

DOUGLAS WOODWARD:

It has been nine months since the idea of proportional representation was first raised by CSWA. A concrete and specific proposal is long overdue. But I don't think there needs to be lengthy debate; the concept is clear, only the specifics are missing. The proposers of the idea should be prepared to fill in the blanks and we can then discuss the substance of the idea rather than the procedural details. We need simply to understand exactly what is on the table, and for that, the following questions need to be answered:

1. What are the categories of groups for which greater voting rights are being proposed?
2. What are the criteria for inclusion in those groups?
3. How would eligibility for inclusion in the preferred voting group be verified?
4. What specific extra weighting is proposed—how many extra votes per preferred group or what percentage extra weighting of votes?
5. For which specific preferred groups among the voting members of the CWG are greater voting rights being proposed and which groups are being relegated to a lesser category with fewer voting rights and on what basis? Here is a list of the current membership as shown on the website. Which of these groups is proposed for increased voting power and why?

VOTING MEMBERS:

American Legion Post 1291
Asian American Arts Alliance
Asian American Arts Centre
Asian Americans for Equality
Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund
Bowery Alliance of Neighbors
Chatham Green
Chatham Towers
Cherry Street Tenant Association
Chinatown Business & Property Owners Group
Chinatown Partnership
Chinatown Rotary Club
Chinatown YMCA
Chinatown Youth Initiatives
Chinese American Planning Council
Chinese American Medical Society
Chinese Chamber of Commerce of NY
Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association
Chinese Progressive Association
Chinese Staff & Workers' Association
Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence

Comment [1]: I don't think whether an organization was solicited has any relevance...though re-polling the member organizations as to their commitment...or ,on the other hand, to see how many of them have been present for voting over the last year - would. zella

Relevance is ambiguous here, but reviewing their records would help. Polling them would produce a Heisenberg effect. - hollander.rob

or a Hawthorne effect more likely- douglas.woodward

Comment [2]: I wonder how many of these members came to CWG themselves with an interest, and how many were solicited and have minimal interest. Jim might have the answer. The rest of this document seems to me a helpful adjunct to Danny's. - hollander.rob

- douglas.woodward

Community Board #1 Manhattan
Community Board #2 Manhattan
Community Board #3 Manhattan
Community Emergency Response Team, CB#2
Confucius Plaza
Continental Garment Manufacturers Association
CREATE in Chinatown
Educational Alliance
Friends of Columbus Park
Good Ole Lower East Side (GOLES)
Greater Chinatown Community Association
Hamilton-Madison House
Hester Street Collaborative
Hotel Chinese Association
Immigrant Social Services
Indochina Sino-American Community Center
International Chinese Transportation Professionals Association
Lin Sing Association
Lin Ze Xu Foundation of USA
Lower East Side Business Development
Lower Manhattan GOP
M'Finda Kalunga Community Garden
Museum of Chinese in America
National Mobilization Against Sweatshops
New York Downtown Hospital
PS 130M Parents' Association
The Pistol Club of Greater Chinatown
318 Restaurant Workers Union
Two Bridges Neighborhood Council
United Fukinese American Association

The strategic significance of this discussion is clear: certain groups within the CWG feel that they should have greater power to determine the outcome of deliberations within the group and should be granted extra voting rights. We need to ensure that any proposal does not have the effect of silencing the voices of those who do not support the agenda of the groups proposing greater power for themselves (another reason to be absolutely clear for which groups the extra power is proposed to accrue). To ensure that no group is disenfranchised, I recommend very strongly that the three sponsoring community boards—CBs 1, 2, and 3—and not just their representatives on the CWG, be asked specifically to review and approve the apportionment of “proportional representation” voting blocks once a clear proposal is offered.