the Assembly  
13 can be dominated by one faction, of having us  
14 crush the voices of the people, of having reached  
15 the Senate district so that it is controlled  
16 through numeric and demographic trickery, of  
17 having protect incumbents that at the expense of  
18 the challengers and citizens, of having hacked up  
19 social communities in favors of political  
20 boundaries, of having failed to keep communities  
21 of interest together, and diluting the  
22 communities voice.

23 I ask that at the end of the process, we  
24 can come to you and say thank you for doing your

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2 job well. And making the interest of our  
3 community a priority. I ask you to give us at  
4 least one additional majority Latino  
5 congressional district, containing the Latino  
6 communities of Manhattan and the Bronx, that we  
7 might be fairly represented.

8 I ask that--I ask that you uphold the  
9 Voters Rights Act for my community. And as our  
10 president says--and I want--I would like you to  
11 take this into consideration. If the Latino  
12 community falls behind, this whole country--the  
13 United States, will fall behind. Thank you.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

15 Jose Cruz [phonetic]? Jose Cruz? Miguel Santana  
16 [phonetic]? Miguel Santana? Valentine Silvario  
17 [phonetic]? Valentine Silvario? Marita Del  
18 Torro [phonetic]? Marita Del Torro? Marita Del  
19 Torro? Eduardo Hopelman? Eduardo Hopelman.  
20 Good morning.

21 EDUARDO HOPELMAN: Good morning,  
22 everyone. Good morning. For the members of the  
23 Task Force, my name is Eduardo Hopelman. I live  
24 on 24 Cooper Street in Manhattan, and I would



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2 like to thank you for the opportunity to address  
3 you regarding the current district--

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
5 Excuse me, I'm having hearing--would you move the  
6 mic now so it's more directly pointed at you?  
7 There you go, okay.

8 MR. HOPELMAN: Okay, thank you.

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: That's better.  
10 Would you start over, please?

11 MR. HOPELMAN: I thank you for the  
12 opportunity to address regarding the current  
13 district process. I am requesting that you take  
14 into consideration the following information  
15 while drawing the new maps.

16 The U.S.--the U.S. census 2010 reported  
17 an increase in Latino population, 15.2 millions  
18 from 2000 to 2010. This means more than half of  
19 the total growth of U.S. population--27.3  
20 millions, the country's population increased by  
21 9.7% while the Latino population increase for  
22 43%.

23 In the state of New York, the Latino  
24 population increased three million. We're at

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2 136,718 or 18.2%. In the total population,  
3 Latinos are 20% of the New York City population  
4 and the majority in the Bronx.

5 According to the U.S. Constitution, the  
6 Constitution of the state of New York, the newly  
7 elected district to reflect this, among other  
8 things. This Task Force has the mission to draw  
9 a district according to 1965 Voter Rights Act,  
10 guaranteeing fair and just represented--  
11 representation to communities of interest.

12 According to the percents of the Latino  
13 population in New York, there should be five  
14 Latino Congress members. - - and 21 Assembly  
15 members. I ask that you create at least one  
16 additional Congressional district uniting the  
17 communities of Washington Heights, Inwood, the  
18 Bronx, and Yonkers. That may be--that may elect  
19 a candidate of our choice. Thank you.

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.  
21 Suzie Lazada [phonetic]? Suzie Lazada? Yeah,  
22 yeah, I will. Reverend Bill Mizell?

23 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Reverend, excuse me.  
24 Before you speak, if I'd ask those people in the

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2 back of the room to take conversations outside.

3 Please do not--please show respect for those that  
4 are speaking. Any conversations, please take  
5 them outside the door.

6 BILL MIZELL, REVEREND, BRONX/WESTCHESTER  
7 CLERGY: Thank you. Good aft--good morning, my  
8 name is Reverend Bill Mizell. I'm an Associate  
9 Pastor of Congregation of Care, Grace Baptist  
10 Church in Mount Vernon, New York. I represent a  
11 coalition of clergy from the Bronx and southern  
12 Westchester that have come in favor of the  
13 rewarding--redrawing of the 15th Congressional  
14 district, to represent northern Manhattan, the  
15 Bronx, and southern Westchester county.

16 The redistricting of the 15th  
17 Congressional district has a common thread that  
18 reflects the population with the common interest  
19 and the constituency for the advancement of  
20 minority representation in Congress as well as in  
21 the district. The 15th Congressional district  
22 that is being proposed by the Bronx in southern  
23 Westchester Clergy Coalition has been redrawn to  
24 reflect those who share a common economic,

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2 communal, cultural and political interest.

3 As clergy, many of our members move back  
4 and forth between Westchester County, the Bronx,  
5 and northern Manhattan, for worship, shopping,  
6 food, family, and other important goods and  
7 services. The mobility of the family and  
8 community residents from Harlem and Manhattan to  
9 the Bronx, and Mount Vernon and New Rochelle in  
10 Westchester County is not new. The movement has  
11 been consistent for decades and neighborhoods  
12 continue to maintain close ties.

13 The redrawing of the 15th Congressional  
14 district would bind these historical ties and  
15 give more political leverage and future  
16 connection to those who are already community and  
17 culturally related. As a member of the clergy, I  
18 can personally testify that there is a strong  
19 connection with clergy in Manhattan, the Bronx  
20 and Westchester count--County. We share pulpits,  
21 common values, and communal interests that uphold  
22 our community in the interest of those we serve.

23 It is not uncommon in New York State-  
24 wide races for clergy in Manhattan, the Bronx,

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2 and Westchester County, to coalesce on issues of  
3 interest in regards to crime and balance, housing  
4 and education, youth and seniors. The economic  
5 and housing makeup in the proposed districts of--  
6 is of similar value for many of our church  
7 members. They range from single family homes to  
8 high rise Mitchell-Llama buildings. Many of our  
9 members that make up these districts range from  
10 poor to middle class--hardworking families. They  
11 come to worship with similar concerns for their  
12 community, their jobs, and their children.

13 As clergy, we have answered the call to  
14 speak for the vi--voiceless and uplift the  
15 broken. And this--and these quality of life  
16 issues that have been raised in the past by  
17 clergy for residents, that there are similar  
18 anxieties when it comes to housing and jobs.

19 Throughout the proposed district from  
20 Manhattan to Mount Vernon, residents want to  
21 maintain the safety of the community and security  
22 of their family, and live comfortably without the  
23 threat of national cuts to assistance in housing,  
24 education, medical care, and only through fair

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2 representation can we assure that these services  
3 could--services and goods will be maintained.

4 The 15th congressional district being  
5 proposed is one of many districts that legally  
6 require minority representation. The boundaries  
7 being proposed in the 15th Congressional district  
8 allow for minority repress--representation where  
9 there has not been an African American  
10 congressional representative in the Bronx and  
11 Westchester.

12 The redistricting would allow for fair  
13 representation for the mainly African Americans--  
14 the many African Americans that reside in these  
15 neighborhoods of common interest. Therefore, the  
16 congressional district being proposed would not  
17 only be impartial but historical.

18 The Bronx and Westchester County Clergy  
19 Coalition also support fair representation for  
20 the 14th and 16th congressional districts, where  
21 the Latino population has grown over the last ten  
22 years. In conclusion, we would like to reiterate  
23 the importance of a minority district with people  
24 who have shared and continue to share common

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2 political, social, cultural interests. The  
3 redistricting of the 15th Congressional district  
4 will not only bring those interests together  
5 politically, but impartially and historically for  
6 the next ten years.

7 I'm sure the committee agrees that fair  
8 representation is the goal of redistricting. And  
9 we should do all we can to make it possible.  
10 That makes--this plan makes it possible.

11 Attached you will find a copy of the  
12 proposed map with the 15th Congressional  
13 distance--district that the Bronx and southern  
14 Westchester County Clergy Coalition is  
15 supporting. I thank you for your time and  
16 consideration in this matter.

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Reverend,  
18 thank you for your testimony. And we  
19 particularly appreciate a map being submitted as  
20 well. The district that's been proposed by  
21 several speakers, is one that would go from  
22 Washington Heights up through the--up to Inwood  
23 and through the west Bronx and then up. And I  
24 wonder what section--are you talking southwest

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2 Yonkers as well? Because you say southern  
3 Westchester County, or going over to Mount  
4 Vernon?

5 REVEREND MIZELL: Mount Vernon. I was  
6 speaking specifically about Mount Vernon.

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Would you need  
8 southwest Yonkers as well, to hit the map?

9 REVEREND MIZELL: No.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Just Mount  
11 Vernon.

12 REVEREND MIZELL: Yes.

13 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Okay, thank  
14 you very much. Luis Facundo. Good morning.

15 LUIS FACUNDO: Good morning. Mr.  
16 Chairman, members of the Task Force, my name is  
17 Luis Facundo and I live at 425 West 205th Street,  
18 New York City. I am also doing business in  
19 Yonkers and the Bronx. Thank you for the  
20 opportunity to address you regarding the  
21 redistricting process.

22 I am here to represent the thousands of  
23 people that do not know today the importance of  
24 this hearing. We understand that your job is to



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2 adjust the lines of the New York State  
3 Legislature, as well as the Congress, to comply  
4 with one person, one vote requirements for the  
5 fair representation in all legislative bodies.

6 It is evident, based on the census  
7 figures, that the biggest task facing this Task  
8 Force is an--is an attempt to provide fair and  
9 accurate representation to all New Yorkers. It's  
10 drawing of a number of additional congressional  
11 and senatorial majority Latino districts that  
12 will reflect the explosion of Latino population  
13 in New York.

14 You have a challenge of ensuring that  
15 Latinos are accurately and fairly reflected in  
16 its legislature. Drawing legislative maps with  
17 min--minority Latino population should be simple.  
18 The populations of Washington Heights, the Bronx,  
19 and Yonkers, for example, make a complete and  
20 contiguous map that joins community with many  
21 commonalities. They share shopping centers,  
22 churches, places of work. They should also  
23 share the members of Congress who represent it.

24 I request that this Task Force give such

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2 district that it brings together these  
3 communities of interest and allows us to elect a  
4 candidate of our choice.

5 Members of the Task Force, take for  
6 example the B-line bus service and the number one  
7 train. If you get in on the number one and run  
8 to 240nd street, and then you take the B-line to  
9 Carroll Avenue, you will notice the commonality  
10 of working class families, all together. As a  
11 difference, sometime when it's rain, a lot of  
12 these individuals get wet because a lack of  
13 protection from the elements. These are the  
14 points important.

15 We know what maps and geographic  
16 information has done to the process, but we're  
17 talking about people. For that reason, I ask and  
18 request to you--this body, which should respect  
19 the drawing of a legislative map with a majority  
20 Latino population. It should be simple. We are  
21 the labor force of the future of America. Thank  
22 you.

23 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
24 much. Marieta Estrella [phonetic]? Marieta

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2 Estrella? Miriam Morales [phonetic]? Miriam  
3 Morales? Facundo Knight [phonetic]? Facundo  
4 Knight? Francesca Pena [phonetic]? Francesca  
5 Pena? Brian Paul? Good morning. I would point  
6 out that if you're speaking out on behalf on  
7 Common Cause, that we have heard the message a  
8 number of times and would like to hear  
9 particularly anything that you want to add to  
10 that message.

11 BRIAN PAUL, RESEARCH AND POLICY  
12 COORDINATOR, COMMON CAUSE NEW YORK: Yes, good  
13 morning. Yes, I'll be offering specific  
14 testimony regarding the Bronx this morning.

15 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: I should add for the  
16 record that we saw you yesterday.

17 MR. PAUL: Yes.

18 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: And that I--

19 MR. PAUL: [Interposing] And will be at  
20 every hearing.

21 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: --look forward to the  
22 new developments that you're bringing to the  
23 table since yesterday.

24 MR. PAUL: Okay, thank you. Well, we'll

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2 be at every hearing in New York City, offering  
3 specific analysis for each borough. So thank you  
4 again for allowing me to testify.

5 My name is Brian Paul and I'm the  
6 Research and Policy Coordinator for Common Cause  
7 New York. As we've previously testified at other  
8 hearings, we continue to support redistricting  
9 reform and independent redistricting. And we'd  
10 also like to thank the Task Force for moving  
11 forward with its compliance with Chapter 57, of  
12 the laws of 2010 in a transparent manner, at the  
13 hearing yesterday.

14 For today's hearing in the Bronx, I will  
15 focus on providing an overview of the demographic  
16 changes in the borough and analysis of some  
17 issues with current district lines in Congress  
18 states--and Assembly. And as always, a more  
19 complete analysis is available online on our  
20 mapping democracy blog at  
21 [www.citizensredistrictny.org](http://www.citizensredistrictny.org).

22 Do you all have copies of the maps I've  
23 provided? Okay. Just to begin, you've gotten  
24 the neighborhood map from other folks. I'll skip

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2 over that. The neighborhoods of the Bronx are a  
3 complex mosaic. They range from dense urban  
4 concentrations to areas of single family homes  
5 that are essentially suburban in character.

6 While south and central Bronx is densely  
7 urban, Wakefield and the north of the borough is  
8 middle density and Riverdale in the northwest and  
9 some neighborhoods in the eastern half are  
10 essentially lower density suburbs as map two  
11 population density illustrates.

12 And there are some major socio-economic  
13 differences between certain areas of the borough.  
14 The south and central Bronx are much more densely  
15 populated and majority lower income tenants who  
16 work in blue collar and service sector jobs,  
17 compared to the more middle income east Bronx and  
18 the more affluent area of Riverdale in the  
19 northwest.

20 Overall the population of the Bronx grew  
21 by almost 4% since 2000 and this growth has been  
22 concentrated in the south central Bronx.

23 Neighborhoods that grew the most were Morrisania,  
24 and Crotona Park area. So in every region where

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2 we've looked at the factors driving population  
3 growth in New York State, we've found that it has  
4 been growth in the minority and immigrant  
5 communities that has helped boost the population,  
6 as others have testified today.

7 In the Bronx, the non-Hispanic white  
8 voting age population decreased by more than  
9 35,000, or 21%. And this pattern of white  
10 population decline in historically white majority  
11 neighborhoods in the outer areas of the borough  
12 is the same pattern that we've seen in Queens and  
13 we'll see in Brooklyn as well. It's a pattern  
14 that holds city-wide.

15 In contrast to the white population  
16 decline, non-Hispanic black voting age population  
17 of the Bronx grew by almost 20,000 or roughly 7%.  
18 But even more significantly, it has been growth  
19 in the Hispanic community, as many have said  
20 today, that has really boosted the borough's  
21 population. The Hispanic voting age population  
22 of the Bronx grew by close to a 100,000  
23 individuals in the last ten years, or almost 23%.  
24 The Bronx is now a majority Hispanic borough,

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2 with Hispanics accounting for over 51% of the  
3 voting age population.

4 One--if you look at map 9 in my  
5 testimony, one interesting pattern that reveals  
6 itself on a map of Hispanic population change in  
7 the last ten years, is the relative decline of  
8 the Hispanic population in Washington Heights and  
9 Manhattan, compared to strong growth in adjacent  
10 communities of the Bronx. And since these  
11 figures indicate that almost 19,000 Hispanics  
12 left Washington Heights since 2000, and there  
13 seems to be a movement into the Bronx of the  
14 Dominican population.

15 Unlike the situation we discussed  
16 yesterday, with the Asian population of Queens,  
17 for the most part--a Hispanic population in the  
18 Bronx, especially when you compare it to the  
19 situation in Queens with the Asian community, is  
20 much better represented by existing lines.

21 Regarding Congress and the State Senate,  
22 however, there are a few specific issues that  
23 should be looked at. The Bronx is currently  
24 divided between three congressional districts.

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2 Of these districts, only district 16 is entirely  
3 contained within the borough, encompassing the  
4 core of the south and central Bronx, with a solid  
5 Hispanic majority.

6 District 7 joins the east Bronx with a  
7 small area of Queens in the Elmhurst-Corona area.  
8 And while we object to the current line of that  
9 district in the Queens portion, the idea of  
10 dividing the Bronx between the south and central  
11 areas and the east, generally makes sense based  
12 on distinct socio-economic demographics.

13 As others have noted today, district 17  
14 is highly problematic, however. This district  
15 currently combines the black communities of the  
16 north Bronx and Mount Vernon with Riverdale, and  
17 then in a shape that snakes up the Hudson River  
18 to cross into Rockland County. Instead of  
19 following this strange gerrymandered shape, this  
20 district could instead join the north Bronx with  
21 the towns and cities of southern Westchester,  
22 including Yonkers, New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, and  
23 then going up the Long Island Sound to  
24 Portchester.



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2 And that district in that shape would be  
3 much better aligned with demographic  
4 commonalities, geographical common sense, and  
5 communities of interest.

6 In the State Senate, the Bronx is  
7 currently divided between six districts, four of  
8 which are a Hispanic majority, one of which is a  
9 black majority. While districts 28, 32, 33 are  
10 relatively compact, districts 31, 34, and 36 are  
11 some of the most oddly meandering districts in  
12 the state right now.

13 District 31 extends from Washington  
14 Heights and Riverdale far down into the upper  
15 west side along the Hudson River in a shape that  
16 actually cuts out many individual blocks from  
17 their surrounding neighborhoods. Now these lines  
18 were drawn ten years ago as a political  
19 gerrymander, and should be repaired in the new  
20 cycle. District 31 could remain based in  
21 Washington Heights, but should perhaps be joined  
22 with neighborhoods across the river and the  
23 Bronx, where the Dominican population has been  
24 growing. If this were done, there is still

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2 plenty of room for districts 28, 31, 32, and 33  
3 to remain based in the south and central Bronx  
4 areas.

5 If the section that is currently cut out  
6 and joined with district 36 were redistributed to  
7 these districts instead, this extension of  
8 district 36 from the north Bronx into this area  
9 violates many of the basic principles of good  
10 government redistricting, as it extends in a non-  
11 contiguous shape that blatantly divides  
12 neighborhoods. More areas of the north Bronx and  
13 Mount Vernon could be added to that--the  
14 rectangular core of district 36 to make up for  
15 the population loss.

16 Similarly, we leave that the inclusion  
17 of Fordham University area, into state district  
18 34, rather than one of the districts based on the  
19 central Bronx, is also misguided. And as Senator  
20 Rivera testified about neighborhood anchors, I  
21 think that neighborhood anchor belongs in a  
22 central Bronx-based district.

23 In the State Assembly, we've also heard  
24 someone testify about the division of Norwood,

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2 and that's the basic issue with the assembly  
3 districts right now, divided into three.

4 District 80 snakes over from the east  
5 across the park and in an unnecessary shape that  
6 could easily be avoided.

7 And in closing, I'd like to thank you  
8 once again for the opportunity to testify, and  
9 express my hope that you will seriously consider  
10 the information presented in this testimony, and  
11 the many testimonies of the local Bronx residents  
12 and elected officials offered here today, thank  
13 you.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

15 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you.

16 Discussions are helpful. Are you planning to  
17 submit maps for proposed districts?

18 MR. PAUL: Yes, we will be submitting  
19 maps for the complete state, all levels--probably  
20 in about a month from now, I would say.

21 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: I'm sorry, I couldn't  
22 hear you.

23 MR. PAUL: Early October.

24 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Early October.

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2 That's terrific, because this gives us a chance  
3 to discuss the time frame that the--there are a  
4 number of forces that are requiring the earlier  
5 than later establishment of lines to be proposed  
6 for the public scrutiny and the review of the  
7 legislature. So thank you for your participation  
8 and I encourage further input.

9 MR. PAUL: All right, thank you very  
10 much.

11 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: The Honorable Cynthia  
12 Cox?

13 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Actually--  
14 before you start, please, Ms. Cox, I want to say  
15 that Assembly member Dinowitz is here, and we're  
16 happy to see him.

17 HONORABLE CYNTHIA COX: Good morning,  
18 okay. Good morning.

19 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Good morning.

20 HONORABLE COX: I am the Honorable  
21 Cynthia Cox. I am very pleased to be here. I am  
22 an elected district leader of the 79th Assembly  
23 district, located in the Bronx. I reside in 800  
24 Concourse Village West, the Bronx, New York,

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2 which is known as Concourse Village. Concourse  
3 Village is--has over 1800 corporate units.

4 I am here to testify before you that New  
5 York State's Legislative task was for demographic  
6 research and reapportionment. As an elected  
7 public official, I offer you the testimony for  
8 this region to have the lines established at the  
9 Senate, Assembly, and Congress level. As elected  
10 judicial leader, what would you like to see  
11 structured as an appropriate representation line  
12 for these legislation bodies, namely the Senate,  
13 Assembly, and the Congressmen. Exactly what your  
14 attorney has stated.

15 We have drawn individual maps--will be  
16 submitted, with our recommendation on how the  
17 lines should be drawn for the Senate, Assembly  
18 and Congressmen. I strongly support our maps and  
19 recommendation, because this is the best way for  
20 our community to enjoy a better life. It's the  
21 best way to have a safe life for themselves and  
22 their families.

23 All the corporate of--owns of--at  
24 Concourse Village makes a vital contribute to our

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2 economic and our culture. They pay taxes, vote,  
3 every primary and general election. It's unfair  
4 to decrease the election represent--  
5 representation in the Senate, the Assembly, and  
6 the Congress. As our--as our representation is  
7 decreased, it will cause a severe hardship and  
8 burden on our community, especial our senior  
9 citizen, our youth, our single parents, our  
10 unemployed, our working families, and our  
11 neighbors who are struggling with their major  
12 sicknesses.

13 It is unfair to deny access to decent  
14 health care and basic human needs. It's only  
15 fair to draw the lines the way we recommend it.  
16 If the Assembly and Senate district under--  
17 underrepresentation, our community will suffer.  
18 Our probable need will be overlooked and not  
19 addressed until they have become big problems--  
20 more severe and difficult to solve. This is the  
21 results of increased costs. The increased costs  
22 will be passed onto the rest of the higher ta--  
23 higher taxes, less services, benefits to the  
24 community.

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2 Finally, because of the state, our  
3 economy is also the right thing to do. I urge  
4 you to support the lines and maps we have drawn  
5 for the legislative body of the Senate, the  
6 Assembly, and the Congress. Please support our  
7 recommendation.

8 Thank you for your attention to this  
9 important issue, and thank you for your  
10 commitment to the healthier representation,  
11 economic survival in all of the Bronx.  
12 Respectfully submitted, the Honorable Cynthia  
13 Cox, thank you.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
15 much. Do you have maps that you're submitting?

16 MS. COX: Yes.

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Okay, thank  
18 you, that's important. We'd like to receive  
19 them, during September if possible. John Garcia?  
20 John Garcia. Fernando Terado [phonetic]?  
21 Fernando Terado? Carmen Acosta? Good morning.

22 CARMEN ACOSTA, ASSOCIATION MUJERES  
23 PROGRESISTAS: Good morning, members, official--  
24 elected officials of the state of New York. My

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2 name is Carmen Acosta, and I represent the  
3 Association de Mujeres Progresistas, translated--  
4 the Association of Progressive Women. I am the  
5 secretary of that organization. And I stand  
6 before you because I believe that this is a very  
7 important issue for our community. Again, thank  
8 you for inviting the community to this hearing.

9           Unfortunately, many who would like to be  
10 here, that would not miss this opportunity--  
11 cannot be here because they are working, making  
12 ends meet, and keeping a roof over their family's  
13 head. It is the hope of the community that a  
14 hearing be scheduled during working hours and  
15 prefer--probably in Washington Heights area.

16           ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: During working  
17 hours or after working hours?

18           MS. ACOSTA: After working hours--off-  
19 working hours.

20           ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: What time  
21 would you like to see that begin?

22           MS. ACOSTA: I'd say between 7:00, 9:00,  
23 6:00, 8:00--those hours.

24           ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: If it was



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2 yesterday's hearing in Queens, add seven hours to  
3 7:00 at night, and you'll find out when you'll  
4 get out.

5 MS. ACOSTA: And we could be here all  
6 night, too. That--that's important--this is an  
7 important issue for us, and I don't think that  
8 anyone would be, you know--

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
10 Unless they had child-raising responsibilities  
11 and the babysitter had to get to school.

12 MS. ACOSTA: What I believe is that  
13 there are work--a work-able time frame that  
14 community can be here to participate. And I  
15 think that should be looked into--very important  
16 for us.

17 We're working people and--you know, we  
18 have those responsibilities as well, but we also  
19 like to be engaged civically--particularly in  
20 these kinds of meetings. So the Association of  
21 Women Progresista is a community-based  
22 organization that serves the communities of  
23 Washington Heights, Hamilton Heights, and Inwood.  
24 But I'm not limited to those areas of--and they

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2 serve in the areas of health care, education,  
3 immigration, and issues of domestic violence.

4 Our programs--AMP's programs are family  
5 focused and uniquely tailored to the needs--and  
6 very mindful of the time limitations of working  
7 women, head of household, and their children.

8 Congressional district 15 contains the  
9 areas that we serve. But for the past ten years,  
10 AMP has seen many of our participating families  
11 move to the adjacent neighborhoods of Highbridge,  
12 Kingsbridge, Marble Hill, and other parts of the  
13 northwest Bronx. Nevertheless, these families  
14 remain loyal to the programs that AMP offers,  
15 such as Dancercize, Play Streets--Clear  
16 [phonetic] programs to help combat childhood  
17 obesity. We welcome their participations in  
18 special events, in commemorating the Three Kings  
19 Days and midsummer Health Fair programs.

20 Families from across the Bronx come and enjoy AMP  
21 staple of activities and many other special  
22 projects that are both educational and enriching.

23 As part of its commitment, AMP will  
24 continue to help women and their families take

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2 advantage of services that are available within  
3 the district's seamless borders. The new  
4 district should reflect elements of a desirable,  
5 well-rounded, balanced block of Hispanic voters.  
6 It will unite social, cultural, racial, ethnic,  
7 and economic interests in that area.

8 Without a doubt, we'll be the subject of  
9 discussion and consideration in the next  
10 legislative session in Congress. Most  
11 importantly, reapportionment of the--of the  
12 congressional district 14, 15, and 16 will be  
13 significant and a necessity for several reasons.

14 One, the 2010 statistics of the census  
15 shows that there's a growing number in those  
16 districts of Hispanics. So that one Congressman--  
17 --Jose Serrano, which does a wonderful job, is not  
18 sufficient to fill the void and the challenges  
19 that lie ahead.

20 There are commonalities of issues, that  
21 affect the community, in education, economic  
22 opportunity, health and welfare, which demand  
23 more representatives, rather than less, with  
24 skills that can handle the increase in volume and

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2 culturally sensitive nature of the issues and the  
3 needs.

4 The shifting population of displaced  
5 tenants--its composition that is made up of a  
6 pattern of women who are single head of  
7 household, and a pattern of mobility that  
8 indicates that these diverse group of Hispanics  
9 are bidding for resources, that are  
10 interconnected. And that crisscross territories--  
11 northern Manhattan and northwest Bronx.

12 Act--activist Hispanic leaders have  
13 matured politically. And more than ever, are  
14 prepared for full civic engagement at the federal  
15 level of government. Our youngsters want to go  
16 to Washington D.C. to proclaim their rightful  
17 place at the table where decisions are being made  
18 about their future.

19 AMP has a duty again to support the  
20 redistricting efforts of the Coalition for Fair  
21 Representation. And we'll be remiss if we did  
22 not advocate for those families who are looking  
23 to have their voices heard in Congress. AMP  
24 believes that due to its natural progression, the

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2 reapportionment will be carved out in ways that  
3 include maximum cohesiveness of interest, and  
4 emerging political prowess among new immigrant  
5 voters that are contained in the areas of  
6 northern Manhattan and the northwest part of the  
7 Bronx.

8           There's a big presence of Hispanic  
9 families--on both sides of the I-87 corridor, who  
10 can be better served by an increase of elected  
11 officials that have lived the Hispanic  
12 experience. For these reasons stated above,  
13 Association de Mujeres Progresista supports the  
14 present proposal to redraw the lines as it is in  
15 the map submitted by the Coalition for Fair  
16 Representation. Reapportionment, where fair  
17 representation is achieved, is long overdue in  
18 our community. Thank you very much.

19           ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
20 much. Fredas Vina Moscosa [phonetic]? Fredas  
21 Vina Moscosa? Aldrin Bonilla? Good morning.

22           ALDRIN BONILLA, EX-CUNY IN THE HEIGHTS:  
23 Good morning, and thank you for your service on  
24 the Task Force. Since much of what I want to say

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2 has been stated, I'll just submit for the public  
3 record--

4 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: [Interposing] Mr.  
5 Bonilla?

6 MR. BONILLA: Yes?

7 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Could you be so kind  
8 as to pull the microphone closer to you?

9 MR. BONILLA: Yes, so I'll submit for  
10 the public record so as to not repeat and save  
11 some time, but I would like to offer my support  
12 for the redistricting map that represents and  
13 reflects the clear and compelling and growing  
14 community of interest that has taken shape over  
15 the decades in northern Manhattan--the northwest  
16 and west neighborhoods of the Bronx.

17 These neighborhoods roughly comprised of  
18 Washington Heights, Inwood, Marble Hill,  
19 Kingsbridge, Fordham, University Heights,  
20 Highbridge, that are connected through several  
21 key, heavily trafficked and utilized bridges--not  
22 least of which are the 181st Street bridge, 207th  
23 Street bridge, and 225th Street bridge. These  
24 bridges have--these communities, on average, are-

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2 -have more in common with each other than they do  
3 with the rest of their current congressional  
4 districts.

5 A newly redrawn congressional district  
6 that comprises these neighborhoods would align  
7 democratic representation with the demographic  
8 growth in shifts that have accelerated over the  
9 last decade, and reinforced the common lived and  
10 shared reality on the issues around immigration;  
11 housing stock and affordability; public  
12 transportation; road and bridge infrastructure;  
13 river front access and parkland use; small  
14 business job creation; education quality; school  
15 over-crowding and school construction, as well as  
16 non-profit social service agency capacity  
17 building.

18 The pressing and growing common lot of  
19 this community of interest make the  
20 unconventional possible. For example, a large  
21 northern Manhattan based non-profit organization,  
22 such as [foreign audio], being called upon to  
23 manage and operate several programs in the west  
24 Bronx, for youth services, immigration, women's

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2 services, and not least of which the much  
3 heralded mosaic Beacon school.

4 Or vice versa, a Bronx-based institution  
5 of higher learning such as Hostess Community  
6 College [phonetic] being called upon to create an  
7 extension program in Washington Heights-Inwood,  
8 to offer continuing education, licensing, and  
9 professional certificate programs.

10 I am a resident of the Bronx, but I am a  
11 former resident of Washington Heights, like so  
12 many other thousands of people who have made that  
13 transition. Nonetheless, the bridges that I  
14 speak of serve to unite us and coalesce us around  
15 northern Manhattan and the west Bronx. For play,  
16 work, prayer, economic activity and business  
17 activity, this community of interest--we cannot  
18 wait another ten years for the recognition and  
19 respect of this community interest that is  
20 growing and compelling. Let us not sit here ten  
21 years from now and have to then divvy up and  
22 carve up a net loss of two more congressional  
23 seats because people have decided to implement  
24 the teabowl hypothesis, and not vote--but vote



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2 with their feet and go elsewhere. Thank you.

3 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
4 much. Luis Ducos [phonetic]? Luis Ducos? Kenya  
5 Abru [phonetic]? Kenya Abru? Rafael Beaumont?  
6 Good afternoon.

7 RAFAEL BEAUMONT, 161ST STREET: Hi, good  
8 morning--good afternoon, it's after 12:00, yes,  
9 hi. Thank you for this opportunity. This is the  
10 very first time that I'm testifying before a  
11 congressional--legislative body, and I'm very  
12 happy to do so.

13 As a student of political science, I  
14 was--I was always expecting to see the  
15 legislative process in action, and this is the  
16 opportunity for me to see that. I am a member of  
17 a northern Manhattan, west Bronx commission for  
18 fair representation, and as such I am in support  
19 of redrawing the new lines, where a new--a new  
20 conger--congressional district is to be--or  
21 should be--or should be created.

22 I'm not so much interested in the--in  
23 the ethnic composition of any--of any district in  
24 New York. What I'm interested is in the

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2 political process and the legal process to take  
3 its natural or legal process. And that is that  
4 after a particular geographical area acquires a  
5 particular number of residents, according to the  
6 law, a new district or the lines should be  
7 redrawn.

8 And basically that's why I'm here--to  
9 support. That's why I became involved in--in my  
10 organization. And that's one of the things that  
11 I--I'm going to be working for, for the next few  
12 months.

13 I'm an educator. And one of the things  
14 that I explain to my students is that the  
15 American political process is one of the best one  
16 in the world, once--number one--once you learn  
17 how it works, and number two--once you are  
18 committed to it. And that's--and that's the  
19 reason why I'm here. And again, as an educator,  
20 one of the things that I'm planning to do is to  
21 organize workshops within my community to explain  
22 what's going on here so more people can become  
23 involved. And so more people can be--can--make  
24 come before you to urge you to--just to redraw

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2 another district as the law requires.

3 And again--I live in a community,  
4 Washington Heights, that has acquired a number of  
5 residents that are new--that--that according to  
6 the law, a new committee should be--a new  
7 congressional district should be created. And  
8 basically that's what I'm here for.

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: What do you  
10 teach?

11 MR. BONILLA: I'm sorry?

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: What do you  
13 teach, you say you're an educator?

14 MR. BONILLA: I teach preparation of  
15 legal documents. I have been doing this  
16 opportunity for the last five years. And I'm  
17 also a legal professional for the last 30 years.  
18 And I have been residing in New--in Washington  
19 Heights for the last 35 years. I was a member of  
20 my community board for seven years. So I'm  
21 really--I'm really committed to my community.  
22 That's why once- I found out that we have reached  
23 that--that number of residents, I'm here to urge  
24 you just to create another district, okay?

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Very good,  
3 thanks. Thank you very much for your testimony.

4 MR. BONILLA: Yeah, thank you for the  
5 opportunity.

6 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Yeah. Ramone  
7 Murphy [phonetic]? Ramone Murphy? Marcia  
8 Garcia? Marcia--ah. Good afternoon.

9 MARCIA GARCIA, CLUB DE LEONES: Good  
10 afternoon, members of the Task Force and elected  
11 official of the State of New York. My name is  
12 Marcia Garcia, and I reside at Washington--I am a  
13 resident of Washington Height and Inwood section  
14 of Manhattan.

15 I am representing the New York Leone  
16 Club, which is a club that has served our  
17 community for many years. And most of the  
18 members reside in this area. I am also a member  
19 of a northern Manhattan and west Bronx Coalition  
20 for Just Representation.

21 I am here today in front of this  
22 commission to request consideration for map  
23 presented by our Coalition to have a  
24 congressional representation. To defend the

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2 interests of our people, we are a minority  
3 community in need of numerous services such as  
4 housing, more school, health care. These  
5 services could be only obtained by having a good  
6 congressional representation from somebody  
7 familiar with our need. That is the reason why  
8 it's so important to us to obtain at least two  
9 congressional seat. I thank you for the  
10 opportunity to have a voice in this important and  
11 much needed process, thank you.

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

13 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Father Ricardo  
15 Dajardo [phonetic]? Ricardo Dejardo? Jose  
16 Zabala? Good afternoon.

17 JOSE ZABALA, ZABALAALDIA.COM-181ST

18 STREET: Buenos dias.

19 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Buenos dias.

20 MR. ZABALA: [Foreign audio]

21 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Do you  
22 understand?

23 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Yo entiendo  
24 pequito, pero. . .

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2 MR. ZABALA: Okay, [Foreign audio].

3 Okay, my nombre is Jose Zabala. [Foreign audio].

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Muchas  
5 gracias.

6 [Applause]

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: [Foreign audio]

8 MR. ZABALA: [Foreign audio]

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Basically, what  
10 he testified to--and we apologize for not  
11 translating, but I will do that now. Basically  
12 what he testified to was regarding Washington  
13 Heights and the Bronx, which several other  
14 individuals had testified to that, and they're  
15 recommending an additional congressional district  
16 with the opportunity to elect a Latino in the  
17 5th--in the Washington Heights Bronx area.

18 And basically what I said to him was  
19 thank you for his testimony, and that we will  
20 take his recommendations into account, as we will  
21 everybody else who has testified. Thank you.  
22 Excuse me?

23 [Inaudible conversation with audience  
24 member]

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Well, I just  
3 translated, thank you. We can move on, sir.

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Tony Matta  
5 [phonetic]? Tony Matta? Ubaldo Santos  
6 [phonetic]? Ubaldo Santos? Altagracia Iraldo  
7 [phonetic]? Altagracia Iraldo? Sandra Harris  
8 [phonetic]? Sandra Harris? Wilma Alfonso  
9 [phonetic]? Wilma Alfonso--Alonso? Luis Para  
10 [phonetic]? Luis Para? David Williams? Steve  
11 Santana.

12 STEVE SANTANA: Good morning, to the  
13 Task Force. Thank you. I would like to thank  
14 you guys for the opportunity--to give us the  
15 opportunity to present ourself to you guys to let  
16 you know the needs that we have. To have a  
17 congressional seat together in the area,  
18 basically represented by Latino. Basically  
19 leaving Latinos there--we have a lot of needs.

20 We need a representative for us to  
21 understand our culture, to understand that we  
22 need more support from the federal government.  
23 To understand the opportunity that we are looking  
24 for when we come to this country. These areas

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2 basically on the upper Manhattan side, Washington  
3 Heights and the west Bronx, where I live, has  
4 been not well represented. And we'll--we want  
5 you to take into consideration the needs that  
6 these re--resident have. Please take into  
7 consideration that--the needs that we have.  
8 Thank you very much.

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Leonida  
10 Garcia? Leonida Garcia. Good afternoon.

11 LEONIDA GARCIA: [Foreign audio].

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
13 No, excuse me. Pardon me. If this is to be  
14 productive for everyone in the room, I would ask  
15 if somebody might translate at the same time.

16 MS. GARCIA: [Translated through Mr.  
17 Lopez] Okay. The distinguished members of the  
18 committee, of the Task Force, my name is Leonida  
19 Garcia. I'm a resident--I'm sorry? Of east of  
20 the Bronx. [To Ms. Garcia].

21 MS. GARCIA: West Bronx.

22 MS. GARCIA: [Translated through Mr.  
23 Lopez] West Bronx, thank you. I came to ask you  
24 that you take into consideration the necessity of



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2 the Hispanic in the area, that we should have  
3 representation at the level of Congressman--  
4 Congressperson. And that they represent also our  
5 language and culture. And our interests,  
6 economic and social. The high cost of living has  
7 taken over a lot of my families and friends--and  
8 a friend of ours that a restaurant from the area--  
9 --that they have to be--they moved from the area  
10 in the east of the Bronx, to form a new community  
11 close to the area. [To Ms. Garcia] Look--I'm  
12 sorry, say that again, I'm sorry. I lost you  
13 there.

14 MS. GARCIA: Okay. [Foreign audio]

15 MS. GARCIA: [Translated through Mr.  
16 Lopez] Nonetheless, them--the same as other  
17 Latinos, they cross daily. They cross the north  
18 of Manhattan daily, so they can receive basic  
19 service, like medicine, doctors, food, education,  
20 work, and civic involvement in the community.  
21 They are a legal resident of the Bronx, and they  
22 receive service in the community.

23 I ask you--oh, why don't they get the  
24 service in the new area? They tell me they don't

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2 know the assistant of a new service in the area.  
3 And they don't know where their representatives  
4 are located--where they live. I came here today  
5 to ask you that you should take into  
6 consideration our necessities that we of Latin in  
7 these two communities are facing, north of  
8 Manhattan, east of--west of the Bronx.

9 MS. GARCIA: Yeah, okay.

10 MS. GARCIA: [Translated through Mr.  
11 Lopez] Of the Bronx--that they have in common.  
12 And that they will have--they will give us  
13 opportunity so we can obtain political  
14 representation in the area. [To Ms. Garcia] I'm  
15 sorry, I lost you right there. Go back again.  
16 [Interpreting] So that they can give us  
17 opportunity--political representation--oh  
18 federal, okay, representation. [To Ms. Garcia]  
19 Go ahead. [Interpreting] Capable to provide us  
20 the resources--the resource--necessary resource  
21 so they can empower us--so they can empower us to  
22 this level.

23 We are asking this commission that you  
24 take the decision--correct decision so you can

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2 protect this community--the Spanish community.  
3 That we live in both counties--we have com--hold  
4 on--common interests--common interests--common  
5 interests. We consider this is a very just  
6 cause--right cause to make sure that you do this,  
7 of course. And correct. Thank you. Ethical and  
8 correct. That your decision should be ethical  
9 and correct.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
11 much for your testimony, and we thank Welquis  
12 Castro, a member of the Task Force, for  
13 translating. Lopez--I'm sorry, I'm looking at  
14 Mr. Castro as I say that. Luis Espinal? Good  
15 afternoon.

16 LUIS ESPINAL: Good afternoon. Good  
17 afternoon, Honorable member of the Committee.  
18 Good afternoon everyone. My name is Luis  
19 Espinal, and I am here representing the northern  
20 Manhattan and west Bronx Coalition for Fair  
21 Represent--Representation. Please allow me to  
22 thank you for the opportunity to appear on record  
23 supporting the creation of a congressional  
24 district that will allow residents of the

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2 northern Manhattan and west Bronx communities to  
3 have fair representation in term of cultural,  
4 linguistic, and socio-economical background.

5 During the last four decades, upper  
6 Manhattan, as comment by the census data, has  
7 been a stronghold for the Latino community as  
8 portrayed by the professional businesses,  
9 community and faith based organization and  
10 educational institution in this area.

11 In the last two decades, there has been  
12 a spill of residents from upper Manhattan  
13 coalition into the western part of the Bronx.  
14 The 2010 census data clearly tracks this  
15 movement. This shift is practically - - as we  
16 witness the increase of public transport--  
17 transportation within this contiguous community  
18 at the main connection points between upper  
19 Manhattan and the west Bronx. Bronx 12, Brown  
20 Street, Bronx 36--as well as numerous taxi bases.

21 Those who have relocated to the western  
22 part of the Bronx continue to use--to use the  
23 upper part of Manhattan island--not only to visit  
24 relatives and friends, they remain in the old

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2 neighborhood back also to continue getting  
3 essential services such as health care, shopping,  
4 civic, education, and laser.

5 While crossing the new political lines  
6 of New York City and State, congressional  
7 district, you now have before--you now have  
8 before you a historical opportunity to provide  
9 this similar community, who share the same  
10 linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic values  
11 with the representation and voice at the federal  
12 level. This is the--demographically possible  
13 while preserving the political representation at  
14 the federal level of the African American  
15 community to the south of the Puerto Rican  
16 community to the west.

17 Honorable commission member, I call on  
18 you to marry with the history by allowing your  
19 action and decisions be fair, just and ethical.  
20 I would like to make a simile between this good  
21 opportunity that I'm having right now, in  
22 connection with that one voice that we could have  
23 at the federal government, okay? At the federal  
24 level, all right? Thank you.

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
3 much. Alanda Sancho--Sanchez?

4 ALANDIS SANCHEZ: Good morning.

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Good  
6 afternoon.

7 MS. SANCHEZ: Good afternoon. Actually  
8 we came here at 10:00, yeah, I see why you're  
9 here when you say seven hours.

10 Okay, my name is Alandis Sanchez, and  
11 I've been a business owner for over 20 years in  
12 this community, district 86. I'm here  
13 representing northern Manhattan and west Bronx  
14 coalition for fair representation. Please allow  
15 me to thank you for the opportunity to appear on  
16 record supporting the creation of a congressional  
17 district that would allow residents of northern  
18 Manhattan and west Bronx communities to have fair  
19 representations in terms of cultural, linguistic,  
20 and socio-economic background.

21 I--with this--I am going to support  
22 something with my own experience of what it's  
23 been living in Washington Heights and moving into  
24 the Bronx as a teenager. I was expressing to Mr.

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2 Castro yesterday, when we spoke about this issue.  
3 I said this is a very important issue for me. We  
4 do not want to wait another ten years, because my  
5 experience was that even though my family moved  
6 to the west Bronx, I didn't feel familiar with  
7 the new neighborhood.

8 Everything I did in Washington Heights--  
9 I went to school in Washington Heights, and if I  
10 was--if I wasn't empowered by being among my  
11 community, I would have probably not been lucky  
12 enough to have good grades, to be able to go to  
13 the school that I wanted to.

14 Most of my classmates had to go to a  
15 zone school, which is decided by your district.  
16 Which meant that I would have had to go to  
17 Roosevelt, which wasn't a very good school at  
18 that time. Which really panics me. I was lucky  
19 enough, like I said, to have good grades and be  
20 accepted into one of the best schools in New  
21 York. And it was on 135th Street and Convent  
22 Avenue [phonetic], which was Manhattan. It was  
23 very convenient. I loved it.

24 I think our children need to be--they

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2 need to be empowered by where they come from.  
3 And this is--one of the things that I loved when  
4 I real--when I actually realized this--that New  
5 York was a boiling point of all cultures. And  
6 until that time that I really understood that, I  
7 was--I was--felt out of place. But at the time  
8 that I was empowered by the knowing that, not  
9 only us Latinos are here, Italians are here,  
10 Jewish are here, and they all have a place in  
11 Congress, as a federal--in the federal level.

12 We also want a piece of that boiling  
13 point at--to be represented and to understand the  
14 needs of our community. I am very strongly  
15 advocating for something that would actually make  
16 my kids, because--for me it's very important to  
17 keep my roots. I have a toddler. I have a baby.  
18 And I am--I am doing my work to keep them knowing  
19 that they are Latinos. They have a Spanish last  
20 name. And I'm very proud of it. I want them to  
21 be empowered by it--by it. I don't want them to  
22 be feeling that they are out of place because  
23 they come to be born in a place where they have  
24 no representation.



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2 So for me, it is very important that  
3 these lines are rearranged in a way--to be  
4 honest, the first time I came to the--to the  
5 idea, I was lost. I was like--I don't understand  
6 how this is going to work. Northern Manhattan,  
7 west Bronx--I thought districts were supposed to  
8 be--and when I looked at it in that perspective  
9 of how you want to be represented as a community  
10 that have the same worships, that have the same  
11 language, that have probably the same needs, I--I  
12 totally understood.

13 I said--of course we need that, of  
14 course. I'm going to be there and I will be  
15 there all the way. This is the opportunity that  
16 we were--we've been looking for. I came here  
17 when I was seven. Well--I'm 40 years old and  
18 I've been here so many times. And this is part  
19 of my community, but I really understand that--I  
20 feel American. But I understand that we have a  
21 community that will--that it's still coming in,  
22 and we're still going to be a boiling point for a  
23 long, long, long time.

24 I would really appreciate if you would

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2 honor our commission members, our cultural marry  
3 your view with the history allowing us to the  
4 action of fair decision and ethical--and we would  
5 really, really, really be so happy to actually  
6 see this happen now. Thank you.

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
8 much.

9 MS. SANCHEZ: Did you have a question.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Yeah, Senator  
11 Dilan.

12 SENATOR DILAN: No, we'd just like to  
13 thank you.

14 MS. SANCHEZ: Okay.

15 SENATOR DILAN: Okay, I just want to, on  
16 behalf of State Senator Nozzolio, our co-chair,  
17 acknowledge the presence of State Senator  
18 Vemanette Montgomery from Kings County. Welcome  
19 and thank you for your presence.

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.  
21 It's good to see you, Senator. Yocasta Polanco  
22 [phonetic]. Yocasta Polanco.

23 MALE VOICE: Can someone take her spot?  
24 She's not here.

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Oh. Could I  
3 ask that we go through the list first, and then  
4 we would allow you to--because that's basic--

5 MALE VOICE: [Interposing] Because we  
6 did that before, you know, we could do that--

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
8 Well, because we made the mistake before, we  
9 should continue to be consistent? Very well, at  
10 the--at the recommendation of our local host. Go  
11 ahead, sir, and give us your name.

12 DAVID WILLIAMS: Okay, my name is David  
13 Williams. [Foreign audio]

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Are you going  
15 to--hold on a minute. Do you want to do it, Ray?

16 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Let's do it  
17 again. Okay.

18 MR. WILLIAMS: My name is David  
19 Williams, right?

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Yeah, si.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: [Interpreted through Mr.  
22 Lopez] The person in this forum is to establish  
23 the interest that the Dominican community and the  
24 African community has to--so they get recognized

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2 something that was establish in the 2000 census.  
3 That we recognize the amount of Hispanics that  
4 they live in this side, in the county of Bronx.  
5 And that this requires that we reach a level of  
6 federal representation, an adequate and dignified  
7 of representation in the federal government, so  
8 we can defend our interests and our rights.

9 Twenty two years I've been  
10 superintendent of the Bronx. I--I have seen the  
11 necessity of our community and the growth of our  
12 community. I have the perception that is--this  
13 is the right time that we have a representation--  
14 federal representation that can carry on the help  
15 that our--that our community needs.

16 The same as the upper Manhattan, like  
17 the Bronx, they have 75% of business people that  
18 they contribute economically to the growth of  
19 the--of the--Manhattan, the city of New York.  
20 That is justified that in both counties that we  
21 have a dignified representation. And have the  
22 perception that this committee has a  
23 responsibility--so they can have the  
24 responsibility--the historic responsibility to

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2 make the impossible a reality.

3 For the next elections--federal--our  
4 county has--want a representative--federal  
5 representative. And lastly, I want to inform  
6 that the numbers--that the census came out in the  
7 two counties justify--they justify the position  
8 that we are just discussing right now. We came  
9 to ask for and justify the reason why they should  
10 do a federal representation, so we can recognize  
11 it.

12 I want to apologize that I came and  
13 spoke in my language, but it is the language of a  
14 lot of different people--well known people.  
15 Thank you.

16 SENATOR NOZZOLIO: Thank you very much.  
17 I'd like to acknowledge the presence of the  
18 Honorable Larry Seabrook, a former colleague.  
19 Great to see you. Yajira Ramirez [phonetic]?  
20 Yajira Ramirez? Nelson Castro? Nelson Castro--  
21 he spoke. Abraham Jones?

22 ABRAHAM JONES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
23 CLAREMONT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER, INC.: Good  
24 afternoon. My name is Abraham Jones. I am the

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2 executive director of Claremont Neighborhood  
3 Centers, a community based organization in the  
4 Bronx. I also stay here as a resident of the  
5 Bronx. And also I serve on the Executive Trustee  
6 Board at my church, the Bible Church of Christ--  
7 which is located in the Bronx. We also have a  
8 location in Mount Vernon. So we have a community  
9 of interest there.

10 I'd like to just share with you a couple  
11 of thoughts that I have. I am sitting here, as  
12 we are looking at redistricting. And I'm  
13 thinking about the long and the very, very hard  
14 fought battle that was won through the Voting  
15 Rights Act. I'm thinking about all the  
16 challenges that were faced and how, in the end,  
17 we were successful.

18 And so I'm here because I have a concern  
19 of making sure that communities of color still  
20 stay united. I'm also here for another issue and  
21 that's the issue of the count for prisoners. As  
22 we look at the community remaining united, I  
23 think that through this long, hard fought battle,  
24 that we must make--ensure--we must ensure that

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2 those communities that have worked and worked and  
3 worked and been supported by elected officials  
4 still remain united.

5 In my work with the Board of Elections,  
6 as a coordinator, I cannot tell you how very,  
7 very disenchanting it is for me to have to turn  
8 away voters. Because they come to the polling  
9 site; they find out that--that their district or  
10 the--where they're supposed to vote is--whether  
11 it's across the street or across town, they're  
12 disenchanted, they're angry, they're upset. And  
13 many often just refuse to go across town to cast  
14 the ballot because they feel that they've now--  
15 once again, been disenfranchised.

16 And so it is important that you  
17 understand that people who have become accustomed  
18 to voting and knowing who their representatives  
19 are, that we make sure that they don't remain  
20 confused. We're talking about single families;  
21 we're talking about seniors which live in our  
22 communities. As Executive Director of Claremont  
23 Neighborhood Centers, we work with all  
24 populations of people. We work with--for the

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2 census, we was a site, in which we encouraged  
3 people to vote. We encouraged people--I'm sorry,  
4 to--not to vote, I'm sorry. We encouraged people  
5 to take the census to be counted. To be counted.

6 In my organization, we work with all  
7 populations of people. I've done work with  
8 immigrants. And so I'm listening to a lot about  
9 different populations and I'm--I got stuck on one  
10 word--voting age. But I'd like to submit to you,  
11 gentleman, that because someone is voting age, it  
12 does not mean that they can legally vote. And I  
13 know that this may not be politically correct;  
14 however, it is politically true. And so I just  
15 want to submit that to you for your  
16 consideration.

17 And, in leaving, I just would like to  
18 read something to you--actually from the Voting  
19 Rights Act, section five, which states that, "it  
20 should consider the effect of the proposed  
21 changes. And will the proposed change lead to  
22 retrogression." And that's an interesting word,  
23 "retrogression." Will any of these changes lead  
24 to "retrogression"--worsening of the position of



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2 minority voters. For instance, a proposed plan  
3 may effectively decrease the number of minority  
4 elected officials as well as decrease the voting  
5 strength of the minority group. Thank you.

6 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

7 [Applause]

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Maria Luna?

9 Maria Luna? There she comes. Good afternoon.

10 MARIA LUNA, DISTRICT LEADER AD 71: Good  
11 afternoon. Well, I came early in the morning,  
12 but I am happy to be here with all of you today.  
13 My name, as you know, is Maria Luna. I was born  
14 in Santiago, the Dominican Republic. I am a  
15 proud, naturalized American citizen. I am a  
16 resident of Washington Heights, in the other side  
17 of the river.

18 As a citizen of this great nation, I  
19 have the opportunity to participate in the  
20 political life, engaging my time mainly in  
21 educating other members of my communities and  
22 newly immigrants about our political system and  
23 the responsibility to join with others in the  
24 bettering of all equally.

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2 I am the only Latina to be elected as  
3 the first biracial of the New York State  
4 Democratic Party, and the first Dominican  
5 American elected to a party position here in New  
6 York. I'm a district leader on the 71st Assembly  
7 district. I'm also a member of the New York  
8 State Democratic committee. Let me add that I'm  
9 also the first Dominican American ever elected as  
10 a member of the Democratic National Committee  
11 serving on the Credentials committee [phonetic].

12 I was an elector placed to President  
13 Obama in 2008, and a delegate to many  
14 presidential democratic conventions--going back  
15 to Jimmy Carter.

16 So here I am, with a very significant  
17 appeal to this commission, to see me as a voice  
18 for the newly organized northern Manhattan/west  
19 Bronx Coalition for Fair Representation. Our  
20 goal is that you, distinguished members of this  
21 committee, will recognize the importance at this  
22 time, based on the figures of the U.S. census--  
23 the 2010 census, and considering approve our  
24 recommendation of creating a congressional

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2 district that will allow the residents of our  
3 communities to see fulfilled the promise of the  
4 lands of opportunities.

5 You will hear in this hearing about our  
6 Latino linguistics, socio-economic background,  
7 and everything else. How we have done--how we  
8 have grown in numbers, but this should not be  
9 enough for you to agree to our requests.

10 What we hope you do is to be fair and  
11 transparent. Recognize our contribution, and  
12 then one day soon, one of us will serve as  
13 representative in the United States Congress.

14 There has always been resistance to  
15 fully embrace equality for all. But the  
16 increasing number of Latinos in the map that I  
17 presented today--I submitted the ten copies that  
18 I was asked to submit--also we put it online,  
19 that this is a historic opportunity for all here  
20 in New York--in New York state, to share--to  
21 share equally in the decision makings at the  
22 congressional level. And we hope you make a  
23 decision based on facts, not on emotions.

24 I also would like to apologize. Some of

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2 our--the people who came, they are, you know, a  
3 member of our coalition have said that they are--  
4 we are lacking services, and so on and so on.  
5 Each one have a right to say--to make a statement  
6 said. We don't want to offend anybody. We need  
7 to make sure that we leave together with all the  
8 groups and that we have the same opportunities of  
9 representing each other.

10 I always tell everybody, when I register  
11 people to vote, and to encourage people to  
12 participate--it's just not a color of the skin  
13 only that is a fact. We need to see how the  
14 person is going to deliver for everybody equally.  
15 We have been served highly by Congressman Charles  
16 Rangel, by Jose Serrano, for--and Congressman  
17 Engel, we have also been represented highly at--  
18 the congressional delegation of New York state is  
19 one of the best. We need to continue that.

20 We also have to be part of the same  
21 table. We want to make sure that everyone feels  
22 that we can--that we are brothers and sisters,  
23 that we need to continue working for the future  
24 of our country, the future of our children. So

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2 it's not a matter of color, height and how tall,  
3 and how heavy, and how skinny we are. We need to  
4 reassure that we respect each other, that right  
5 now we have the opportunity--since in New York,  
6 we are losing two congressional seats.

7 People have to understand that by  
8 drawing lines just based on the way I speak, the  
9 way I sound, the way I look--is not really the  
10 fair way of doing things. We need to share at  
11 the table equally--as I said before, but also  
12 take into consideration the increasing numbers of  
13 Latinos. That also needs to be sure that they  
14 are inclusive. They are going to be part of the  
15 seams of our particular state.

16 So I hope that you as a commission, take  
17 into consideration our request, is not fighting  
18 with each other, it's also only participating  
19 with each other that is important to us. Thank  
20 you so much.

21 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.  
22 Ana Garcia [phonetic]? Ana Garcia? Jose Cruz?  
23 Jose Cruz? Dr. Hazel Dukes?

24 [Laughter]

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Good  
3 afternoon.

4 DR. HAZEL N. DUKES, PRESIDENT, NAACP NYS  
5 CONFERENCE: [Testimony read by Biarni Burke] I  
6 guess you know there's a need to clear up one  
7 thing. I am Biarni Burke, I am the President of  
8 the Bronx branch NAACP.

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: What is your  
10 name, sir?

11 MR. BIARNI BURKE: Burke--Biarni Burke.

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Biarni Burke.

13 MR. BURKE: Yes.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Representing  
15 Hazel Dukes?

16 MR. BURKE: Ah, yes.

17 [Laughter]

18 MR. BURKE: Thank you. Thank you, Task  
19 members, for allowing me to give testimony as to  
20 why it is important that the 15th congressional  
21 district remain intact as a traditionally African  
22 American congressional district.

23 In my testimony, I will seek to outline  
24 the reasons why the 15th Congressional district

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2 is so very important to the residents of Harlem  
3 and to African American communities throughout  
4 the United States, and why it should be expanded  
5 through African American neighborhoods in the  
6 Bronx and Westchester County, in order to  
7 preserve our historic legacy and quality  
8 congressional representation.

9 As you know, the 15th congressional  
10 district is a voting rights district, protected  
11 by section five of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.  
12 Historically, efforts have been made to preserve  
13 the 15th Congressional district, given the  
14 seniority of this district and the historic and  
15 every-day significance of what it means to have a  
16 Harlem district. This deference to the Harlem  
17 district is not due to political influence, but  
18 the true needs of our people for a guaranteed  
19 voice in Congress. Without it, Manhattan would  
20 not have a single African American federal  
21 representative, nor the political involvement  
22 that we so cherish throughout Harlem.

23 Since 1945, Harlem has had two  
24 Congressman--Adam Clayton Powell, Junior, and

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2 Charles B. Rangel. This speaks to the power  
3 which this district gives our residents and the  
4 power that our people give to the representatives  
5 of this district, the power that allowed  
6 Congressman Powell to become the first African  
7 American - - of any congressional committee, and  
8 the power that allowed Congressman Rangel to  
9 ascend to the chairmanship of the powerful Ways  
10 and Means Committee.

11 The NAACP, along with both Congressmen,  
12 has successfully advanced our agenda,  
13 concurrently with the advancement of our elected  
14 officials. Without the Harlem district, there  
15 would be no Federal Voting Rights Act. Without  
16 the empowerment of African Americans in the  
17 north, it could be said the Civil Rights Act, the  
18 Voting Rights Act, and countless other federal  
19 mandates aimed to give our people the rights we  
20 have always deserved, would have gone down as a  
21 one-sided argument, not the complex social  
22 movement that we still foster today.

23 With the help of Congressman Rangel and  
24 Congressman Powell, we have brought more federal



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2 funding into impoverished inner cities. We have  
3 created empowerment zones, aimed at stimulating  
4 job creation, education and business development.

5 We have ended apartheid in South Africa.  
6 We have reimagined the possibilities of our  
7 people, given all African Americans throughout  
8 our society faith and hope, and helped pave the  
9 way for our first African American President,  
10 Barack Obama.

11 Some may say otherwise, but we in Harlem  
12 know that is imp--that is because of our leaders  
13 whom we first fostered before any other district  
14 in the nation, that we can thank our rising power  
15 and community improvement.

16 As you know, all is not well in Harlem.  
17 We have unemployment beyond the city, state, and  
18 national averages. Most importantly among young,  
19 black males. We have high levels of poverty  
20 among our children and our elderly above the  
21 city, state, and national averages. More people  
22 from our district rely on social services,  
23 subsidized housing, subsidized medical care above  
24 city, state, and national averages.

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2 Our district needs all the attention it  
3 deserves, and cannot--and should not be diluted,  
4 but rather strengthened. Unfortunately, many  
5 areas in the Bronx and lower areas of Westchester  
6 County suffer the same problems and have a  
7 similar demographic makeup to the 15th  
8 congressional district. This is precisely why we  
9 must hold these neighborhoods close to us, and  
10 refuse to allow division among our people and our  
11 neighborhoods, because we are one.

12 Our congressional district should become  
13 one as well. You see, Harlem is not just a  
14 place, but a state of mind. It is the cultural  
15 capital of black American diaspora. Harlem is a  
16 community that is known throughout the world--  
17 throughout the city. And that is because of our  
18 culture. It only makes sense that we would seek  
19 to bridge the Harlem River with our brothers and  
20 sisters into the fold. In the first--last  
21 census, Harlem demographically looked a lot like  
22 Bronx does today, with many problems and little  
23 hope. By tying our neighborhoods together, we  
24 would empower the districts north of Harlem with

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2 the veracity and tenacity that made our body  
3 politic famous.

4 The United States Constitution promises  
5 a guaranteed voice for communities, a right that  
6 was reaffirmed by the Voting Rights Act. Harlem  
7 is a vibrant community, with cultural  
8 institutions ranging from the religious, to the  
9 arts, to fine dining, with a bevy of historical  
10 institutions interspersed throughout our  
11 neighborhoods.

12 We have the Cathedral church of St. John  
13 the Divine, Riverside Church, St. Martin's  
14 Episcopal Church, St. Phillip's Church, Convent  
15 Avenue Baptist Church, Abyssinian Baptist Church,  
16 Malcom - - and Chavez - -, Metropolitan AME,  
17 Canaan Baptist Church, and hundreds more. We  
18 have Sylvia's, Red Rooster, Longdell's  
19 [phonetic], The Lenox Lounge, The Apollo Theater.  
20 We have Grant's Tomb, the Studio Museum, the Jazz  
21 Museum of Harlem, and City College.

22 Many of these institutions are as  
23 utilized by Bronx and Westchester African  
24 American communities as they are by members of

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2 the Harlem community. It only makes sense to tie  
3 communities of similar mindsets together  
4 politically, to guarantee our voice is heard loud  
5 and clear for generations to come. We are  
6 African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and  
7 Continental Africans. Our people are of one  
8 cloth, and we must bind ourselves together to  
9 preserve and expand our power on the national  
10 stage.

11 By creating districts with different  
12 purposes than preserving the voting rights  
13 district, we would not only be softening our  
14 voices, but conceding that our neighborhoods no  
15 longer need a collective voice to be heard in  
16 Congress. This is simply untrue, and the  
17 underrepresentation of African Americans in the  
18 United States Senate and the United States House  
19 of Representatives speaks to the continuing need  
20 for our political unification.

21 Simply put--the 15th congressional  
22 district is a powerhouse in our community and in  
23 Washington. By carving it up weakens the black  
24 voice. We would potentially set our

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2 neighborhoods back at least a generation.

3 As I stated before, we are a high needs  
4 district--very much like some parts of the Bronx,  
5 such as Eastchester and Williamsbridge. By tying  
6 our communities together, we would maintain our  
7 voice, strengthen our people, and continue the  
8 uphill battle to improve our city, state, and  
9 nation.

10 As President of the New York State  
11 NAACP, I have a responsibility to ensure that our  
12 people are adequately represented at the  
13 bargaining table. In an effort to see our  
14 communities responsibly represented, I have a  
15 plan that I hope will help guide this Task Force  
16 in its deliberation.

17 We black New York residents need the  
18 15th congressional district to continue our  
19 uphill climb and hope that this Task Force will  
20 do the right thing and work with our communities  
21 to create the future that we all need for our  
22 city, state, and nation to flourish.

23 Thank you for allowing me to deliver  
24 this testimony on behalf of the communities I

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2 have dedicated my life to representing. I will  
3 be glad to answer any questions that you should  
4 have at this time.

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Burke, and express our gratitude to Hazel Dukes  
7 for that--that testimony.

8 MR. BURKE: Thank you.

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Walter J.  
10 Edwards?

11 WALTER J. EDWARDS, CHAIRMAN, HARLEM  
12 BUSINESS ALLIANCE: Good afternoon. My name is  
13 Walter Edwards, Chairman of the Harlem Business  
14 Alliance and CEO of Fullspeck, LLC [phonetic], a  
15 Harlem-based green building development  
16 corporation.

17 I would like to extend my thanks to the  
18 members of the Task Force for holding this  
19 hearing today to hear the concerns of the  
20 communities and individuals who will be the most  
21 affected by possible redistricting.

22 I will address the Task Force as an  
23 independent business representative, a coalition  
24 of Harlem located businesses, and as a Muslim

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2 American of African descent, two distinct  
3 groupings which will be impacted by any redrawing  
4 of political lines.

5 The Harlem Business Alliance serves as  
6 an advocate for the preservation and retention of  
7 Harlem business community. Founded in 1980, we  
8 have worked diligently to establish Harlem as a  
9 self-sustaining business community and make our  
10 collective voice part of the decision making  
11 process on the local, state, and federal level.

12 Hence, this is why I am here today.  
13 Harlem is historic, brand new tradition and  
14 eclectic. We are the cultural center of black  
15 America. We are moving forward with an eye on  
16 history. We are home to famous business,  
17 legendary attraction, ma and pop grocery stores,  
18 and street side vendors. In short, Harlem is a  
19 small town in a big city, with all the history  
20 and dreams that have made New York City what it  
21 is today.

22 This is one reason that we need to  
23 preserve Harlem and Harlem's congressional  
24 district as the black district it is today.

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2 Harlem is home to internationally renowned chefs,  
3 historic soul food restaurants, celebrated ethnic  
4 and cultural institutions, holy sites to black  
5 Christians and Muslims alike.

6 Harlem is home to large scale housing  
7 developments, Lenox Terrace, Riverton, Delano  
8 Village, 3333 Broadway, and a plethora of New  
9 York City Housing Authority property.

10 Harlem is home to City College, Columbia  
11 University, Bernard College, Union Theological  
12 Seminary, and Yeshiva University. Harlem is a  
13 fully intact community and any divisions to our  
14 representative--representation could be  
15 potentially devastating to both our community and  
16 our political power.

17 I do not believe that we should be  
18 divided, but united with similar communities in  
19 the Bronx and perhaps Westchester. From a  
20 business standpoint, part of what makes Harlem so  
21 attractive to business development is the long-  
22 standing ties that the business community has  
23 with political community. We have forced each  
24 other's growth in terms of creating self-



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2 sustaining businesses and encouraging our elected  
3 officials to lend a helping hand to indigenous  
4 business people.

5           Congressman Rangel, our second  
6 Congressman since 1945, and I have worked with  
7 both of them, thank God--helped alter the federal  
8 empowerment's own program, which give tax  
9 incentives, grants and bonding authority to local  
10 communities. This helped create the second  
11 Harlem Renaissance, which we are seeing the  
12 positive effects today.

13           Despite the economic revitalization  
14 which we have seen since the last redistricting,  
15 Harlem still remains a high needs area. Many  
16 people rely on government benefits to survive and  
17 many businesses rely on government benefits to  
18 prosper. We have thousands of people living in  
19 housing and many more relying open--upon federal  
20 aisles and subsidy.

21           Simply stated, Harlem needs the precious  
22 government funding that we currently receive, and  
23 any political division could threaten the ability  
24 of the representatives to bring these dollars

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2 home.

3 The 15th congressional district has  
4 always been one that has gotten attention from  
5 the federal government, due to our historical  
6 nation and empowered population. And I believe  
7 that by extending the borders to better reflect  
8 the historic demographics of Harlem, we'd  
9 continue this trend for the benefit of our  
10 people, our defenders, and our neighborhoods.

11 The Harlem Business Alliance has many  
12 connections with other groups representing  
13 minority business people, and if we were able to  
14 share a congressional district with members of  
15 our ethnic community, who live in the Bronx and  
16 Westchester, it is my positive belief that we  
17 could extend our relative prosperity outward. By  
18 linking our neighbors which would have of the  
19 same negative demographic trends, such as high  
20 unemployment and poverty, we would be able to  
21 bring more federal assistance to the people who  
22 need it most.

23 Additionally, by bridging the gap  
24 between our similar communities, we will bring

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2 our longstanding business development agencies,  
3 empowerment zones and advocacy groups to parts of  
4 New York who haven't seen such investment. We  
5 would be able to bring our expertise to  
6 communities which share Harlem's demographics and  
7 show our businesses off who've been working on  
8 the edge of fiscal stability.

9 Businesses that already are in good  
10 standing would be connected, both political and  
11 culturally to newly developing businesses, and  
12 that would stand to benefit all of New York--not  
13 just one ethnic group.

14 As I stated before, I am also speaking  
15 to you as a Muslim American of African descent.  
16 We are a rising demographic in Harlem, the Bronx,  
17 and Westchester. In fact, anywhere the African  
18 diaspora resides, Harlem and the Bronx are  
19 longstanding bastions of Islamic faith, with  
20 countless mosques and houses of worship available  
21 to the religious diverse population that comprise  
22 our neighborhood. Although I do not have the  
23 hard numbers of how much of the population in the  
24 15th congressional district is constituted by

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2 Muslims, it is apparent to any resident that we  
3 are a growing force.

4 So not only is the 15th congressional  
5 district a protected district, according to the  
6 Voting Right's Act of 1965, it has also fostered  
7 the growth of religious tolerance with any  
8 diverse community--African and African American  
9 Muslim are a segment of the population not often  
10 politically represented, and especially not on a  
11 national level.

12 But I have found that with the current  
13 structure of political representation, we have a  
14 voice and some political clout that has benefited  
15 both the followers and non-followers of my  
16 religion. The Harlem group--the Harlem  
17 congressional seat has become a force for the  
18 oppressed in the United States and throughout the  
19 world. And that is because we have people from  
20 around the world comprising our community.

21 It is my hope that we can take this  
22 representation to a similar demographic, and keep  
23 our communities whole and guarantee that we have  
24 a united voice at the bargaining table.

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2 I believe that the Bronx and Mount  
3 Vernon offer the best possible outcome for  
4 preserving our co--and economic continuity. And  
5 I would encourage you to view our efforts to  
6 preserve our community in a light that they  
7 deserve--the light of freedom, empowerment, and  
8 just representation.

9 Thank you for this opportunity to voice  
10 these thoughts today. I look forward to  
11 continuing this dialogue and answer any questions  
12 that you may have.

13 And in closing, I would say that as we  
14 look around our nation today, and see the ugly  
15 head of racism raising its head, what would we be  
16 if we didn't have our representatives  
17 representing us as we need them. Thank you.

18 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: William  
21 Stanford? William Stanford--okay. Good  
22 afternoon.

23 WILLIAM STANFORD: Yes, this is my  
24 proposal. The portion--western Broadway Avenue--

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2 AK Broadway above to 25th Street--between 225  
3 Street and the border should be considered as  
4 Manhattan--not this borough, for the obvious  
5 reason, okay?

6 Most districts--well, you mentioned--you  
7 didn't mention the city council, but you  
8 mentioned the other three. Any particular reason  
9 why? You mentioned the State Assembly, you  
10 mentioned the State Senate, you mentioned the  
11 Federal Congress--you didn't mention the city  
12 council.

13 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: No, because we  
14 have no jurisdiction over the city council. The  
15 city of New York redistricts itself when the time  
16 comes.

17 MR. STANFORD: Okay, scratch that. All  
18 right, so. . .most of these districts have--lie  
19 in one borough, but it would be nice if they just  
20 lie--if all the districts lied in one borough, to  
21 avoid confusion. There's very few of them,  
22 there's very--I just feel one--most of them  
23 should just lie in one borough. I'm not saying  
24 you can't--you know, extend them. But, it would

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2 be nice if--here in the New York City region,  
3 they lie in one borough because there's too much  
4 confusion here.

5 But--part of one--part of a district in  
6 Brooklyn, and part of it in Staten Island--when  
7 Staten Island technically belongs to New Jersey--  
8 so it's considers--I guess it's a fake New York  
9 borough. . . As far as the districts go, I think  
10 they should just be left the way they are. I  
11 don't know, maybe they should just be left the  
12 way they are.

13 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: We don't have  
14 the option to leave it the way it is, because the  
15 numbers differ from district to district. And  
16 they have to--because of the Voting Rights Act,  
17 as far as individual groups, but also because of  
18 the New York State Constitution. And because of  
19 the federal one person, one vote ruling, every  
20 ten years it very rarely comes out exactly the  
21 same.

22 And even if it does in one district, if  
23 the one next to it is between the river and the  
24 district, and they're short 10,000 people then

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2 you have to eat into one of the districts next to  
3 it. So the map gets redrawn every ten years.

4 MR. STANFORD: So, all right, but. . .  
5 if the districts--well cause districts change, my  
6 politicians will change. But it would be nice if  
7 I can elect who I wish to elect, not necessarily  
8 the person who represents the neighborhood I live  
9 in.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Mm-hmm.

11 MR. STANFORD: Especially if I deem that  
12 politician is a crook. And we have some crooked  
13 politicians here in the New York City region, but  
14 I'll mention the names some other time.

15 But in the future, if you hold public  
16 hearings here, you should post signs all over the  
17 campus so we don't get disproportioned. I had to  
18 go through hell trying to find this building  
19 because you hadn't even posted signs. You had  
20 one posted sign right outside this building, but  
21 you didn't have any all over the campus. That's  
22 unfair to us.

23 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Well, the one  
24 thing that you can remember as far as seeing what



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2 went on, you can actually watch it now on the  
3 web--on the webcast that--that the Task Force  
4 maintains. So you'll be able to watch every bit  
5 of testimony that's here. Plus, ultimately there  
6 will be a whole report that comes out of what  
7 everyone said, including yourself.

8 MR. STANFORD: Yeah, but the problem is  
9 I don't have my own computer, so if I want to  
10 watch it on webcast, I have to--

11 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
12 Go to--

13 MR. STANFORD: [Interposing] Right--I  
14 have to go out of my way--

15 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: You have to go  
16 to the public library.

17 MR. STANFORD: Right, but I have to  
18 supply the use of my own computer and then you--  
19 and then borrow the library computer. Because we  
20 know how library computers can be. We know how  
21 Dell computers can be. Dell computers give you  
22 hell. . .you know.

23 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Okay, well  
24 thank you for--

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2 MR. STANFORD: [Interposing] It isn't--

3 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: --coming down  
4 and giving us your opinion. That's what it's all  
5 about.

6 MR. STANFORD: All right, but do you  
7 think it's possible that in the future--if the  
8 districts change, that a law could be placed  
9 stating I could elect who I want in the  
10 Democratic party--not necessarily who represents  
11 me? Because that's what I've always wanted over  
12 the years. I want to let who I want to let--not  
13 who the powers that be decide who I should let.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: The pit--  
15 political process allows you to go out and to  
16 advocate. We try and find meaningful districts  
17 that you can advocate for the individuals and the  
18 causes that you believe in.

19 MR. STANFORD: Oh--okay, but this--fine.  
20 But I just hope that in the future, I can elect  
21 who I wish to elect in the Democratic party, and  
22 not necessarily the person who represents my home  
23 address, especially if I can't be bothered with  
24 him or her.

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: So noted.

3 Thank you for coming in.

4 MR. STANFORD: Thank you.

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Claudia  
6 Nesbitt [phonetic]? Claudia Nesbitt? Carlos  
7 Sierra?

8 CARLOS SIERRA: Good afternoon,  
9 everyone. Good afternoon, members of the Task  
10 Force. I thank in advance for allowing me an  
11 opportunity to testify before you. My name is  
12 Carlos Sierra. I am a proud resident of the  
13 Bronx. I live a few minutes away from here--from  
14 this wonderful campus.

15 I am a proud--mostly a proud member of  
16 the Legal United Latin American Citizen--LULAC,  
17 the National American Roundtable--the NAR, the  
18 National Association for the Advancement of  
19 People of Colors--the NAACP, and the Bronx  
20 Democratic County Committee.

21 But today I am speaking on behalf of  
22 myself as a Bronx resident. I have to support  
23 the plea of our Honorable Assemblyman Nelson  
24 Castro, as well as the NAR president Dr. Maria

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2 Teresa Feliciano, which is to create a new  
3 congressional district that will represent part  
4 of the upper Manhattan and the west Bronx.

5 I believe the new district will help us  
6 enhance our quality of life by securing  
7 additional Congressional funds, and more  
8 political power.

9 I am a perfect example of how both areas  
10 impact our lives. For example, when I was a  
11 teenager, I went to school in the Bronx--Taft  
12 High School. It is located in the Highbridge  
13 section of the Bronx. But at the same time, I  
14 assisted as volunteer for cultural events in  
15 Manhattan. I participated in cultural programs  
16 with Elisa Mericana [phonetic] that had several  
17 facility--that has several facilities in  
18 Manhattan, as well as many other not for profits  
19 in Manhattan. Now I continue to live in the  
20 Bronx in the Highbridge section of the Bronx, but  
21 I work in Manhattan, in Washington Heights.

22 Like myself, my son, young Luis Sierra,  
23 now goes to school in Highbridge, in the Bronx,  
24 but he play baseball in Manhattan. Finally, it

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2 is important for me to state for the record that  
3 I am not here advocating on behalf of the  
4 creation of a district that will help benefit any  
5 particular ethnic group.

6 However, I ask that the Task Force  
7 consider the creation of a new congressional  
8 district. And in doing so, I hope that you will  
9 consider preserving and enhancing the culture,  
10 religions--cultural, religion, and economic  
11 dynamic that helps us move forward as one  
12 community.

13 I thank you in advance, and as a former  
14 student here--one who graduated from Bronx  
15 Community College, I thank you for being here,  
16 choosing this wonderful campus among many other  
17 facilities that you had available. And I also--I  
18 would love for you to take a walk over our  
19 wonderful campus--especially the Great Hall of  
20 Fame of Great Americans. Again, I thank you.  
21 And God bless all of you for being here. Thank  
22 you.

23 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you. We  
24 also appreciate your alma mater and we will look

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2 at the hall of fame.

3 MR. SIERRA: Thank you.

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Johnny Goff  
5 [phonetic]? Johnny Goff? Elizabeth Thompson?  
6 Elizabeth Thomp--oh. Good afternoon.

7 ELIZABETH THOMPSON, KINGSBRIDGE HEIGHTS  
8 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION: Good  
9 afternoon, everybody. My name is Elizabeth  
10 Thompson. I'm representing Kingsbridge Heights  
11 Neighborhood Improvement. And Kingsbridge--I  
12 lived in Kingsbridge over 30 years. I volunteer  
13 at Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement  
14 for half of that or more.

15 My child got killed in Kingsbridge. So  
16 there is a lot of things that I know that need to  
17 be done in our area--whoever become the  
18 representative for our community, we would like  
19 to make sure that they listen to the community.  
20 And as one of the things I feel that when people  
21 get empowered, they do not listen to the people.  
22 And we are overcrowded. We are from Science High  
23 School, Walton High School, PS 86, 304, and 207--  
24 and the Armory.

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2 And the filtration in our area, we need  
3 a lot of things done in our community. And I'm  
4 here to represent African American--we have no  
5 jobs. We're--we have homeless. We definitely  
6 need a lot of things. Whoever goes in power have  
7 to recommend the community and listen to the  
8 voice of the community.

9 And I'm sitting here--this is my first  
10 time coming to one of these hearings, and I'm  
11 listening very careful on key events and key  
12 notes that the people are talking about. And I  
13 want to make sure that ya'll listen to them,  
14 because we need a lot of things to be done.  
15 Thank you.

16 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
17 much. Councilman Larry Seabrook? Senator  
18 Nozzolio and I are always happy to see one of our  
19 alumni.

20 LARRY SEABROOK, COUNCILMAN: It's good  
21 seeing all of you here and welcome to God's  
22 country. It--it's certainly--having the  
23 opportunity--and I certainly know the work of  
24 this committee as well. I chaired this committee

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2 at one time in the Assembly.

3 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: That's--I--I  
4 believe you are my predecessor on this committee,  
5 among several.

6 MR. SEABROOK: That's right. [Laughs].  
7 So--but I come here to--today--I certainly want  
8 to thank you all for holding the hearing here--  
9 and certainly holding the hearing here at Bronx  
10 Community College. And I think that it--it's  
11 important as we come to talk about this period--  
12 and certainly of reapportionment.

13 And being in the Bronx and having the  
14 opportunity to represent the Bronx, and being a  
15 part of a Voters Right Act seat in the Assembly,  
16 and a Voters Right Act seat that was protected in  
17 the Senate as well.

18 So I come here today to talk about the  
19 need of preserving a congressional district. And  
20 this congressional district is so historic--as it  
21 relates to black empowerment--even before the  
22 concept of black empowerment. That congressional  
23 district that I'm talking about is the 15th  
24 congressional district--it's so historical to us



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2 because it was the first ever held by an African  
3 American in this entire city. And to have that  
4 and the historical event for the first African  
5 American in New York to chair a committee in  
6 Congress--and then secondly, to have the first  
7 African American to chair the congressional Ways  
8 and Means Committee, so it has a historical  
9 dynamic to it.

10 But it also has a historical sense of  
11 migration as well. People who've lived in Harlem  
12 and at a time migrated to other parts of the  
13 Bronx--Concourse Village, later when Co-op City,  
14 Williamsbridge, Mount Vernon, and places where  
15 there was opportunity as things spread. So there  
16 was a sense of migration, but never losing the  
17 concept of the Harlem Renaissance.

18 So this district is so historical that  
19 it has to be preserved. And what better way of  
20 preserving it is with some of the offspring's of  
21 Harlem, now moving up and having an opportunity  
22 to buy homes in those districts in which we live  
23 and which we represent--Williamsbridge, Co-op  
24 City, and those areas.

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2 So it has a historical dynamic and tying  
3 it together as a means of preserving this  
4 district, and what it actually means. So it is  
5 not a question of who is there as much as it is a  
6 question of geography. And so people who lived  
7 in Harlem--who felt that there was an  
8 opportunity, as they say, to move on up--had that  
9 opportunity to move up and as they moved up, it  
10 gave them that opportunity for--as I said, to  
11 purchase homes, co-ops, and everything else. But  
12 still in mind--Harlem on my mind. And it  
13 existed.

14 I think that it also said something  
15 that--that here's an opportunity. And we have  
16 lived to see and have the opportunity to elect an  
17 African American President. But the people in  
18 the northeast Bronx, and Mount Vernon, and other  
19 parts of the Bronx in particular--has never had  
20 the opportunity to have an elected black  
21 congressional person--ever. And so that says  
22 something about an opportunity, that--before I  
23 leave this planet I will be able to say that I  
24 voted and elected an African American to go to

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2 Congress. And what better way to do it than  
3 having those lines drawn to preserve that  
4 district so that I will be able to say to my kids  
5 and grandkids that I did have the opportunity  
6 before I left this planet that I could actually  
7 vote and get elected and stand on election day  
8 and say we elected--my vote elected a black  
9 person to Congress from the Bronx--which has  
10 never ever happened before.

11 And I think that that's the reason why  
12 it is so important for us to do that--otherwise  
13 it will never ever happen. And we must do that  
14 so that our children will have that opportunity.

15 And so I know that--that you all were  
16 here a lot of this, because I have seen that.  
17 And I certainly appreciate all of you and what  
18 you all have been able to do. But it's so  
19 important for us to maintain that 15th  
20 congressional district because it means so much  
21 for history to come. And two people have  
22 represented it.

23 But that district--as I've always called  
24 it, the person that represents that district is

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2 not just in that congressional district. They  
3 become a spokesperson for African Americans  
4 throughout this nation. And that's what they do.  
5 They're not just a 15th congressional district  
6 Congress person.

7 But if you look at historically--those  
8 two individuals--they are national Congressional  
9 people, and they represent all of us when we are  
10 in trouble. So always--we must always remember  
11 that--that that was their purpose and their need.

12 So I certainly want to thank all of you  
13 so very much. And I know that justice will  
14 prevail. Thank you, and it's good seeing all of  
15 you guys. You are looking younger there.

16 [Laughter]

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you,  
18 Councilman. Francis Chapman? Good afternoon.

19 FRANCIS CHAPMAN, PRESIDENT, KINGSBRIDGE  
20 HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION:  
21 Good afternoon. My name is Francis Chapman, and  
22 I live at 2075 Sedgwick Avenue, here in the  
23 Bronx. I am President of the Kingsbridge Heights  
24 Neighborhood Improvement Association and we are a

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2 non-profit organization dedicated to empowering  
3 our community.

4 I welcome the opportunity to testify  
5 before the committee today, and I congratulate  
6 you on undertaking this task. I appreciate the  
7 efforts that the committee is making to increase  
8 the participation of residents, and the fact that  
9 these hearings are being videotaped and being  
10 preserved and distributed through video and  
11 transcription. I am also impressed by the  
12 openness and transparency of the process so far,  
13 and look forward to the second series of  
14 hearings.

15 My experience with reapportionment is  
16 limited. And I'm not making any definite  
17 recommendations on how to redraw the lines this  
18 time. However, I join in a request that the  
19 lines be drawn by fairly representing the  
20 communities of interest, in conformance with  
21 prevailing laws and constitutional requirements.  
22 I thank you for your attention to this matter,  
23 okay? That's it.

24 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very

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2 much. Gregoria Feliciano? Good afternoon.

3 GREGORIA FELICIANO, COMMUNITY BOARD OF  
4 BRONX: Yes, good afternoon. First I'd like to  
5 apologize for the redundancy of my statement,  
6 which I'm sure you've heard earlier today. But I  
7 ask that you indulge me as I make my brief  
8 statement.

9 Good afternoon, Chairman and members of  
10 the Commission. Thank you for holding these  
11 important hearings here in the Bronx, and  
12 affording me the opportunity to comment on your  
13 task, which is to establish districts that  
14 represent--that respect municipal boundaries and  
15 communities of interest.

16 I am Gregoria Feliciano, a resident of  
17 the Bronx for over 40 years, and an educator. I  
18 am here on behalf--on behalf of immigrant  
19 parents--perhaps hundreds that have children in  
20 public schools in both the Bronx and northern  
21 Manhattan, who have very high needs and require  
22 specialized services. This is just one thread  
23 that unites these two communities together. The  
24 needs of the children through their--for their

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2 education and for them to thrive.

3 Northern Manhattan and the west Bronx is  
4 a unique corridor between two distinct boroughs  
5 that have very similar populations and in many  
6 respects, share many common interests,  
7 socioeconomic interests, cultural, and similar  
8 needs.

9 I respectfully and strongly request that  
10 you take in--take this fact into consideration as  
11 you draw new congressional district line that  
12 unites these two communities with one legislative  
13 representation.

14 I would conclude by saying that I am  
15 compelled to come here today as a result of the  
16 2010 census, which indicate a high number of  
17 Hispanic residents that are unique in the area of  
18 northern Manhattan and the Bronx, who are  
19 entitled to representation of elected officials  
20 who understand and advocate for the needs of this  
21 community. Finally, I support the maps submitted  
22 by the Northern Manhattan and West Bronx  
23 Coalition for Fair Representation, and I also  
24 support the scheduling of public hearings in the

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2 evenings, when my neighbors are available to  
3 attend and address this commission. I thank you  
4 for your time.

5 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
6 much. What time would you like the evening  
7 meetings to begin?

8 MS. FELICIANO: I think 6:30 is a good  
9 time for people to get out here.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: 6:30?

11 MS. FELICIANO: Yes. And I understand  
12 it takes a long time. I've been in government  
13 and understand that public hearings take many,  
14 many hours. But it's a very important topic that  
15 many of us are passionate and concerned about.

16 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: I do believe  
17 that a lot of people here have represented people  
18 who couldn't be here. And represented them well-  
19 -including yourself, thank you. Loretta Ruddock-  
20 Smith. Good afternoon.

21 LORETTA RUDDOCK-SMITH, RESIDENT OF  
22 BRONX: Good afternoon, gentlemen. And thank you  
23 for giving me this opportunity to express my  
24 concerns. I live in the west Bronx, in the



1 Committee on Redistricting, 9-8-2011  
2 Morris Heights section, in a very diverse  
3 committee--community. And--

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
5 Move the mic a little bit closer to you, or speak  
6 more directly.

7 MS. RUDDOCK-SMITH: Oh, okay.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Perfect, thank  
9 you.

10 MS. RUDDOCK-SMITH: Yes, I live in the  
11 Morris Heights section of the Bronx. And in my  
12 community it's very diverse. All nationalities--  
13 it's too--it's so many of us in this community  
14 that are different language--different culture.  
15 And I've been a resident here for the past 40  
16 years. And today my concern is keeping our  
17 community united.

18 And I'm asking that our representation  
19 be a person who is sensitive to the quality of  
20 life, and to--and to the impact of fractured--a  
21 fractured line that is drawn and it's fractured--  
22 the impact it would have on our schools, our  
23 hospitals, our youth, and our community--and our  
24 community involve--involved in different aspects

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2 of our life.

3 I also would like to ask that our  
4 representative be someone of color that  
5 understands our needs and the quality of life in  
6 our community.

7 I would like that more of our community  
8 residents be here today. But they're not able to  
9 be here. And I've heard so many community  
10 residents ask for afternoon meeting, because a  
11 lot of our community are a working people--and  
12 another thing. A lot of our people are not aware  
13 of this meeting. It wasn't--it was in the  
14 papers, I understand, but it wasn't really  
15 publicized. And a lot of senior citizen would be  
16 here today.

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: All the  
18 advocacy groups--many of whom, like the NAACP and  
19 others were made aware of it. And that goes on  
20 to literally hundreds of groups across the state.  
21 We're told of these, and told to get the word  
22 out--as well as the usual legal and all elected  
23 officials knew of it.

24 MS. RUDDOCK-SMITH: Yes, well I just ask

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2 that we keep our community united. And it's not  
3 the fractured line drawn to confuse our local  
4 families. Because a lot of our people don't even  
5 know who their Senators are or representatives  
6 are, because of the lines. They are not aware of  
7 it. So I thank you for this opportunity.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
9 much for your testimony. Ted Martin.

10 TED MARTIN, CHIEF OF STAFF FOR ASSEMBLY  
11 MEMBER ERIC STEVENSON: Good afternoon,  
12 gentlemen. I would address the Chair, and I'm  
13 Ted Martin. I'm the Chief of Staff for  
14 Assemblyman Eric Stevenson. And we are here  
15 basically to talk about the concept of fairness.

16 You've heard from a number of speakers  
17 with respect to preserving the 15th congressional  
18 district. And we're not going to talk about  
19 that. This is a borough with a population of  
20 about 1.3 million people. And in this borough,  
21 we don't have an elected black Congressman. We  
22 do have, however, one Hispanic Congressman and  
23 two white Congressmen, who--one is from Queens,  
24 and he's act--in fact, he's a Queen's County

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2 Leader. And we have another Assembly--Congress  
3 person, Mr. Engel, who represents part of the  
4 Bronx and he goes off into Rockland County.

5 If we look at the purpose of the Voting  
6 Rights Act and though--and it's progeny, we are  
7 aware of the fact that there came a time in  
8 history when populations which had been in power  
9 were forced to give up that power. But before  
10 they did so, they would graft onto a certain area  
11 in order to include areas that previously were  
12 not included or never thought of.

13 So I guess we're concerned about the  
14 fact that the districts represent the  
15 populations. And any time you've got to go  
16 across a bridge, over the river and through the  
17 woods to get to grandma's house to include her in  
18 your congressional district--I think we're  
19 stretching reality.

20 And there comes a time when we all  
21 recognize that it's a new day. And to the extent  
22 that it is a new day, and I speak for an  
23 Assemblyman who is now the new Assemblyman, and  
24 it's a new day--we are looking at the monumental

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2 task of this committee, knowing ultimately that  
3 the Courts will resolve our differences.

4 We witnessed that in Nassau with respect  
5 to certain actions by elected officials there,  
6 and we are also witnessing it now with respect to  
7 the inclusion of the prison populations where  
8 they should be included. So what we're asking  
9 for, perhaps, may be rhetoric at this juncture,  
10 knowing full well that whatever is decided, it  
11 will be decided by a court of law.

12 And we only hope that in drawing up the  
13 lines, we don't protract or have a protracted  
14 process, which only makes for confusion for those  
15 who are running for office because they're not  
16 sure if they're in this district or not in this  
17 district. And to the extent that we all must  
18 live by the sword and/or die by the sword when it  
19 comes to electoral politics, I think it's  
20 important to bear that in mind that it's  
21 virtually impossible--conceivable--it's possible  
22 because it exists.

23 But you can't have--I don't see how the  
24 Bronx has two Congressmen who aren't really

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2 connected to the Bronx other than in name only.  
3 So with that in mind, I know you are going all  
4 over the state, and this is a statewide  
5 procedure, but we would hope that common sense--  
6 which often doesn't enter into some political  
7 decisions, would enter into yours. Thank you.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you for  
9 your testimony. And I have to comment, as the  
10 historian, that with all the change that we  
11 discussed and times moving on, that your  
12 Assemblyman Eric Stevenson holds the same seat as  
13 his grandfather before him. And he's very proud  
14 of that.

15 MR. MARTIN: Yes, he is. And so are we.  
16 Thank you.

17 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Very good,  
18 thank you. Fredesvina Mascoso [phonetic]? I may  
19 be mis-pronouncing it. Fredesvinda Mascoso?  
20 She's left? Okay. Kenny Augusto [phonetic]?  
21 Kenny Augusto? Egypt Allen [phonetic]? Egypt  
22 Allen? Richard Thomas? Beverly Smith? Your  
23 partner ran out on you right after she testified,  
24 didn't she? The two of you have been here since

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2 the very beginning. We appreciate your  
3 dedication.

4 BEVERLY SMITH, RESIDENT OF WEST BRONX:

5 Good afternoon.

6 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Good

7 afternoon.

8 MS. SMITH: My name is Beverly Smith,  
9 and I am a resident of the west Bronx. Born in  
10 Harlem in the 15th district, migrated with my  
11 parents here quite some time ago to the west  
12 Bronx, and I've lived here ever since.

13 I have represented this community. I've  
14 sat on the community board for 17 years, and I've  
15 worked for the City of New York for 32. I'm here  
16 today to ask that the lines be kept intact.  
17 Right now, Washington Heights is Washington  
18 Heights and the west Bronx is the west Bronx.  
19 Where--if you live in Washington Heights, then  
20 whatever is going on in Washington Heights should  
21 be conducted in Washington Heights. Having a  
22 person to represent Washington Heights and the  
23 cross Bronx would be--and the west Bronx would  
24 cause division. I've heard it in the speeches

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2 that I've heard here today, in the course--

3 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
4 You're speaking Congressionally now, right?

5 MS. SMITH: Congressionally, yes.

6 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

7 MS. SMITH: It would cause division  
8 racially. Where there will be just one group of  
9 people speaking one group of language. And I  
10 feel it's very unfair. It will--it will cause  
11 confusion and it would be a division in the unity  
12 that's here today.

13 Certainly, people that live in  
14 Washington Heights shop in the Bronx, and  
15 definitely people that live in the Bronx shop in  
16 west--Washington Heights. However, that's no  
17 reason for the lines to be drawn together. I'm  
18 here to request that the lines stay intact, and  
19 also to ask that the next time you have a  
20 meeting, that it's in the evening and that you  
21 have a translator to translate the languages,  
22 because I felt like kind of disrespectful in the  
23 back when you were holding a conversation that I  
24 didn't understand. Okay, so that's all I'm



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2 asking. And thank you very much for giving me  
3 the opportunity to speak.

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
5 much for coming and for giving us your opinion on  
6 that. And we'll also take the translator  
7 suggestion under advisement.

8 MS. SMITH: Okay.

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: We probably  
10 weren't quite expecting it. We probably did  
11 better for the second one than the first one, and  
12 we'll be better prepared the next time.

13 MS. SMITH: Thank you very much.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
15 much. Rather than list every name that I've  
16 called twice, where someone hasn't come, I will  
17 ask is there anyone else here who would like to  
18 testify? Is your name on the list or--what it--  
19 come on up. Come on up. Good afternoon.

20 BERNEL-ARTHUR RICHARDSON, EXECUTIVE  
21 DIRECTOR, BLACK UNITED LEADERSHIP OF THE BRONX:  
22 Good afternoon, members of the Commission. My  
23 name is Bernel-Arthur Richardson, and I'm the  
24 Executive Director of an organization by the name

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2 of Black United Leadership of the Bronx.

3 My purpose here today is to bring to the  
4 attention of the Commission certain issues and  
5 facts relevant to the decision-making process  
6 leading up to the drawing of the lines for the  
7 Assembly, State Senate, and the Congressional  
8 districts.

9 Ten years ago my organization was one of  
10 the litigants in Bronx County, and we sincerely  
11 hope--though we're not optimistic, that we will  
12 not have to repeat that legal relief again.

13 Before I focus on the specifics  
14 regarding the issues, I'd like to address certain  
15 concerns of the overall African American  
16 community. First, we as a people are deeply  
17 troubled by the non-representation of African  
18 American--of the African American community on  
19 the New York State Legislature and Congressional  
20 Redistricting Commission. This lack of  
21 representation is the first time in the modern  
22 history of the redistricting process, and we are  
23 deeply troubled by that.

24 Secondly, equally distressing, is the

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2 refusal of the Commission to implement the state  
3 law approved by the Justice Department calling to  
4 subtract the prisoners from the prison site and  
5 add them back to the population based on their  
6 home addresses--

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
8 Excuse me, sir. That is not true.

9 MR. RICHARDSON: Then I withdraw that.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

11 MR. RICHARDSON: I apologize. Now, for  
12 the issues of importance. One is we understand  
13 that there may be an enlargement of the State  
14 Senate. And we will certainly like to be aware  
15 of that discussion and we would like to be--to  
16 have a possible chance of responding if there is  
17 such a decision.

18 Second of all, we're concerned that  
19 certain specific communities of interest within  
20 the Bronx be maintained. We are particularly  
21 concerned about the in--the districts within the  
22 southern section of the Bronx. We are aware of  
23 the decrease in population of the African  
24 American communities throughout the borough, but

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2 there is certain specific communities of interest  
3 that we want to be maintained, especially as it  
4 pertains to the 79th Assembly district under  
5 Assemblyman Eric Stevenson, and the 77th district  
6 of Assembly-woman Vanessa Gibson, the only two  
7 African American representatives in the Assembly  
8 for the southern part of our borough.

9 And, thirdly, we want to ask that in the  
10 future, that if possible these hearings be held  
11 in the evening. It's really a dis--it's a  
12 discomfort and it's somewhat of a difficulty for  
13 more participation due to the day time. We  
14 really would like it to be. We would also like  
15 to add our support for a black congressional seat  
16 in the Bronx. We believe strongly that the  
17 possibility is there. And if it's not a black  
18 congressional seat, we certainly would like a  
19 full congressional seat in the Bronx.

20 Our population have dramatically  
21 increased over the last ten years, and we realize  
22 that ten years ago we were down in population  
23 because of the problems that Bronx County faced.  
24 But in the ensuing ten years, the population have

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2 increased. And we would like very much for we to  
3 have one full congressional seat, another full  
4 congressional seat, and then perhaps share a  
5 third one.

6 So I just want to bring those things to  
7 the Commission attention. And I thank you. Oh,  
8 one other thing. We would like to be able to  
9 know when it would be the schedule for the  
10 submitting of alternative redistricting plans.  
11 Thank you.

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: We are  
13 accepting now alternative plans for all three--  
14 Senate, Assembly, and Congressional. We have  
15 received a number of them. We encourage this to  
16 take place, if at all possible by the first week  
17 of October.

18 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you.

19 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: If it came in  
20 in September, it would be even better. All these  
21 plans become part of the record, and they're all  
22 very seriously considered. And we try to  
23 accommodate if it's at all possible.

24 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you.

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you for  
3 coming.

4 KENNY AGOSTO, DEMOCRATIC DISTRICT  
5 LEADER, 80TH AD BRONX: Good afternoon.

6 MALE VOICE: Wait for the Senator--

7 MR. AGOSTO: Oh, sorry.

8 SENATOR DILAN: I have a question of the  
9 previous witness, sir? Can you come up? I just  
10 want to ask you two questions. I apologize to  
11 you and we'll be right back to you. Thank you  
12 very much.

13 I just need clarification on two points  
14 that you made. First I think--the one with  
15 respect to the 2010 law with respect to counting  
16 prisoners in their respective home district or  
17 last known address. This Task Force has taken a  
18 position that it is honoring that law. So that's  
19 the current position of the Task Force. However,  
20 you must be aware that there is a lawsuit--

21 MR. RICHARDSON: [Interposing] Yes.

22 SENATOR DILAN: --by several Senators--

23 MR. RICHARDSON: [Interposing] Yes.

24 SENTOR DILAN: --that will be decided by

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2 a judge--

3 MR. RICHARDSON: [Interposing] Yes.

4 SENATOR DILAN: I believe it's in Albany  
5 County or it may be--

6 MR. RICHARDSON: [Interposing] It's in  
7 Albany County, yes.

8 SENATOR DILAN: Yeah, so I expect that  
9 some decision will be forthcoming late November  
10 or early December with respect to that. I  
11 support counting the prisoners in their home  
12 district. I have also filed a brief with the  
13 court as a friend of the court. So I just wanted  
14 to clarify that position so the public is aware  
15 that although we as a Task Force do support the  
16 law, a judge could overrule that and I expect  
17 that there will be appeals and it will probably  
18 go all the way up to the Court of Appeals. I  
19 also believe that you made a comment with respect  
20 to the size of the Senate.

21 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

22 SENATOR DILAN: Can you restate that,  
23 because I think I missed it.

24 MR. RICHARDSON: Yeah, we've been

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2 hearing that there are discussions to enlarge or  
3 decrease from 62 to 61, or 63 seats. And we have  
4 been told--and I'm not legal, but we've been told  
5 that according to a court in the constitution,  
6 that the commission could make that choice on  
7 their own. And we respect that, but we just  
8 would like to be informed of it and perhaps given  
9 an opportunity to express our opinion. That's  
10 all.

11 SENATOR DILAN: I appreciate your  
12 position because I know several people have  
13 testified as to the size of the Senate, and I've  
14 been calling for criteria, or that we as a  
15 commission let the public know if we are going to  
16 do 61 or if we are going to do 63 or we're going  
17 to do 62. That way the public or advocate  
18 groups--when they're drawing lines, they could  
19 draw the same amount of Senate seats that we  
20 would be proposing and coming back to you.

21 The one thing I've been stating over and  
22 over again, that the State Constitution of New  
23 York has a formula that would dictate that  
24 number. I believe that according to the numbers



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2 that my staff and I have analyzed--I believe that  
3 that number would dictate that the Senate stays  
4 at 62. However, I do agree that perhaps it  
5 should be an odd number.

6 I've been advocating that we go down to  
7 61. Others have been advocating that it goes to  
8 63. But I do agree with you. We should let the  
9 public know now what it's going to be. Not that  
10 we come back later and tell you what it is.

11 MR. RICHARDSON: Thank you, Senator.

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

13 Good afternoon. Please state your name and any  
14 group that you may or may not represent if  
15 necessary.

16 MR. AGOSTO: Good afternoon, Chairman  
17 Nozzolio and Senator Dilan, and all of the  
18 members of the Honorable New York State LATFOR  
19 Task Force. My name is Kenny Agosto. I am a  
20 lifelong resident of the great borough of the  
21 Bronx and serve as a duly elected district leader  
22 of the 80th Assembly district. Welcome to the  
23 Bronx, gentleman.

24 These districts--this--this district

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2 encompasses the communities of Allerton, Bedford  
3 Park, Bronx Park East, Bronxdale, Eastchester  
4 Gardens, Fordham, Indian Village, Jerome Park  
5 Reservoir, Kingsbridge, Laconia, Morris Park,  
6 Norwood, Ollinville, Pelham Bay, Pelham Gardens,  
7 Pelham Parkway, Van Cordtlandt Village, Van Nest,  
8 and Westchester Square. Phew.

9 As well, I am also the first openly gay  
10 elected official of the great borough of the  
11 Bronx. I will not repeat what's already been  
12 said, in--in interest of time. But it is of  
13 paramount importance that in all levels of  
14 government--be it federal, state and local, that  
15 the Bronx--which is also called--known as "God's  
16 Country" or the "Gateway to the American  
17 mainland"--that also has the dubious distinction  
18 of being--of having the poorest congressional  
19 district in the United States--be drawn  
20 responsibly, as well as thoughtfully.

21 As a federally protected community and  
22 county under the United States Voting Rights Act  
23 of 1965, section five, it is virtually--it is  
24 vitally important that the districts in all

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2 levels be drawn as compact and contiguous as  
3 possible. It must include whole community  
4 districts--at least 50% or more.

5 For example, in my community, in the  
6 northeast Bronx, we have Allenton [phonetic] and  
7 Bedford Park, Eastchester Gardens and Laconia at  
8 the crossroads. Pelham Parkway and Van Nest and  
9 Morris Park--also at the crossroads. It spans  
10 from community board seven to 12.

11 In some of those areas, we have up to  
12 four or five Senatorial districts, and four  
13 Council districts. I appreciate the hard work of  
14 some of our elected officials, such as Senator  
15 Ruth Hassell-Thompson and Councilman Jimmy Vacca,  
16 who more often than not go above and beyond  
17 representing just their areas that they  
18 represent.

19 But when we have a community divided  
20 into four or more districts, it's--it really is a  
21 disservice to our community, that many times  
22 already struggles in fighting drugs and crime,  
23 poverty, and sickness. We have the highest rates  
24 of asthma, cancer, and HIV/AIDs in the nation.

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2 That must change.

3 We must be mindful that although we lost  
4 two congressional seats in the state of New York,  
5 and the game--the musical chairs game starts--  
6 minus two chairs, we must be very mindful that  
7 our combined communities of color must have all  
8 of our district lines drawn to respect the sacred  
9 tenants of section five of the Voting Rights Act--  
10 -to respect the diversity and dignity of all the  
11 people of the Bronx.

12 In the--in 2010 census, we had a dynamic  
13 change. We gained 50,000; we have a change in  
14 population. We lost a lot of people who are  
15 Euro--of European descent, and we gained a lot of  
16 people of Latino and African descent. We have to  
17 be mindful that all of our communities need to  
18 have a voice, be it Dominican, Garifuna,  
19 Bangladeshi, Ghanaians, Pakistani, Albanians,  
20 Puerto Ricans, Malawians, Hondurians--it doesn't  
21 matter. In addition to our protect--to our  
22 protected people of color, it--to our protected  
23 people of color, let us also protect the families  
24 of--our under-represented, our incarcerated

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2 people whose families desperately need our  
3 support. The new law bears it out.

4 [Bell ringing]

5 MR. AGOSTO: So, I don't know if that's  
6 you or that's the school, or [Laughs]

7 FEMALE VOICE: The school bell.

8 MR. AGOSTO: Okay, I'll wrap it up.  
9 Whew. Oh that's a--

10 FEMALE VOICE: [Interposing] Fire drill?

11 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: If you  
12 continue this--

13 MR. AGOSTO: [Interposing] I--can I wrap  
14 it up?

15 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Sure.

16 FEMALE VOICE: That's a fire drill.

17 MR. AGOSTO: Okay, let us be--let us  
18 also protect the families of our under-  
19 represented people who are desperately need our  
20 support. Let us protect our seniors, our  
21 disabled, and our--and our veterans, as well as  
22 our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered  
23 community.

24 As you may or may not know, the Bronx is

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2 home of the largest same sex led households in  
3 the state. We have a myriad of problems here in  
4 the Bronx, but our people are strong and willing  
5 to work together for the betterment of the Bronx.  
6 Thank you.

7 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
8 much. For the record, would--did anyone else  
9 wish to speak? All right. Are we supposed to  
10 leave the--officer? Are we supposed to leave  
11 now?

12 POLICE OFFICER: No, it's fixed. You're  
13 good.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: We're okay.  
15 Okay, thank you Officer. Is there anyone else  
16 here who wishes to give testimony. Please come  
17 forward.

18 RAMON MURPHY: Okay, [Foreign audio],  
19 yeah?

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Okay, Ray are  
21 you prepared? Yeah, good afternoon.

22 MR. MURPHY: [Interpreted through Mr.  
23 Lopez] Okay. Good afternoon, everyone. My name  
24 is Ramon Murphy--Ramon Murphy, and I am the

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2 President--I am the President of the Barragatos  
3 Association of Barragotas [phonetic].

4 We are here because we live in the--we  
5 live in the Bronx and in Manhattan. I've been  
6 able to live for a lot of years in Manhattan, and  
7 I also study in Manhattan. This could move  
8 around drastically. We immigrated in the 1980's  
9 and this community--we started basically making  
10 business like grocery stores. [To Mr. Murphy] I  
11 can't--I can't hear you. [Interprets] This  
12 growth--socio-economic also increased the family,  
13 community growth and community, the community in  
14 the Bronx, Manhattan. A lot of people that live  
15 in Manhattan buy--they go and they buy in  
16 Fordham. People that come from Westchester,  
17 south Bronx--they come to Washington Heights so  
18 they can make their grocery purchase.

19 Right here in Bronx Community College, a  
20 lot of students from Manhattan are here too.  
21 This community representation in the state,  
22 federal, and we understand that we need  
23 representation also in Washington. This is like  
24 the business that we are in--the grocery store.

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2 The growth will--the community grows and it has  
3 to be represented.

4 That's why you see the grocery store is  
5 small business. That when you go to the bodilla  
6 [phonetic], you feel like if you are home--it's  
7 like a family. We sell everything. Everything  
8 you need, we sell it there. We can make  
9 sandwiches. What does this signify? That mean a  
10 corporation have growth with us, because with us  
11 those corporations are not the same thing as us.

12 Also, in the store--grocery stores, it's  
13 for information. We go to bodillas and we get  
14 all the different information. In this area,  
15 there is more than 70% of Hispanics. In the  
16 1970--in the 1970's we have a small business and  
17 it's changed now, right? Right now it has growth  
18 maybe 100% more. So basically, they're talking  
19 about that the community is growing and business  
20 is growing from 1970 to the 1980's has grown  
21 drastically--more than 100%. So where they're  
22 looking right now is--since the community is  
23 growing, they want representation also--so they  
24 can be represented in a congressional seat,



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2 etcetera. Mucho gracias.

3 MR. MURPHY: Gracias.

4 LUIS DACASSE, BUSINESS OWNER-143RD ST,  
5 NEW YORK: Good afternoon.

6 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Good  
7 afternoon.

8 MR. DACASSE: My name is Luis Dacasse, I  
9 will--I would try to do my best in English.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER LOPEZ: Thank you, Luis.

11 [Laughter]

12 MR. DACASSE: I came to United States  
13 1986. At that time, the only opportunity that we  
14 have for people who doesn't speak in English to a  
15 story, was a Alto Community College [phonetic]  
16 that has a bilingual program, and we are starting  
17 there. And be surprised when I came this  
18 afternoon, I saw that none my generation is in  
19 the school now. Is--they are our kids. Our  
20 daughters and sisters that coming to this  
21 university as well as the community college, city  
22 college, and I--I used to live in the 471 151th  
23 Street in Washington Heights in the north of  
24 Manhattan. However, all of my history was in the

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2 Bronx.

3 But now I am tried to open a business  
4 here in the Bronx, even though I live here for 25  
5 years in Manhattan. So this is really, really  
6 connection that we have in both communities.

7 After 25 year, I never told that I can be  
8 business owners in the Bronx, where I came to a  
9 story. Even though all my life, I live--I live  
10 in Manhattan. So that mean that--that's growth  
11 that we have. That I can see that my daughter is  
12 history here. And she born in the United States.

13 That means that we need to be  
14 represented. That means that we are staying  
15 there--in the city and we love that--this city.  
16 But sometimes we have the inconvenience that--  
17 when we have some problem, we don't know where to  
18 go. We don't know--we are--we have a few  
19 officials listed that can represent us. So I  
20 would like to bring that attention to you.

21 Because we believe in this country--we  
22 believe in this city, and even though in my  
23 throat was go back to Dominican Republic and live  
24 and die. I decide to stay and I'm going to stay

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2 here. So that growth that you see--the  
3 population growth that we have--the population  
4 growth that we have right now, it because people  
5 like me--we decide to stay here and we will  
6 continue to stay here. So we need your support.  
7 We need more officials elected. We need  
8 representatives that can represent us. Thank you  
9 very much.

10 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
11 much.

12 MR. DUCASSE: Thank you.

13 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Assembly woman  
14 Naomi Rivera?

15 ASSEMBLY MEMBER NAOMI RIVERA: Good  
16 afternoon, members of the New York State Task  
17 Force on Demographics Research and  
18 Reapportionment. My name is Naomi Rivera and I  
19 am a New York State Assembly Member representing  
20 the 80th Assembly district in the Bronx.

21 I am here today to briefly voice the  
22 concerns felt by many Hispanics and other ethnic  
23 minorities across our region and throughout the  
24 City of New York. That concern revolves around

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2 the feeling of being ignored, neglected, and  
3 marginalized.

4 To prove this point, we only need to  
5 look at the April 2011 release of the United  
6 State Census of the population figures for the  
7 New York City. The city only grew by about  
8 160,000--166,000 residents. Queens--where you  
9 can't find a vacant apartment and our kids go to  
10 overcrowded schools--only grew by 1,300  
11 residents. And here in the Bronx, the growth  
12 document--the growth documented was shockingly  
13 less than the reality that we see on our streets,  
14 our housing developments, and our schools.

15 Early this year I released evidence of  
16 the huge under-count that New York City has  
17 experienced. I am sure other municipalities  
18 across New York State have had the same  
19 experience. That evidence was taken right out of  
20 New York City's Bureau of Vital Statistics, which  
21 show that over the past decade, from 2001 through  
22 2010, there were over 1,250,000 children born in  
23 New York City. Even accounting for deaths during  
24 that time period, there was a rate of two births

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2 for every death in New York City.

3 Obviously, these children were born to a  
4 parent and families that include other siblings--  
5 yet according to the census, these children and  
6 their families just walked out of the city. We  
7 are to believe that they were part of an exodus  
8 of young families and children that was never  
9 identified or documented in our newspapers.

10 The overcrowding of our schools is a  
11 clear indication that the census was wrong--  
12 overly wrong. And a very expensive--and a very  
13 expensive error for New York City and New York  
14 State, as billions in federal aid is tied to  
15 these population figures.

16 For Hispanics and Asians, we see these  
17 numbers as an effort to conceal the true growth  
18 of our communities. In Queens alone, 73% of all  
19 births were to foreign born mothers. Queens and  
20 the Bronx saw over 500,000 children born in these  
21 counties over the past decade. But we are to  
22 believe these children just pushed their own baby  
23 carriages out of our state.

24 So at this point I am here today to link

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2 two issues with deep impact and consequences for  
3 Hispanics and minority communities. The huge  
4 under-count in our communities is now linked to  
5 the creation of new political districts that are  
6 to define political power for all communities.  
7 But if the new political districts were to be  
8 drawn--they were to be drawn--rely exclusively on  
9 census data that is not adjusted--and if back  
10 room politics trumps acknowledging the large new  
11 racial and ethnic demographics changes that have  
12 taken place in New York, minorities are correct  
13 to feel ignored, neglected, and marginalized.

14 So I am here this--today to remind this  
15 government body that there is a concern that you  
16 will not acknowledge the fact that there are huge  
17 minority communities across our city and state  
18 and these minorities want to have representation  
19 in government that look like them. While I  
20 represent a part of the Bronx, I am well aware  
21 that there are large growing and emerging  
22 minority communities across New York State.

23 Hispanic, African American and Asian  
24 legislators are virtually nonexistent north of

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2 Bronx County. Westchester has over 500,000

3 Hispanics and virtually none in elected office.

4 Our communities constant--constitute over 45% of

5 the populations of the city of Buffalo and

6 Rochester, and over 30% of the city of Syracuse.

7 In all of the mentioned, there is clear

8 absence of elected officials that resemble the

9 ethnicity and race of the residents of these

10 communities. Let me be clear. How is it that

11 New York State has close to four million

12 residents but not one Hispanic elected to the New

13 York State Legislature from upstate counties?

14 That defies--that--this defies a trend.

15 Our numbers continue to grow

16 significantly and already make up a significant

17 percentage of the regional population. What I

18 and many community leaders in minority

19 communities expect to see is that the new

20 legislative districts drawn for the 2012

21 elections will adequately represent the diversity

22 of this state.

23 As you all know, civil rights groups

24 have already told our mass media that they are

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2 preparing for legal action in congressional  
3 districts--if congressional districts are drawn  
4 to dis--to dilute minority voting strength.

5 Recently, Latino Justice--formerly the  
6 Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund has  
7 threatened to sue a Hispanic growth in New York  
8 City--if New York City is diluted to deny  
9 Hispanic--Hispanics the opportunity to run and  
10 win a seat in Congress. New York is the state  
11 with the third largest Hispanic population in the  
12 nation, yet we only have two Hispanics in the  
13 U.S. House of Representatives.

14 Hispanics accounted for over 54% of the  
15 population growth in the entire nation over the  
16 past decade, and this is true in communities  
17 across New York State as well. As you also know,  
18 coalitions of minority civic groups have formed  
19 to watch this process and are prepared to ask  
20 U.S. Justice Department to intervene if the lines  
21 created by LATFOR disenfranchise our communities  
22 and do not allow for more minority candidates to  
23 have a fair opportunity to run for public office.

24 So I ask you today to embrace the great



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2 diversity of our state in a matter--in a manner  
3 that will make our democracy proud. I ask you to  
4 respect the wishes of growing minority  
5 communities and provide balanced political  
6 districts where our future majority electorate  
7 with--will begin the process of fully  
8 participating in government.

9 Thank you for this opportunity to voice  
10 my concerns. I look forward to the end product  
11 of your work. Attached to my testimony, you will  
12 find data that indicates the numbers that I have  
13 described to you. Thank you.

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
15 much, Congresswoman. It's good to see you here  
16 in--in your home county. Assemblywoman--I'm  
17 sorry. That wasn't deliberate. [Laughs] It's  
18 late. Manuel Lantigua?

19 MANUEL LANTIGUA, COMMUNITY LIAISON FOR  
20 DOMINICAN OFFICERS: Good afternoon, and thank  
21 you for giving us the opportunity to testify. I  
22 am the liason--the community liaison for the New  
23 York Dominican Officers Organization. The  
24 organization that--that has about 1,000 members

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2 for the law enforcement community.

3 I served ten years in the Bronx and most  
4 recently 13 years in--in the upper west side of  
5 Manhattan. And as a police officer working in  
6 the community, I have seen the changes that New  
7 York City--that happened in New York City in the  
8 last 20 years. I come here to testify because I  
9 believe it's important that the districts  
10 reflects the community, in itself. That it  
11 should not be something that the state actually  
12 do to favor any particular individual, but the  
13 community in itself. We want the Dominican  
14 community to be taken into account in regards to  
15 the Congress, State Senate, State Assembly--but  
16 also the Council members which are--I saw it was  
17 not part of the invitation that was sent through  
18 the media.

19 I believe all these elected officials  
20 are vital for our community to be represented and  
21 I think it's in the best interest of New York  
22 State that all these lines represent the  
23 community for the--for the best of all of us.  
24 That's all I need to say today.

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2 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you very  
3 much. Is there anyone else here who has not  
4 testified and would like to? There being--ah.  
5 Congratulations, you are number 50.

6 EVELYN RIVERA: Good afternoon. My name  
7 is Evelyn Rivera. I lived in the community for  
8 40 years. I lived in my building for--

9 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
10 Wait a minute, excuse me--talk a little slower.  
11 What is your name?

12 MS. RIVERA: Evelyn Rivera.

13 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you.

14 MS. RIVERA: I lived in my building for  
15 more than 35 years, Tenant's Association on West  
16 172nd Street. My concern is about our community,  
17 because we used to vote in the P.S. 64 of--about  
18 a couple of years they changed the address to  
19 another location as around 172nd, but they told  
20 the community they can go there, but it's  
21 different, because we had--now we have to take  
22 transportation, from 170 to 172nd, on the other  
23 side of the Bronx.

24 So we've been losing a lot of people to

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2 go and vote in the election day because the  
3 situation. When the people come from work and  
4 then they have to call and take a transportation  
5 to go to go and vote--it is a little hassle to go  
6 there, even for myself. Because a community--  
7 they have to go and take a bus and they go and  
8 have to transfer to go and--the election day,  
9 even when we have some time, we have to work all  
10 day. Election day, my--by myself.

11 But the question is--why do we have to  
12 do this? We used to vote at P.S. 64, and they  
13 keep and say they going to come--transfer us to  
14 the same location. We don't understand why we  
15 have to walk that far to go and vote.

16 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: It's not an  
17 issue for this Board. We only control the  
18 federal and state lines of representation.  
19 That's something for the City of New York--  
20 whether it's through your councilman or your  
21 community board. We have--

22 MS. RIVERA: [Interposing] Community  
23 board? We will--

24 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]

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2 We have--we have no--

3 MS. RIVERA: [Interposing] I've been  
4 part of the community for a long time. I go to  
5 the community board, I--

6 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: [Interposing]  
7 But this--

8 MS. RIVERA: [Interposing] We ask for  
9 this information and they keeping giving the same  
10 information over and over then like--because they  
11 go to change and nothing happen.

12 Well anyway, we are here more so because  
13 the community who - - trend that they have--more  
14 so they have to travel from our community to our  
15 other location in the Bronx, from 172nd Jerome--  
16 west Jerome to west--east Ramone [phonetic]. So,  
17 I guess nobody can do anything about it, right?

18 [Pause]

19 MS. RIVERA: Well, in--in the community,  
20 and me working with the Tenant's Association and  
21 others--we are concerned about the children's and  
22 the elders and teens that going on in the  
23 community. Because a lot of thing going on in  
24 the communities that we have to live--to

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2 understand.

3 I mean sometimes the people are saying  
4 that they don't have nothing to do with this, and  
5 they have to do something with the city or the  
6 state, but we believe the patience to you over  
7 here today, because I would like to see the  
8 change. But we would like to have the  
9 politician--we need more politician in our  
10 district to work with the people in the  
11 community.

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Okay.

13 MS. RIVERA: Okay?

14 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: We appreciate  
15 your--

16 MS. RIVERA: [Interposing] Thank you  
17 very much to listen to me, but I here in the  
18 Bronx for more than 40 years, and I concerned  
19 today. Thank you.

20 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Thank you. Is  
21 there anyone else in the house who wishes to  
22 testify? We had 50 people show up, which is  
23 wonderful. And if we had started at 7:00 at  
24 night, it would now be pushing 1:30 in the

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2 morning.

3 FEMALE VOICE: - - .

4 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: We'll keep

5 that--

6 FEMALE VOICE: [Interposing] If there's  
7 any more meetings--that happens to all of us.

8 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: Well, how many  
9 counties did you--how many counties did you cross  
10 to get there?

11 MALE VOICE: Move to adjourn.

12 ASSEMBLY MEMBER MCENENY: A move we  
13 adjourn, so to--so moved, thank you. This--we  
14 declare this hearing closed.

15 (The public hearing concluded at 2:23  
16 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Brandi Dean, do hereby certify that the foregoing typewritten transcription, consisting of pages number 1 to 197, inclusive, is a true record prepared by me and completed from materials provided to me.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brandi Dean".

Brandi Dean, Transcriptionist

September 20, 2011