

LEELA MARET

Testimony for city Council Redistricting.

My name is Leela Maret. I was the Recording Secretary of Local 375, DC 37 for 10 years and the delegate to DC 37 largest Municipal union in the city representing 125,000 members. The city Employees nurses, Cross guards, Engineers, Clerks, Teachers, Police officers, Fire Fighters make the city work day by day. I am a community activist and Vice President of Federation of Indian Association Of North America and Canada and I live in Richmond Hill for the last 25 years.

Richmond Hill, South Ozone Park Community of interest continues to be divided by 4 city Councils. It is a continuous area of people of common interests, culture, and heritage. This Community is disenfranchised, chopped up and fragmented. Punjabis, Indo Carribeans, Bangladeshis are a group of same origin and background. We also congregate in the same places of worship. Heavily populated mundirs Mosques and Gurudwaras are dispersed. The children go to same high Schools John Adams and Richmond Hill, share common Country of Origin, dialect and language. We have opened up small businesses in Richmond Hill that reflect our Culture. We run Countless Roti shops and we have countless ethnic Garment stores in the area. We have Local newspapers West Indian, Carribean Newyorker, Indian panorama And host radio programs to the needs of our community and share community services and organizations. We identify as Americans who can trace our ancestry back to South Asian Diaspora. We did not have health clinics, Community centers, daycare centers, Senior centers, social service centers, or even job training center in our Area.

The Most important family Policy, urban Policy, foreign policy

Labor policy to have and ensure representation by all people. We are a vital part of the economic engine of New York. We are asking for the opportunity to become part of the mechanism in America. We humbly request to Show us some respect and keep us together in one district. We do not have any South Asian elected so far to the city Council. We would like to have a Piece of pie too. We are one of the fastest growing ethnic population. Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park Community should be kept as one district as it functions as one neighborhood. It should be unified into one Community that must be kept together and not splintered.

Within each community throughout the city is a vibrancy civic historic cultural richness of many diverse groups that deserve to be preserved through political empowerment. The proposed map is attached for Commission's consideration.

