

# State Committee Report

By Daniel Marks Cohen

Thank you again to the club for your support for my campaign for City Council. I am grateful for the support and feel honored to have participated, and very proud of the campaign I ran.

Things have been a bit up in the air in the State Committee, with the report released by AG Tish James on Governor Cuomo's behavior, he may be out of office by the time you read this. Nonetheless, the rest of politics moves forward.

***Redistricting.*** I testified before the NYS Independent Redistricting Commission, which will be redrawing the Congressional and State Legislature district lines this year. Here is my testimony:

*I am the Democratic State Committeeman for the 69th Assembly District. I was elected in 2010 and have lived in the two adjacent Manhattan Valley/Morningside Heights neighborhoods my entire life, 50 years. I have testified on redistricting previously following the last Census cycle, and was also the principal litigant against the previous incarnation of this body, the New York State Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment in the case Cohen v. LATFOR and then in its successor case, Cohen v. Cuomo, in 2012. Back then, the issue was Congressional and State Legislative seats, somewhat similar concerns to what we have today. I live in the 10th Congressional District ably represented by Congressman Jerry Nadler, and the district includes the entirety of the West Side and should continue to do so. Others today will*

*speak on the subject of the Congressional lines but I urge you to maintain them largely as they are, and to also maintain the 10th separate from the East Side 12th district, ably represented by Carolyn Maloney.*

*The previous redistricting commission maintained the integrity of some of the legislative districts, and struggled with others. In particular, it must address the challenge of the 31st State Senate District, which was drawn to punish then-State Senator Eric Schneiderman for defying the will of Albany in his support of true leadership and progressive legislation. Though he would be later disgraced by his personal conduct, at the time he nonetheless won re-election to the seat. After he was elevated to higher office it was held briefly by Marisol Alcantara during her single-term foray into the machinations of the*

*Republican Party-controlled Independent Democratic Conference, and is now well represented by Robert Jackson. The district, which brings to mind the South American country of Chile in its design, runs from 23rd Street to 223rd Street and despite heroic efforts on the part of Senator Jackson, its elongated design does not serve its constituents well. I am sure representatives of Senator Jackson will provide more thoughtful commentary on how to redraw the district than I can today. But I hope that the Commission will finish the work it started a decade ago.*

*I would like to take the balance of my time to speak to the 69th Assembly District, which as I mentioned previously, I have lived in for my entire life. The district runs roughly from 86th Street to 125th Street, including the northern parts of the Upper West Side and including the entirety of the*

*neighborhood of Manhattan Valley and Morningside Heights. Particularly due to the arbitrary border of 110th Street as the dividing line between two community boards, Manhattan's CB7 and CB9, those neighborhoods are frequently overlooked in other areas of representation. As the northern end of CB7, Manhattan Valley often struggles for recognition amidst its wealthier and more visible sister neighborhoods to the south. As the President of Valley Restoration Local Development Corporation, a more than 40-year nonprofit that has advocated for the neighborhood, I am regularly aware of the differences between the poorer northern neighborhood and its better-off southern community. And with Morningside Heights, it too is at the southern edge of CB9, and thus also must make a determined effort to get its needs met in CB9, but for the opposite reason, as it is the*

*richer section of the larger Community Board, and the needs of its northern neighbors are frequently of more urgent and immediate concern. Having served previously on CB7 and now as a member of CB9, I underline this statement from personal experience.*

*But Assembly District 69 reflects its constituents well spanning both neighborhoods and thus does not need to be altered. It has been very well represented for the past twenty years by Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell and there is a well-honed synergy in the representation of the neighborhood in its elected leadership and the political will of the district. It is compact and keeps several aforementioned neighborhoods together and whole, rather than splitting up neighbors along arbitrary lines as seen elsewhere in Manhattan (particularly in the City Council, which I acknowledge is not your*

*purview today). I urge you to maintain the 69th Assembly District as it is, and not make any changes that would upset the careful and thoughtful balance the area has achieved. Thank you.*