

May 11, 2021

By Electronic Mail

Mr. Thomas P. DiNapoli
Office of the New York State Comptroller
110 State Street
Albany, New York 12236

Dear Comptroller DiNapoli,

Our groups write to urge you to prioritize the release of \$4 million in funds to New York State's Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC). Without the timely release of these critical funds, the Commission will be further delayed from fulfilling their constitutionally mandated charge of fairly redrawing the state's Congressional, Senate, and Assembly district lines.

Although the Commission was formed more than a year ago, it has yet to receive a single dollar of state funding. The Commission has been unable to hire staff, set up a public website, or even create its own government email addresses for public communication. This lack of funding has led to a further delay in the Commission's actions and to date they have not even had the opportunity to officially review the Census TIGER Data which was released in February of this year.

At its most recent meeting, the Commission stated that they had drafted job listings but were unable to begin soliciting candidates because there are no funds to pay for an employment website. The Commission plans to hold their first set of constitutionally mandated public hearings as early as June. According to the Society of Human Resource Management, it takes the average employer 36 days to fill a position.¹ If funds for the Independent Redistricting Commission are not released immediately, they will be unable to start holding their public hearings until late in the summer leaving little time for staff to get familiar with their roles and less time for public outreach ahead of the hearings. Democracy cannot hang in the balance. The redistricting process is a necessary and critical step in defining power locally and nationally for the next ten years. It must be done in a timely, orderly and transparent way for the public to have confidence in the process.

The US Census Bureau has stated official population counts may be sent to states as early as August and our state constitution mandates that first drafts of maps be available to the public no later than September 15th. We are rapidly headed into the pinnacle point of our redistricting process yet the Commission has been unable to conduct any public education, outreach, or engagement because funding continues to be delayed. We cannot allow our first Commission drawn cycle of redistricting to undermine the constitutional mandate for public input by further obstructing the release of funds.

¹ <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/business-solutions/Documents/Talent-Acquisition-Report-All-Industries-All-FTEs.pdf>

We again urge you to immediately release the Commission's funding so they can get to work.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical Health and Professional Services

APA VOICE Redistricting Task Force

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund

Caribbean Equality Project

CHHAYA CDC

Chinese American Planning Council

Chinese Progressive Association

Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College, CUNY

Citizens Union

Disability Rights New York

Dominicanos USA

Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association

Hispanic Federation

Homecrest Community Services

Korean Community Services

LatinoJusticePRLDEF

League of Women Voters of New York State

MinKwon Center for Community Action

New York Civil Liberties Union

New York Immigration Coalition

OCA-NY

Reinvent Albany

South Asian Council for Social Services

South Queens Women's March