

# Memo

To: Magistrate Roanne Mann  
From: Assemblyman Carl E. Heastie  
Date: March 14, 2012  
Re: An Appeal for Communities of Common Interest in New York City

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We are once again writing to strongly object to your proposed Congressional district composition. In our opinion, the court missed an opportunity to empower communities of interest, one of the key tenets of the redistricting process. The data shows us that we have an opportunity to keep together communities of interest in areas where the court has created divisions.

Specifically, in Districts 12 – 15, the court has not maximized its ability to merge communities of interest. What is not seen in the numbers is a bond that exists between longstanding traditional communities and the existence of newly formed, expanding communities that have more similar characteristics.

With just a few changes, the court could compose new districts that preserve a longstanding, historic African American district, acknowledge the shift and slight migration within a borough of another, and establish and recognize an emerging community seeking to elect a representative that understands the true nature of their communities.

The communities you've included in the 15<sup>th</sup> District share a common bond with many now included within their borough in District 14. These two districts could merge more seamlessly, and could be shifted to accommodate changes needed to combine communities located in a better constructed 13<sup>th</sup> District.

The 13<sup>th</sup> District should be changed to reflect the commonalities within the communities of Harlem, Spanish Harlem and the Bronx. The court should connect these communities, as they are inextricably linked through history. Many of the residents of the Northeast Bronx and Co-Op City actually have family in the communities of Harlem and Spanish Harlem. They grew up in Harlem and still attend church in Harlem.

Simply put, the court should acknowledge the unique nature of these communities and deem them communities of interest. By the numbers, the court should examine and address the dilution of African American votes in the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Districts. In the current composition, you are making African Americans take a step backward by dividing the community. In addition, you are denying the Latino community more representation.

It is American tradition to send representatives to Washington to articulate the distinct cultures of their respective districts. Magistrate Mann, you have an opportunity to insure that all New Yorkers can feel as though they have a voice in Washington, one that is not muted by dilution.

Once again, we urge you to reconfigure the lines under the auspices of the concept of communities of interest. It is the right thing to do.

