

VOTERS ENDORSE CHARTER CHANGES BY 3-1 MARGIN

New York City residents on Nov. 8 overwhelmingly approved ballot questions 3 and 4, authorizing the creation of an ethics code for administrative law judges and extending some of the financial management practices enacted by the state during the 1970s fiscal crisis.

Question 3 sailed to victory with 79 percent of the vote, 371,351 to 99,838 and Question 4 passed with 76 percent, 330,344 to 103,752.

The Charter Revision Commission, led by Chairwoman Ester R. Fuchs and Executive Director Terri Matthews and appointed in 2004 by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, unanimously agreed on Aug. 2 to put both questions before the voters. The 13-member panel's recommendations came after a year of deliberations and debate about how to improve City government by revising the Charter.

"I said in August that we could be proud not only of the process, but of the product," said Chairwoman Fuchs. "Now we can be proud of the outcome. New Yorkers sent a clear message that they expect integrity and sound fiscal management from their government"

Both questions received widespread support from several of the City's major newspapers and government advocacy groups. The New York Times, Newsday, the Staten Island Advance, Citizen's Union, the City Bar Association, the League of Women Voters and the Women's City Club urged voters to support the propositions. Question 4 also was backed by the Citizens Budget Commission, State Comptroller Alan Hevesi and City Comptroller William C. Thompson. Neither proposal drew significant opposition.

Matthews attributed the lack of criticism to the Commission's effort to reach consensus among citizens, government officials, and policy experts about the most effective way to revise the Charter.