

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com – Website
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

**The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Social Justice Committee
Monday, September 29, 2025 – 6:30 PM
*This meeting was conducted via Zoom***

MINUTES

CB8 Members Present: Lori Bores, Sarah Chu, Saundrea I. Coleman, Miles Fink, Wendy Machaver (public member)

Absent: Jennifer Michaels

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 10

Item 1 – Mid-decade Redistricting

Speaker: Professor Jeffrey Wice, New York Law School and Director, New York Elections, Census, and Redistricting Institute

Jeffrey M. Wice is a national expert in redistricting, voting rights, and census law, and served as past counsel to several New York Assembly Speakers and State Senate leaders, state legislative leaders, members of Congress, and other state and local government officials on redistricting and voting rights matters across the nation. Professor Wice is the current chair of the New York City Bar Association's Election Law Committee and serves as a member of the American Bar Association's Election Law Committee.

Historical Context

- From the founding of New York State through 2012, legislative district lines were redrawn every ten years by the Legislature with limited public input.
- The 1980s introduced computerized mapping and a task force that included non-legislative members, but the process remained politically driven.
- Former Mayor Ed Koch advocated for an independent process after 2010. This led to a constitutional amendment passed by the Legislature in 2012–2013 and approved by voters in 2014, creating a bipartisan advisory commission for redistricting.

Recent Cycle (2020–2024)

- The Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) was required to produce two sets of maps for the Legislature. In 2021–2022, the commission failed to agree on final maps.
- The Legislature drew its own maps for the Assembly, Senate, and Congress; Governor Kathy Hochul signed them into law.
- A lawsuit filed in Steuben County challenged the maps as partisan gerrymanders and procedurally invalid. The court found the Senate and Congressional maps unconstitutional and appointed a special master to redraw them for the 2022 elections.

- Assembly maps were litigated later; in 2023, a court-ordered process produced revised maps largely adopted by the Legislature.

Current Status and Constraints

- The 2014 constitutional amendment prohibits mid-decade redistricting in New York until the next decennial cycle (2031).
- Proposed legislation by Assembly Member Lasher and Senator Gianaris would allow the Legislature to bypass the commission under certain conditions; if approved by two successive legislatures and voters, it could take effect in 2028.
- Any new legal challenges to the 2024 maps would face tight timelines ahead of the 2026 election cycle.

National Landscape

- Wice highlighted that some states are exploring “mid-decade redistricting” to gain partisan advantage. He cited examples from Texas and California, where governors and legislatures have considered bypassing independent processes.
- He noted that Republicans currently control more state legislatures and thus hold greater power to redraw maps between censuses. Democratic-leaning states tend to have stronger rules favoring fairness and stability.
- Litigation based on the “one person, one vote” principle and the Voting Rights Act continues to shape districting nationwide.

Census and Representation

- Wice discussed legislation introduced by Council Member Julie Menin to establish a permanent Census Office in New York City and to fund ongoing census outreach.
- He warned of potential federal efforts to include a citizenship question in the 2030 Census, which could reduce participation and undercount immigrant communities.

Question & Answers (Summarized for Brevity)

Q: Concerns were raised about how a citizenship question might discourage participation among immigrant families and result in undercounts.

A: Prof. Wice replied that the U.S. Constitution requires a count of “the whole number of persons,” not citizens, and that attempts to exclude non-citizens are unconstitutional, though he noted the Supreme Court could still entertain challenges.

Q: Is there a “point of no return” for states continually altering districts to entrench partisan advantage?

A: Prof. Wice observed that the current political environment is less restrained by legal or ethical norms than in previous eras, and that both parties are tempted to redraw lines whenever possible.

Q: Does any centralized organization coordinate Democratic redistricting litigation nationwide?

A: Prof. Wice cited former Attorney General Eric Holder’s National Democratic Redistricting Committee (2016–2017) as the main entity focusing on map challenges and voter protection, alongside groups like the League of Women Voters, the ACLU, and Latino advocacy organizations.

Q: How does the census treat incarcerated individuals?

A: Prof. Wice explained that New York passed a 2009 law (he helped draft) to reallocate incarcerated people to their home addresses for redistricting purposes, rather than counting them in rural prison districts. This change added over 30,000 residents back to NYC districts such as Brooklyn for representation and funding purposes.

Professor Wice encouraged attendees to subscribe to his weekly newsletter on New York election law and redistricting issues (jeffrey.wice@nyls.edu).

[Mapping the New Senate, Assembly, and Congressional District.](#)

Item 3 – Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

Item 4 – New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

This meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Saundrea I. Coleman and Sarah Chu, Co-Chairs