

Good afternoon. My name is Dilip Nath and I am the president of New American Voters Association (NAVA). NAVA is a nonpartisan organization that was established two years ago to advance political awareness and voters' education of new immigrant communities throughout New York City. We are dedicated to increasing voter turnout in Local, State and Federal elections.

In the previous election, we have found New American community's voter turnout to be a challenge. Particularly the South Asian community, this community is divided depending on which side of the street they are located. A single community such as ours is represented by different state legislators. For example, Assembly District 25 is divided in the middle of a concentrated Bangladeshi community in Jamaica. There are at least 3 Assembly Members representing this group of people, Assemblymen Rory Lancman, David Weprin, and Bill Scarborough. We all understand the need of keeping our community together so that the people can find their own voice and inspire other new citizens to find their voice in their adopted country of United States. The U.S. Supreme Court recognizes race as one of the factors that should be considered when drawing the district line. Unfortunately, we found that when the district was re-drawn back in 2000, race was not put into consideration. Our community is divided in such a way where it is nearly impossible to elect a South Asian for any elected office. As of today, we do not have a single South Asian representative in the NY State or the NY City.

Based on the American Community Survey, over 300,000 South Asians live in NYC. Queens is the home of 70% of these South Asians and a large number of these people happen to be living in the area of Jamaica, Jamaica Hills, Hollis, Briarwood, Bellrose, and Queens Village.

It is important that when we redraw the district line, the following factors are considered in keeping our community together:

Cultural background, Economic status, Common media markets, Shared community service and organization, including worship places and stores, Common language and dialects, Common country of origin

We urge this task force to take a closer look at Assembly District 25 and others AD throughout the NYC so that we can keep our community together for greater voice among South Asians. The right to vote is fundamental and we must make sure this constitutional right is protected for all South Asians and all New Yorkers. Thank you.