



**CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
TESTIMONY TO THE CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION
ON THE PROPOSED COUNCIL DISTRICTS
October 4, 2012**

Good evening, Chair Romano and other members of the City Districting Commission (the Commission). My name is Rachael Fauss, and I am the Policy and Research Manager of Citizens Union of the City of New York, a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide Citizens Union's feedback regarding the proposed district maps for the City Council.

I wanted to first thank you and the staff for your work to increase transparency and public access to the work of the Commission, as was recommended by Citizens Union to you in a letter and testimony this summer. We commend you for taking the initiative to provide additional information on your website, in particular allowing the public access to online mapping software. We are pleased that you have easily linked to demographic information available from the Department of City Planning, and have provided information related to your past public meetings such as transcripts, submitted written testimony and video. Lastly, we appreciate that you have streamed many of your previous meetings and hearings live on the web, and encourage you to ensure that all future meetings and hearings are webcast.

I would now like to turn to our analysis of the districts, which focuses on the size of the districts, and the demographics of districts as they relate to their population in the city and borough as a whole. We will be providing additional analysis at next week's hearing in Brooklyn with regard to the partisan makeup of the districts.

I. Recommendations and Supporting Information

Given limited time to present our testimony, I would like to provide a summary of our recommendations and supporting information with regard to the proposed districts. Our full analysis is presented in the written testimony following these recommendations.

1. Districts should be corrected to ensure proper representation and the opportunity for minority groups to elect candidates of their choice where the population and consideration other important redistricting criteria such as protecting communities of interest would support the creation of majority, near-majority or coalition districts.

- Citywide, as in 2003, Latinos and Asians would continue to be underrepresented under the proposed maps when looking at the 2010 Census citywide demographic information. It should be noted, however, that the citywide figures may not yield such seats on a neighborhood level due to population distribution.
- From 2000 to 2010, the number of seats that could be expected given the citywide Asian population grew from 5 to 6 seats, and for Latinos from 14 to 15 seats.

Specifically for each borough, we recommend the following:

- a. **Manhattan:** The Commission should examine the possibility of **increasing Asian Representation in District 1 by looking to these neighboring areas in lower Manhattan.**
 - **Asian Americans have fewer seats than expected when looking at the borough population, with no majority or near majority districts,** though it should be noted that District 1 is proposed to be 36.6 percent Asian, and is represented currently by Margaret Chin.
 - The Asian population grew in Districts 2 and 3 from 2000 to 2010, at 35 and 70 percent respectively. The proposed Districts 2 and 3 have proposed Asian populations of 16 and 11 percent, respectively.
 - **It should be noted, however, that District 3 was originally created as an “opportunity to elect”¹ district for the LGBT community, and the Commission should continue to ensure representation for this important community of interest.**

- b. **Brooklyn:** The commission should examine whether it is possible to **create more cohesive districts for Latinos and Asian Americans in Brooklyn, looking at the population centers in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park** to ensure adequate representation of both groups.
 - **Asian Americans have fewer seats than expected, with two 2 expected seats,** yet none have been proposed with a majority or near-majority of the population.
 - Proposed Districts 38, 43 and 47 have the highest Asian populations, between 20 and 35 percent of the population of the districts, which all neighbor each other in Sunset Park, Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst. District 38, however, should be noted as having a near majority of Latinos in the proposed map.

- c. **Queens:** The commission should look to **increase the ability of Latinos and Asian Americans to elect candidates of their choice, specifically looking at the neighborhoods of Elmhurst and Jackson Heights.**
 - **Latinos have fewer seats than expected, having only two seats that are majority Hispanic,** when four would be expected given the population (though when looking at the 40 percent threshold, there would be three seats).
 - **Asian Americans also have fewer seats than expected,** with only one seat proposed to be majority Asian, District 20, and three expected when looking at the borough population.
 - **It should be noted, however, that an “opportunity to elect” district for the LGBT community was created previously in Queens, and the Commission should continue to ensure representation for this important community of interest.**

¹ An “opportunity to elect” district is a term referring to districts that provide a minority group or community of interest to elect a candidate of its choice.

- **A plurality of districts continue to be more than three percent above the ideal district size, though the number dropped from 30 to 24 districts under the proposed maps.**
- **Only 7 of the proposed districts or 14 percent are within one percent of the ideal district size, a principle supported by Citizens Union and other good government groups.**

4. We urge the Commission to release a “scorecard” that list the criteria used in to draw the proposed districts. It would be helpful for New Yorkers to have greater details regarding the adherence to criteria in the City Charter so that it can be known what factors were balanced in creating the districts.

II. Demographics of Proposed Districts

Proposed Maps Compared to 2010 City Demographics

This analysis compares the proposed maps with the current demographics of the city, as well as the current representation in the City Council. The analysis both considers the overall city population, as well as separate representation in each borough. It should be noted that on a neighborhood level, it may not be possible to create majority districts for every group, given population distributions, though it may be more possible to create districts that contain a larger percentage of a particular group to ensure that their voice is as unified as possible. Citizens Union has examined the proposed Unity Map, which has helped to inform our analysis below with regard to our recommendations and their feasibility.

Please note that Citizens Union used general population figures, both looking at the thresholds of majority (50 percent or more) and plurality (40 percent or more). Citizens Voting Age Population numbers would be slightly lower, and would be considered by the Department of Justice when looking at the pre-clearance standards of the Voting Rights Act. It should be noted, however, that members of the City Council represent all residents of their district, regardless of citizenship status and age, and therefore the comparison to the overall population numbers is relevant and important for representation.

Citywide

CITYWIDE DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROPOSED 2013 COUNCIL DISTRICTS						
	2010 Population	2010 Voting Age Population	Current City Council Representation	2010 Number of Seats Expected	2013 Proposed 50%+	2013 Proposed 40%+
White, Non-Hispanic	2,722,904	2,284,419	24	17	16	20
Black, Non-Hispanic	1,861,295	1,420,058	14	12	11	12
Asian, Non-Hispanic	1,030,914	834,547	2	6	1	1
Hispanic	2,336,076	1,709,204	11	15	11	13
Total Pop	8,175,133	6,407,022	51	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average Population of Districts 160,297						

As in 2003, Latinos and Asians would continue to be underrepresented under the proposed maps, both with the makeup of the current City Council and when looking at the 2010 Census citywide demographic information. From 2000 to 2010, the number of seats that could be expected given the citywide Asian population grew from 5 to 6 seats, and for Latinos from 14 to 15 seats. It should be noted, however, that the citywide figures may not yield such seats on a neighborhood level due to population distribution.

Borough Representation

BRONX DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROPOSED 2013 COUNCIL DISTRICTS					
	2010 Population	2010 Voting Age Population	2010 Number of Seats Expected	2013 Proposed 50%+	2013 Proposed 40%+
White, Non-Hispanic	151,209	130,205	1	0	1
Black, Non-Hispanic	416,695	309,709	3	1	1
Asian, Non-Hispanic	47,733	36,840	0	0	0
Hispanic	741,413	520,397	5	4*	4*
TOTAL BOROUGH POPULATION	1,385,108	1,016,912	9	N/A	N/A

*Note: this analysis does not include Council District 8, which contains portions of Manhattan.

In the Bronx, Latinos have the number of seats expected when District 8 (which shares parts of Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx) is added, bringing the number of seats that are majority Hispanic to five for the Bronx. While the goal of adding additional Latino representation to the Bronx may be worthy, we believe that District 8 as currently drawn results in the underrepresentation of Manhattan, and also does not properly unite communities of interest in East Harlem.

We encourage the Commission to examine alternate means of achieving the goal of increased Latino representation in the Bronx, possibly looking at coalition districts as a means to achieve this goal.

African Americans have fewer seats than expected, with 3 expected, and only one district proposed, District 12 (which encompasses Woodlawn and Williamsbridge) which as proposed has a population that is 68 percent Black and 22.7 percent Hispanic. This may be in part due to population distribution, but it should be noted that it is bordered by two districts, 11 and 13, which have growing Latino populations and have Black populations under 20 percent.

We encourage the commission to examine creating coalition districts to maximize Latino and Black representation in the Bronx, particularly in the areas covered by districts 11, 12 and 13.

BROOKLYN DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROPOSED 2013 COUNCIL DISTRICTS					
	2010 Population	2010 Voting Age Population	2010 Number of Seats Expected	2013 Proposed 50%+	2013 Proposed 40%+
White, Non-Hispanic	893,306	702,033	6	6	7
Black, Non-Hispanic	799,066	606,643	5	6	7
Asian, Non-Hispanic	260,762	203,193	2	0	0
Hispanic	496,285	359,871	3	2	3
TOTAL BOROUGH POPULATION	2,504,700	1,910,322	16	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>

In Brooklyn, Asian Americans have fewer seats than expected when looking at borough-level population counts, with 2 expected seats, yet none have been proposed with a majority or near-majority of the population. Proposed Districts 38, 43 and 47 have the highest Asian populations, between 20 and 35 percent of the population of the districts, which all neighbor each other in Sunset Park, Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst. District 38, however, should be noted as having a near majority of Latinos in the proposed map.

The commission should examine whether it is possible to create a more cohesive districts for Latinos and Asian Americans in Brooklyn, looking at the population centers in Bensonhurst and Sunset Park to ensure adequate representation of both groups.

MANHATTAN DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROPOSED 2013 COUNCIL DISTRICTS					
	2010 Population	2010 Voting Age Population	2010 Number of Seats Expected	2013 Proposed 50%+	2013 Proposed 40%+
White, Non-Hispanic	761,493	683,937	5	5	6
Black, Non-Hispanic	205,340	167,141	1	1	1
Asian, Non-Hispanic	178,157	158,575	1	0	0
Hispanic	403,577	315,139	3	3	3
TOTAL BOROUGH POPULATION	1,585,873	1,351,438	10*	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>

*Note: this analysis includes Council District 8, which contains portions of the Bronx.

In Manhattan, Asian Americans have fewer seats than expected, with no majority or near majority districts, though it should be noted that District 1 is proposed to be 36.6 percent Asian, and is represented currently by Margaret Chin. The district in 2003 was 42 percent Asian; however, the district saw a decrease in the Asian population of 3.2 percent from 2000 to 2010. The Asian population grew in neighboring districts, however. Districts 2 and 3 saw increases in the Asian population from 2000 to 2010, at 35 and 70 percent respectively. The proposed Districts 2 and 3 have proposed Asian populations of 16 and 11 percent, respectively.

The commission should examine the possibility of increasing Asian Representation in District 1 by looking to these neighboring districts in lower Manhattan. It should be noted, however, that District 3 was originally created as an “opportunity to elect” district for the LGBT community, and the Commission should continue to ensure representation for this important community of interest.

QUEENS DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROPOSED 2013 COUNCIL DISTRICTS					
	2010 Population	2010 Voting Age Population	2010 Number of Seats Expected	2013 Proposed 50%+	2013 Proposed 40%+
White, Non-Hispanic	616,727	527,091	4	3	4
Black, Non-Hispanic	395,881	305,075	2	3	3
Asian, Non-Hispanic	509,428	408,780	3	1	1
Hispanic	613,750	459,179	4	2	3
TOTAL BOROUGH POPULATION	2,230,722	1,768,821	14	N/A	N/A

Latinos are underrepresented in Queens, having only two seats that are majority Hispanic, when four would be expected given the population (though when looking at the 40 percent threshold, there would be three seats).

Asian Americans also have fewer seats than expected in Queens when looking at borough-wide demographic information, with only one seat proposed to be majority Asian, District 20. District 20 in 2003 had an Asian population of 47.8 percent, and now is 64.8 percent, which is consistent with the increase in population. Neighboring districts, however, 19 is proposed to have a 28 percent Asian population, and district 23 is proposed to have an Asian population of 35 percent. Districts 25, 26 and 29 also border each other and have Asian populations at about 30 percent each.

The commission should look to increase the ability of Latinos and Asian Americans to elect candidates of their choice, specifically looking at the neighborhoods of Elmhurst and Jackson Heights. It should be noted, however, that an “opportunity to elect” district for the LGBT community was created previously in Queens, and the Commission should continue to ensure representation for this important community of interest.

STATEN ISLAND DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROPOSED 2013 COUNCIL DISTRICTS					
	2010 Population	2010 Voting Age Population	2010 Number of Seats Expected	2013 Proposed 50%+	2013 Proposed 40%+
White, Non-Hispanic	300,169	241,153	2	2	2
Black, Non-Hispanic	44,313	31,490	0	0	0
Asian, Non-Hispanic	34,834	27,159	0	0	0
Hispanic	81,051	54,618	1	0	0
TOTAL BOROUGH POPULATION	468,730	359,529	3	N/A	N/A

Latinos have fewer seats than expected in Staten Island, with district 49 having a Latino population of 30 percent. It should be noted, however, that the other two districts in Staten Island have small Latino populations at 12 and 8 percent each. District 49 is currently represented by Debi Rose, who is African American; the African American population of District 49 is proposed to be 24.5 percent, while the Latino population is 30.4 percent. The district could be considered a coalition district, as it provides for the opportunity for minorities to elect candidates of their choice, though it could

drawn to be more compact and align with existing neighborhood boundaries while also preserving Latino and African American representation.

Current Representation in the City Council Versus 2000 Population and Districts

Citizens Union thought it might also be of interest to the Commission to compare the current City Council to 2000 Demographics, as current districts are often used as a starting point when drawing new districts. Latinos and Asians were also underrepresented when looking at citywide demographic information, as seen below.

	Current Members, City Council*	2000 Population, Expected Number of Seats (Citywide)	2003 Districts (2000 Census) 50%+ population	2003 Districts (2000 Census) 40%+ population
White	24	18	18	22
Black	14	12	11	12
Asian	2	5	0	2
Hispanic	11	14	12	13

*Please note that for vacant seats, the prior member's ethnicity was considered.

Proposed Maps Compared to 2003 Districts

This analysis reflects the changes from the previous districts, looking at the changes in representation from the 2003 maps to the proposed 2013 maps.

Hispanic Districts

- There is one less majority Hispanic District (District 38) in the proposed maps from the previous districts. It should be noted, however, that the district lost some Hispanic population from 2000 to 2010 (it dropped by 9.2 percent, a total of about 7,000 people). Conversely, the Asian population in District 38 grew by more than 50 percent, or about 17,600 people).

Asian Districts

- Under the proposed maps, there would now be a Majority Asian District – District 20. Its Asian Population totals 64.8 percent, while it previously was 47.8 percent.
- If looking at a smaller threshold (population totaling 40 percent or more), however, there is one less district that is 40 percent or more Asian. Two districts in 2003 were 40 percent or more Asian – District 1 and District 20. Now, there is only one such district (District 20). It should be noted, however, that the Asian population in District 20 decreased by about 3 percent, by about 2,000 residents. The white population grew by nearly 38 percent in the district, about 21,000 residents.

White Districts

- There were 18 districts that were majority white in 2003, and the proposed maps have 16 such districts.
- District 29 in Queens (Karen Koslowitz) and 46 in Brooklyn (Lew Fidler), which were once majority white, are now majority non-white.

- o District 46 is now 42.4 percent Black (up from 33.0 percent), and 43.7 percent white. This is consistent with growth in the Black population – nearly 30 percent growth of almost 16,000 people.
- o District 29 is now 44.2 percent white, and 31.7 percent Asian (up from 21.7 percent in 2003). This is slightly more than the growth of the Asian population in the previous district, which grew by about 8,500 people, or 26 percent.

III. Variation in District Size

By looking at the size of districts, Citizens Union sought to determine whether districts or boroughs were close to the ideal district size to ensure proper representation. Underpopulating or overpopulating districts can lead to districts in which there are too many constituents per representative, diluting their relative voice compared to other districts, or conversely where too few constituents for each Councilmember, meaning that they relative voice is larger than for other districts. This is why Citizens Union supports criteria for drawing lines that ensures that districts are as close to the average district size as possible, ideally one percent.

Citywide Variance

When examining the size of the districts and their difference from the average (median) size of districts, it appears that the districts are closer to the average under the proposed maps than under the current maps 2003. The ideal district size in 2003 was about 157,000 and in 2013 is now nearly 161,000. The tables below show the spread of district deviations in the 2003 current and 2013 proposed maps, looking at intervals of 1 percent from the average, between 1 and 3 percent from the average, and then 3 percent and over.

Proposed 2013 District Deviations from the Ideal District Size (2010 Census Data)			
Variation from Median	<1%	1%-3%	>3%
Total	7	20	24
As percentage of total districts	13.73%	39.22%	47.06%

Current District Deviations from the Ideal District Size (2003 Districts using 2000 Census Data)			
Variation from Median	<1%	1%-3%	>3%
Total	4	17	30
As percentage of total districts	7.8%	33.3%	58.8%

As seen above, a plurality of districts continue to be more than three percent above the ideal district size, though the number dropped from 30 to 24 districts under the proposed maps. While this trend is positive, too few districts continue to be within one percent of the ideal district size – only 7 districts or 14 percent reach this threshold.

While Citizens Union recognizes that there are competing principles and guidelines in the City Charter that dictate how districts must be draw, we urge the Commission to seek to narrow the deviation of districts so that even more are closer to the ideal district size.

Variations By Borough

Borough	Population (2010 Census)	Average District Size	Average Deviation	Average Deviation %	Proportional # of districts	Actual # of Districts
Manhattan	1,673,468	167,347	6,637	4.13%	10.4	9.5*
Bronx	1,294,582	161,823	1,113	0.69%	8.1	8.5*
Queens	2,211,993	158,000	-2,711	-1.69%	13.8	14**
Brooklyn	2,547,596	159,225	-1,485	-0.92%	15.9	16**
Staten Island	468,576	156,192	-4,518	-2.81%	2.9	3

*Proposed District 8 is in both Manhattan and the Bronx

**Proposed District 34 is nearly entirely in Brooklyn, with a small portion of Queens. It is considered to be in Brooklyn for the purposes of this analysis.

When looking at the relative populations of each borough compared to the number of districts expected and allotted to them under the proposed maps, each borough has roughly what would be expected given their population sizes, with the notable exception of Manhattan. The average size of districts in Manhattan is 4.3 percent above the ideal district size, which results in the borough having fewer representatives than would be expected given its population. Proposed Council District 8 shares roughly equal portions of the Bronx and Manhattan, which is a change from the previous district, which previously had more of its area in Manhattan. The growth in Bronx and Manhattan, however, has been roughly equal, at 3.9 and 3.2 percent, respectively. This imbalance between the Bronx and Manhattan should be corrected, possibly by placing more of the proposed City Council District 8 into Manhattan, as it is currently drawn.

While Staten Island, Queens, and Brooklyn have districts that are on average smaller, they are closer to the ideal district size. Staten Island’s inclusion of three full districts as opposed to having one district that connected from Staten Island across the largest suspension bridge in the U.S. (the Verrazano-Narrows) into Brooklyn is a positive development which would provide more cohesion and better representation, and balances the slightly larger deviation.

Thank you for the opportunity to present Citizens Union’s recommendations regarding the proposed Council district lines. We plan to provide further thoughts on the districts next week, though I am available to answer any questions you have about our analysis of the districts presented this evening.