

**Testimony presented by Lluvia Perez at the January 7, 2013
Manhattan Districting Commission Hearing at Hunter College**



Hi my name is Lluvia Perez. I'm 17 and a High School senior at Hunter High School. Today I have the pleasure of speaking on behalf of my mother Yma Rodriguez and the youth of East Harlem who share her sentiments!

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this very important issue and restoring La Marqueta back to Council District #8.

I'm here on behalf of members of Puertorriqueños Unidos of the State of New York most of whom reside in East Harlem where the organization was founded.

I'm here to tell the commission that we are adamantly oppose to the commission reducing El Barrio's district by 30 blocks.

We are demanding that East Harlem district lines be fully restored. The portion of East Harlem within District 8 should remain unchanged from the previous map!

Common Cause has presented a proposal that restores East Harlem district lines, and which we unanimously support. This map restores the integrity of our beloved El Barrio keeps Randall's and Wards Islands in the district and still grows District 8's portion of the Bronx.

As you know El Barrio is one of the largest Latino communities in New York City. El Barrio is an historic and cultural community of interest. We are the cradle of the Puerto Rican community in the United States!

We are asking the commission to respect our community and not give into political power plays that will undermine our community and our legacy.

Although we love our brothers and sisters in the good borough of the Bronx, we see absolutely no reason to make this district 50% in the Bronx.

We are our own community with our own distinct attributes and concerns. We are asking that the Commission stop its intention to create a Bronx-majority district and instead draw District 8 based on the realities of our community.

We are our own economic community of interest, primarily made up of working class families, and with a large concentration of public housing.

Metropolitan and Mount Sinai Hospitals two of the important and distinguished institutions should remain in District #8! These important institutions serve and employ a large portion of our community. We have helped build and grow them and we want and need them in our community.

Our public housing developments should remain united. We would like to know what logic was used by the Commission when you divided the Lexington and Carver Houses, and puts them in a district that in no way represent or reflect their interest. Ask yourselves, how are these developments being served being by your current plan.

Both the Lexington and Carver Houses developments belong in a District #8, where their interests will be properly addressed by people who understand their needs and concerns.

Taft Houses was also divided in two districts. We ask you “How does this make sense?”

Randall’s Island should not be taken out of our district. It belongs in Manhattan and already shares a Community Board with our district. The influx of traffic going to and out of both islands will be born by District 8's community.

District 8's residents particularly our children need and deserve that open park space.

Both islands belong to the borough of Manhattan and we want it to stay that way!

Thank you for listening. We hope that you give thoughtful consideration to our petition and do the right thing for the people of district 8!