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5	New Yor	k, New York 10013
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7		1:14 P.M.
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9	APPEARANCES:	
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12	COMMISSIONERS:	
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15	CESAR PERALES, Chair	LIRAN ANGELO
16	DEB ARCHER	KYLE BRAGG
17	MARCO CARRION	UNA CLARKE
18	ANGELA FERNANDEZ	MATT GEWOLB
19	RACHEL GODSIL	SHARON GREENBERGER
20	MENDY MIROCZNIK	DALE HO
21	CESAR PERALES	CARLO SCISSURA
22	ANNETTA SEECHARRAN	JOHN SIEGAL
23	WENDY WEISER	
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1	MR. PERALES: Good afternoon. My name is
2	Cesar Perales and I have the honor of serving as
3	Chair of the New York City Charter Revision
4	Commission. And I welcome all of you to this
5	June 12th meeting of the Revision Commission.
6	Let me begin, as I usually do, by asking the
7	members of the Commission who are here to
8	introduce themselves. And I'll start on my left
9	with John.
10	MR. SIEGAL: Thank You, Mr. Chair. My name
11	is John Siegal. I'm a practicing lawyer here in
12	Manhattan. And I guess for purposes of this
13	panel on elections, I've previously been a
14	campaign aide and assistant to the mayor. As
15	well as served as counsel to citywide campaigns
16	from 1993 through 2009.
17	MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you. My name is
18	Angela Fernandez and I'm the executive director
19	and supervising attorney of the northern
20	Manhattan Coalition for immigrant rights. And
21	for the purposes of this meeting, I have worked
22	as the district chief of staff for Congressman
23	Jose Serrano and as a staff aide to U.S. Senator
24	Bill Bradley.
25	MR. HO: Good afternoon. My name is Dale Ho

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1	and I am the director at the ACLU's voting rights
2	project here at the New York ACLU's national
3	office.

MS. WEISER: Hello. I am Wendy Weiser and I direct the democracy program at the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law. Thanks for coming.

MR. PERALES: My own background is that I'm a former secretary of State of New York, former deputy mayor of the City of New York. But perhaps most importantly and most relevant to this afternoon's discussion is that I am the founder of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund, now known as the Latino Justice. An organization that's been very much engaged in voting rights.

MS. CLARKE: Good afternoon. My name is Una Clarke. I'm a former member of the New York City Council. I'm the first ever immigrant from anywhere as a woman to be elected to the City council. I am the product of the 89 Charter Revision, when the council was expanded from 32 to 51. I became lucky to be the first from the Korean-American community to be elected to public office. Since that time, my daughter is now a member of the House of Representatives and I have

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great interest in making sure that the doors of
democracy is open for those who come and want to
participate in our democracy. So I'm very much
interested in this. I'm an educator by
profession.

MS. ANGELO: Good afternoon. I'm Liran

Angelo. I'm a senior research fellow at the

Institute in local governance security. And I am
a former budget person. Spent many decades, too

many decades, of my life doing it on both the
council and the mayor side.

MR. PERALES: Before we hear from Matt Gewolb, I just want to say a few other things.

For those of you who are not familiar with our work, today we will be focusing on the administration of elections and trying to make elections more meaningful and with greater participation by the citizens. I just want to say that when the mayor first asked me to serve as chair of this commission, he made a point of telling me how important he thought our election system was. And he thought that there was a real opportunity for us to improve it. So that today's discussion with experts and amongst the Commission members is very, very important and

goes to the crux of what our Commission was established for.

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Having said that, the mayor also made a point of telling me that we are to look at the entire City Charter to see what changes we think ought to be made. In that context, we've heard from lots of people since we start -- first met as a group in April. We held forums throughout the City, in each of the boroughs. And we've heard some really creative and insightful ideas about improving our Charter.

As I indicated, today's topic is going to be meaningful participation in elections. And what we're doing today is that we've called together some experts who will give us their views on some of the more important issues cited by the people from whom we heard during our community forums. There will be no taking of public testimony We will continue to do that in other today. forms. But today it's really for the Commission members to engage this panel before us and the panel will follow on some of these topics that are not just interesting, but very complex. This meeting is being live-streamed and we've got language interpreters. And we also have a sign

1	language interpreter.
2	Before I get us started, I'm going to ask
3	Matt Gewolb, our executive director, to explain
4	the ground rules.
5	MR. GEWOLB: Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman.
6	And thanks to you and the Commission members for
7	all of your works so far, obviously.
8	The Commission has received over 60
9	recommendations relating to election
10	administration. So this is a topic that was of
11	tremendous interest to the public as we made our
12	way around the City in the borough forums. We've
13	heard comments election administration voter
14	participation ranging from early registration to
15	changing the deadline for our changing party
16	affiliation. So a range of proposals. I'm
17	looking forward to hearing from the panel. I
18	know we're all eager to hear from the esteemed
19	panel, so we'll turn to that now.
20	As you mentioned, Mr. Chair, a couple of the
21	ground rules, so to speak. We're going to allow
22	five minutes for prepared remarks from each of
23	the panelists.
24	Thank you all very much for being here.
25	I'll give you a two-minute warning here so

1	you have a sense of the time. And with that, I
2	think we're ready to get going. So we thought
3	that we would begin with Harry Grossman.
4	Mr. Grossman is the voting rights attorney at the
5	New York Civil Liberties Union. Thanks very much
6	for being here and for your testimony today.
7	MR. PERALES: Matt, if I might.
8	MR. GEWOLB: Yes.
9	MR. PERALES: I presume that after each one
10	of the experts has spoken, we can ask questions
11	immediately. And then perhaps at the end, having
12	heard from all four, we can continue our
13	questions.
14	Does that make sense?
15	MR. GEWOLB: Yes. Absolutely.
16	MR. PERALES: All right. Well, let me first
17	introduce each of the panel members.
18	Perry Grossman, as you just heard, is the
19	voting rights attorney from the New York Civil
20	Liberties Union.
21	We've got Susan Lerner, the executive
22	director of Common Cause New York.
23	Katherine Gray, co-president League of Women
24	Voters of New York City.
25	We're waiting for Jerry Vattamala, who is

1	the director of the democracy program at AALDEF,
2	the Asian-American Legal Defense Fund.
3	And Andrew Wilkes, Director of Policy and
4	Advocacy, Generation Citizen.
5	With that, let's begin with Mr. Grossman.
6	And just before Mr. Grossman starts, just to
7	clarify the record, because I work at the
8	American Civil Liberties Union. And because
9	Mr. Brisbane works at the New York Civil
LO	Liberties Union, I'm going to excuse myself
L1	during his prepared remarks.
12	MR. PERALES: All right. So noted.
L3	MR. GROSSMAN: Thank You, Mr. Chair and
L4	members of the Commission for this opportunity.
L5	Good afternoon.
16	I was asked to discuss the state of
L7	elections in New York. What is a state issue,
L8	and what is a City issue, and what is the proper
L9	focus of the Charter Revision Commission, and how
20	we can improve the state of elections and
21	political participation in New York City.
22	So I wanted to start with the New York State
23	Constitution itself. And Article 1, Section 1 of
24	the New York State Constitution begins, "No
25	member of this state shall be disfranchised."

1	And Article 2,	Section 1	begins,	"Every	citizen
2	shall be entit	led to vote	e."		

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But archaic election practices regularly abridge the voting rights of thousands of New Yorkers. We lack common sense modernizations widely adopted elsewhere.

According to the National Conference of State Legislators, early voting is available in 37 states and D.C., but not New York. No-excuse absentee ballots are available in 27 states and D.C., but not New York. Automatic voter registration is available in 12 states, including Jersey and D.C., but not New York. Same-day registration is available in 17 states and D.C., but New York requires voters to register 24 -- 25 days before an election. Electronic voter registration is available in 37 states and D.C., but not New York. Last week I spoke with Kristen Rouse, of the New York City Veterans Alliance, who worked with election officials while serving in Afghanistan with the US Army. She told me that electronic voter registration was available in Afghanistan, but not New York. The results are embarrassing.

In November 2016, New York ranked 47th out

1	of 50 states and D.C. in registration and 44th in
2	voter turnout. Obsolete election practices make
3	voting a more costly and time-consuming exercise
4	that places the heaviest burden on our most
5	vulnerable voters; low-income, minority, and
6	immigrant citizens. We bear high cost to
7	maintain an old broken-down system at a time when
8	increasing civic engagement is a moral
9	imperative. Some reforms require state-level
10	action. No-excuse absentee balloting and
11	same-day voter registration will require
12	amendments to the State Constitution, as will
13	ending the partisan duopoly over state and county
14	boards of elections that continues to stifle
15	valuable reforms. Automatic voter registration,
16	the deadline for party registration changes,
17	primary consolidation, and early voting outside
18	of local elections will require statutory fixes.
19	But the City can and should ensure that its
20	citizens' constitutional voting rights are
21	protected by improving the quality of election
22	administration provided to New York City voters.
23	The City appropriates the Board of
24	Elections' entire 115 million dollar budget. The
25	City's unique diversity, economy, infrastructure

and geography raise unique challenge that require local solutions. The City and its constituents are entitled to election administration that meets these challenges with modern and cost effective systems consistent with the Board of Elections' statutory mandate, quote, to encourage the broadest possible participation -- voter participation in elections. Some solutions are already in maturity.

For example, Section 1057 C already requires the Board of Elections to place notices on former poll sites that give voters the means to find out where their new poll site is. The City should exercise its authority to make further reforms to local laws and be prepared to enforce them.

To that end, there are five proposals for the Charter that will increase participation and also save taxpayers money. Electronic poll books, E-poll books permit more efficient, accurate and cost effective management of voter data and polling places than paper poll books. They will shorten lines at the polls, help poll workers direct voters to their correct polling places, and save printing costs.

25 Most importantly, E-poll books can store the

1	full set of registered voters in New York City,
2	while paper poll books omit inactive voters.
3	Voters left off the rolls are forced to cast
4	affidavit ballots that are less likely to be
5	counted later. E-poll books will result in more
6	voters casting ballots that get counted.

Finally, E-poll books can get New York ready to implement early voting and election day registration. For counties in New York State, Onondaga, Cayuga, Orange and Cortland, have already successfully piloted the use of electronic poll books.

The electronic transmission of registration forms. Right now the DMV assists New Yorkers in registering to vote and electronically transmits those forms, photostatic signatures and all, directly to the Board of Elections. Which receives them instantaneously and securely.

Motor voter accounts for approximately 28 percent of all registration statewide. In New York City, many residents have no business with the DMV.

The City Board of Elections only receives about 10 percent of registrations through motor voter.

But plenty of other City agencies come intact -- come in contact with unregistered but eligible

voters and currently have or could adopt the same technological capabilities as the DMV. New York City agencies should adopt these technologies and transmit registrations electronically to the Board of Elections. Registrations in New York City should not be subject to a more costly time-consuming and less secure process than elsewhere in the state.

Early voting. Absentee ballots are not easily available. Working family obligations, health and transportation issues, and unexpected obstacles can make it difficult to vote in person near home on a Tuesday. Early voting in local elections can make sure that all voters have a convenient time to vote and allow New York City to serve as a model for the rest of the state.

Language assistance. The Federal Voting
Rights Act is a floor, not a ceiling, for the
extent of the language assistance that the City
can provide voters. Others here will testify
more competently on this point. But we echo
their call to ensure that the language assistance
provided to New York City voters better reflects
the diversity of the City.

And finally, the right to vote. The Charter

1	is a place to affirm the City's fundamental
2	commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and the
3	essential role of political participation in
4	protecting both. To that end, the City Charter
5	should offer express protection for the right to
6	vote in local elections. An express right to
7	vote sends an unambiguous message that the health
8	of our democracy depends on clinical
9	participation and that New York City thrives when
10	more of its residents are engaged. It also sets
11	the stage for New York to consider joining other
12	cities that have expanded access to the franchise
13	in a number of ways I think other members of the
14	panel can discuss more thoroughly.
15	I thank the Commission for the opportunity
16	to share these views with you today and I look
17	forward to answering your questions.
18	MR. PERALES: I'll exercise the prerogative
19	of the Chair and ask the first question.
20	I am still not clear as to what it is that
21	the City can do without violating state laws.
22	For example, you mentioned absentee ballots,
23	their importance. I have to believe that if we
24	had a more flexible way of letting people vote or
25	an absentee ballot would make a big difference.

1	But as I understand it, state law, which draws to
2	authority from our constitution, State
3	Constitution, seems to limit the grant of an
4	absentee ballot to people who are seriously ill
5	or disabled. Could is it your opinion,
6	Mr. Grossman, that we could expand that? Could
7	we, for example, in New York on its own, decide
8	that people with childcare responsibilities that
9	they can't avoid, could they, for example, ask
10	for an absentee ballot and receive an absentee
11	ballot? That's just an example. But it's one
12	that obviously comes to mind.
13	MR. GROSSMAN: It's an excellent question,
14	Mr. Chair.
15	I would say it's sort of a facial matter,
16	right. The no-excuse absentee issue comes
17	directly from the New York State Constitution.
18	Which is, frankly unfortunately, obnoxious. So
19	it does limit who can have access to an absentee
20	ballot to people expressing good cause. Your
21	question is, can the City of New York help define
22	what what could cause its right. So the
23	the constitution, as I recall off the top of my
24	head, talks about, in addition to the
25	disabilities you've described, people who will be

1	absent from the jurisdiction on Election Day,
2	right. I am not aware of anything that
3	necessarily cabins the City's authority to
4	describe what good cause is. And to push it in
5	directions that potentially expand the
6	definition, I would suggest that the City is
7	better off begging for forgiveness than asking
8	for permission on this score. The fact is a lot
9	of this has not been litigated, so we don't know
10	what the courts have said on it. We don't have a
11	lot of statutory guidance. And so, to the extent
12	that there is an inkling that there are causes
13	that the City thinks that are especially worthy
14	of further consideration, I would urge the
15	Commission to put it on the record. And, at a
16	minimum, you know, it's setting the groundwork
17	for important state reforms later. But as I sit
18	here, I can't give an authoritative opinion on
19	whether the City could unilaterally do that. But
20	I would say that where the law is ambiguous, it
21	is always better to push in the direction of
22	expanding access to democracy, rather than
23	contract it.
24	MS. CLARKE: I'd like I'd like to just
25	follow up with a question on absentee ballots and

1	the way they get counted.
2	We all know that on election night everybody
3	get excited and they call a winner. Which means
4	if the winner gets X amount of votes, nobody
5	knows when the absentee ballots are counted. Or
6	if those absentee ballot can would overturn
7	somebody's victory.
8	What is your thought on that?
9	MR. GROSSMAN: With great respect, Chairman
10	Clarke, Commissioner Clarke, I don't have a view
11	on that. But perhaps one of my co-panelists
12	does.
13	MS. GRAY: My understanding Catherine
14	Gray, from the League of Women Voters. My
15	understanding from the Board of Elections, they
16	count the ballots open the absentee ballots on
17	Friday after the election. And they do count
18	them all. But and they don't certify the
19	election results until that is done. That's the
20	reason why the election results are not
21	permanent what's the word?
22	MR. GROSSMAN: Certified.
23	MS. GRAY: Certified. Thank you.
24	Early I mean, they don't certify them
25	election right.

1	MR. PERALES: Wendy will go next.
2	MS. WEISER: Okay. Thank you.
3	So one is a clarifying question to what you
4	just were asked.
5	Is your proposal that the City define good
6	cause for no excused absentee for every
7	absentee ballots for all races or only for
8	municipal races? The same question about early
9	voting. I'm assuming that you are recommending
10	only for municipal races, not for all races; is
11	that correct?
12	MR. GROSSMAN: That is correct.
13	MS. WEISER: And so a follow-up question,
14	then on the so but but for the absentee
15	ballots, you're is the proposal similarly
16	limited to municipal?
17	MR. GROSSMAN: That that's correct. But
18	only because I haven't done the research to
19	suggest it could go further. I'm not saying that
20	it could not. And again, my position is the
21	extent the law is ambiguous, state law's
22	ambiguous, the constitution is ambiguous. Push
23	it.
24	MS. WEISER: And the follow-up question
25	there is, is your suggestion that the Home Rule

1	Law then allows New York City to make changes as
2	it applies to municipal elections? So it's not
3	really an interpretation of the state races, it's
4	actually just governing its own races; is that
5	correct?
6	MR. GROSSMAN: That's correct.
7	MS. WEISER: And then so now on the early
8	voting, I just had then a practical question.
9	The since this will apply only to
LO	municipal elections, have you given any thought
11	as to whether or not that might induce people to
L2	not vote in the non-municipal elections that are
L3	on the race by voting early for a municipal race,
L4	and then not voting in the others? And how do
L5	you how have you weighed that or I'm just
L6	questioning
17	MR. GROSSMAN: Sure. Let me just make sure
L8	I understand it for answer.
L9	So would expanding early voting for
20	municipal elections decrease participation in
21	non-municipal elections?
22	MS. WEISER: Yes. That are that are on
23	the same
24	MS. GRAY: That are on the same ballot. DA,
25	iudges, etc.

1	MS. WEISER: Yes. The ones that are that
2	we're voting for in the same election. And if
3	so so have you considered that question? Or
4	if not, is that something that is worth
5	considering? And if it is, I'm just wondering if
6	that proposal could be made for municipal
7	elections where that happened when there aren't
8	also other races at the same time.
9	MR. GROSSMAN: So let me answer that in
10	MS. WEISER: Yes.
11	MR. GROSSMAN: a couple of different
12	parts.
13	The first is, I don't I don't have any
14	statistical studies to suggest what the impact
15	would be. So I haven't done that analysis. You
16	know, again, I think expanding part of what I
17	would like to encourage the City to do is to
18	lead, right. And to the extent we can expand
19	early voting in one area, I think it's likely to
20	lead to early voting in other areas shortly
21	thereafter. So my hope is that, should we come
22	across the conundrum where we have municipal,
23	where we saw we have early voting for some local
24	offices but not others, that that's not something
25	we have to live with for a very long time. But,

1	right, obviously for at least one election, that
2	would be a possibility. So my suggestion would
3	be the the gains made by expanding early
4	voting and by allowing more people to participate
5	are much more likely to outweigh any loss that
6	might occur from people voting early and not
7	voting for certain offices. Because the people
8	you're going to capture voting early are people
9	who might not have voted on election day at all.
10	And so by bringing new voters into the system,
11	and this is maybe a much more normative argument,
12	but voting is a habit. And the more we can get
13	people into the habit of voting, the more they're
14	going to do it.
15	MR. PERALES: Let me just point of
16	clarification because this is getting my own mind
17	a little bit confused.
18	We talked a moment ago about the
19	restrictions on absentee ballots that exist in
20	state law. Are you suggesting that we could go
21	beyond the current ability or opportunities to
22	get an absentee ballot if we had, quote, a

25 MR. GROSSMAN: So I can -- I can sit here

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municipal election? Or are you suggesting that

we assume that we can push it for all elections?

1	and speak confidentially about municipal
2	elections
3	MR. PERALES: You're confident that the
4	state restrictions do not apply to City
5	elections?
6	MR. GROSSMAN: That's that is my
7	understanding. Is that state the Home Rule
8	Law gives New York City and and other
9	municipalities in the state, extensive control
10	over their own elections and government. And New
11	York City has allowed a lot of leeway to to do
12	things to its own elections. To the extent that
13	they don't interfere with state elections. You
14	know, there are more ambiguous areas that we can
15	discuss. But the City has extensive control over
16	its own elections.
17	MS. ANGELO: Hi. I wanted to ask a couple
18	of questions on electronic registration and
19	electronic, I guess, registration books. The
20	things you go to see when you go to vote. Do you
21	have can you have one without the other?
22	MR. GROSSMAN: Can you have just to make
23	sure. Can you have electronic poll books without
24	electronic registration?
25	MS. ANGELO: Correct.

2	MS.	ANGELO:	Do	you	have	а	sense	of	the	cost

of implementing each of those, electronic poll

MR. GROSSMAN: Yes.

4 books and electronic registration.

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MR. GROSSMAN: I don't -- I don't have cost 5 estimates as I sit here today. But we are 6 7 talking about cost savings, not cost to the City, 8 right. We are replacing printed paper poll books 9 which contain only, you know, a fraction of the City's voters. And those -- those costs are 10 11 instead replaced with reusable electronic poll 12 books that can be updated regularly without 13 having to reprint and be used year after year after year. With respect to electronic 14 15 registration -- and when I say electronic 16 registration, I don't want to confuse the notion 17 of people registering fully online with Social 18 Security numbers and whatnot. I am simply 19 talking about the very limited reform of 20 replicating what the DMV does. Where you are 21 there, you sign your name, they basically take a 22 picture of it, and they send it to the Board of Elections, and the Board of Elections receives it 23 24 electronically. Right now other forms have to 25 pass in paper over the desk and there's a

1	tremendous drop-off. So if we have a system
2	whereby New York City agencies were able to
3	replicate what the DMV does, which is not a
4	technological marvel by any stretch of the
5	imagination, I think you would see a substantial
6	reduction in cost because you are going to see,
7	one, for your forms printed. Two, less
8	because there's they're sort of instantaneous
9	transmission and greater security, forms are
10	going to be received with a greater accuracy that
11	require less human correction on the back end.
12	But we can certainly look into what those cost
13	savings would be. But I do think they are cost
14	savings and not cost generation.
15	MS. ANGELO: And there's no state
16	prohibition on this?
17	MR. GROSSMAN: None.
18	MS. ANGELO: Thank you.
19	MR. PERALES: I'm told we're spending too
20	much time on one panelist. But I'm going to let
21	them Wendy follow up with one clarification
22	question.
23	MS. WEISER: Do you have a you recommend
24	electronic voter registration at City agencies
25	automatic voter registration, as well, or just

1	electronic at this point?
2	MR. GROSSMAN: So sitting here talking about
3	the City Charter, what I'm recommending is end to
4	end electronic transmission of voter
5	registration. I think automatic voter
6	registration is great public policy and it should
7	absolutely be enacted. Don't sit here today with
8	a view as to what the City's authority to enact
9	automatic voter registration is. I'm certainly
10	not saying they can't do it. But I don't want to
11	sit here and tell you that you can.
12	MR. PERALES: Thank you, Mr. Grossman.
13	Let's move on as quickly as we can to Susan
14	Lerner.
15	MS. LERNER: Thank you very much to the
16	Commission for this opportunity to talk about
17	this fascinating and complex question of
18	improving election administration and voter
19	turnout. There is no easy answer and no magic
20	silver bullet, unfortunately. And, as I think
21	Perry Grossman has indicated, the State of New
22	York state law doesn't help us in this endeavor
23	at all. And, in fact, there is an ongoing
24	controversy between the New York City Board of
25	Elections and the New York City Council and the

1	mayor's office as to what the responsibilities of
2	the New York City Board is in following City law.
3	So you're talking about a difficult and gray
4	area. Let me give you two quick examples.

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On when we're talking about expanding language access, which is something which Common Cause strongly supports, we have a vivid example of how the New York City Board of Elections refused to follow New York City law last November, when the city council appropriated additional monies to provide Russian language and Haitian Creole translators and the mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs recruited and trained nonpartisan translators to go out to voting locations, polling places, where you have a need for those translators. I personally witnessed the fact that the New York City Board of Elections threw the translators out of the polling places and required them to stand 100 feet away from the entrance to the polling place, significantly interfering with their ability to offer their services to people who might need it.

Secondly, we have another example. The City Charter, as it currently stands, has a provision which requires the New York City Board of

Elections to provide a voter information portal
that was added to the Charter in 2016, effective
January 1, 2017. And as part of that
requirement, the New York City Board of Elections
is directed to include information which will
allow a voter to track the progress of their
the receipt and mailing of their absentee ballot
application and absentee ballot through a barcode
system that conforms with the requirements of the
U.S. Postal system. The Board, to my knowledge,
has never discussed that requirement and it
certainly has not implemented it.

This past month -- actually, at the end of April, it turns out that the Brooklyn Postal Service, U.S. Postal Service, delivered over a hundred thousand absentee ballots on April 24 and 25 to the New York City Board and said, "oops, we lost them." These were ballots -- absentee ballots which should have been delivered of -- in relation to the New York City November 2017 general election. And over a hundred thousand New York City residents were disenfranchised because their absentee ballots were untraceable because of the Board's failure to follow City law. So I think you have an interesting

proposition in front of you. Which is, you can consider a lot of reforms. But if the Board is going to ignore the requirements and the City is not going to enforce the requirements, then we're going to have a very interesting theoretical discussion. So I have some very specific suggestions as to what can be done to strengthen the City's argument. Which frankly, I think is going to have to be resolved through litigation.

First, we believe that the Charter should be amended to very specifically amplify the state constitutional right to vote. There is a public policy interest in New York City in expanding and protecting the franchise of its residents for New York City elections and I think that should be expressed. And I think that the City voters should have an opportunity to adopt that for the Charter because, frankly, I think it will strengthen the argument that the City Board must follow City law.

Secondly, I believe that we should be using the budget process to ensure greater accountability of the Board of Elections.

Currently the State of -- New York State law by statute, and as explained and interpreted by case

law, indicates that the Board has absolute	
discretion without any oversight to hire and fire	
its staff up to the maximum budget allocation for	
staff provided by the local legislature. It is	
absolutely silent on oversight for other issues.	
And so I know, for instance, that there was some	
discussion at the Council level about instituting	
electronic poll books and being willing to pay	
for it. Apparently, that went nowhere because	
you can't get cooperation from the Commission.	
So I believe that the terms and conditions	
process and the reporting process in the budget	
could be used to provide more accountability and	
more reporting. And I recommend some areas for	
that in my very summary written testimony.	

Additionally, we believe that the Charter could clarify that the City Conflicts Of Interest Law applies to the Board of Elections. There is a 1996 Corporation Counsel decision which says that the Board is exempt from those requirements. We believe that is outdated and incorrect. And we believe that a simple addition to Charter Section 2604(b)15 to include commissioners of the Board of Elections among the offices subject to the Conflicts Of Interest Law would be a worthy

addition to our City law. We believe that VAAC,
the Voter Administration Assistance Commission,
can be strengthened and expanded. We believe it
should be an independent agency, with its own
guaranteed budget. And we believe that there is
a continuum of City programs that encourage
participation in the broadest sense that include
volunteerism and the continuum all the way
through civic engagement to voting, which should
be housed under one agency so that the message is
clear to the public that our City endorses the
broadest type of participation and that one type
of participation interlocks with the other. So
the people who are receiving information about
volunteerism should be encouraged to become
civically engaged in other forms and in voting.
And people who are receiving information about
voting should be receiving information about
other forms of engagement. I think having this
under one body will mean the City's efforts and
expenditures in this regard will be much more
effective, with a unified message, and we don't
have unnecessary duplication or contradiction.
Finally, we believe that the Commission

should resist the temptation to load the Charter

1	Revision with a lot of election reform proposals.
2	We have no election modernization and reform in
3	our state and it would be inviting to add every
4	single reform that we can think of. But I think
5	that there are two reasons that would argue
6	against that.
7	First, I think administratively you can't go
8	from zero to 60 instantaneously. Every election
9	administrator I have talked to in states that
10	have significant modernization has emphasized how
11	it has been a gradual incremental process that
12	allows the administrators to actually handle the
13	changes.
14	Secondly, I think we should be picking an
15	area where the argument is strongest, that the
16	City can effect the change. And I would suggest
17	to you that that is in the rank-choice voting
18	area. You have to worry about contradictions in

to you that that is in the rank-choice voting
area. You have to worry about contradictions in
the Constitution of the state that may or may not
apply. And I believe that rank-choice voting not
limited to run-offs, which we'll talk about
later, would be a very effective and

24 Thank you.

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MR. PERALES: Yeah. I sort of dominated the

transformative reform for the City to start with.

1	questioning before. I'd like oh. I'd like to
2	recognize the fact that Rachel Godsil, our Vice
3	Chair, has joined the Commission panel.
4	Questions?
5	Well then I have one. I always have one.
6	Ms. Lerner, I am intrigued by the fact that
7	you talk about this one agency that you think
8	will make a big difference in getting people
9	involved in elections, as well as volunteerism.
10	I'm going to play the devil's advocate.
11	We already have an agency that is supposed
12	to encourage voting.
13	Do you know?
14	MS. LERNER: Yes.
15	MR. PERALES: So why bother trying to
16	revitalize a dead horse?
17	MS. LERNER: So, you know, I think what we
18	have seen with the last Charter Revision, which
19	placed the VAAC in the Campaign Finance Board and
20	transformed it now refers to itself as NYC
21	Votes, providing more staffing and more funding
22	has actually revitalized the City's messaging
23	around elections and participation in a way that
24	I think is positive and I think will have some
25	long-term impacts. As we know, it's very

1	difficult to move the needle on voter turnout.
2	There's no one silver bullet. But the fact that
3	the City has made a commitment and is starting to
4	speak more effectively and in a more unified
5	voice, I think helps the prospects for improving
6	voter turnout for the City. What I'm suggesting
7	is not eliminating VAAC. I'm suggesting
8	combining it and expanding it.

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The -- my sense is that the agency that deals with volunteerism -- and I'm forgetting the name. I just looked at it on the internet and it's out of my mind -- is doing a pretty effective job of getting the word out. And we're seeing more advertising regarding voting. And there seem to be a separation in the public's mind about these different types of engagement. What I'm suggesting is pooling the resources, pooling the expertise, and making it clearer to the public that there are a lot of ways to be engaged. You engage in one, you should also engage in the others, as well. And I think that's more efficient economically and from a messaging point of view. So that's why I'm suggesting combining those efforts, expanding them, and giving them staff and budgetary

1	independence.
2	MR. PERALES: Rachel.
3	MS. GODSIL: So I just wanted to try to
4	understand the argument that you're making as to
5	the concerns you have about the New York City
6	Board of Elections.
7	Am I correct in understanding that because
8	of those concerns and because of the degree to
9	which you described the Board not following
10	previous Charter Revision Commission adoptions,
11	that there's that's the reason you think that
12	this Board should be mindful? Or are you
13	suggesting there's something that could be done
14	in this by us in this process that could
15	actually help implement and make alive that which
16	has already occurred?
17	MS. LERNER: Well, that's that's why I
18	make specific recommendations about including a
19	very specific right to vote in City elections in
20	the Charter. And also using the budget process,
21	which I understand is being used
22	MS. GODSIL: Is that how okay. I just
23	want to understand.
24	If so your point appears to be that if
25	there's a specific right to vote, which obviously

Τ	already exists at the constitutional level, it
2	simply makes more robust a litigation effort?
3	Because I'm not sure that I'm understanding
4	precisely the direct link, causal link
5	MS. LERNER: I think I think it does make
6	more more robust a litigation position. And
7	it might actually embolden the city council to
8	try and enforce the law. Or the Corporation
9	Counsel. There is nothing which stops our
10	elected officials or appointed officials from
11	enforcing the law, except that they don't have
12	the courage to do so. If they had a direction
13	from the voter, perhaps they would feel it's
14	important to be sure that our election law is not
15	being flaunted by what is actually a City agency.
16	MS. GODSIL: But as in terms of the
17	number of in terms of the prioritization of
18	choices that this Board makes, obviously it has
19	to be thoughtful about the number that we put on
20	the ballot. That would be high up on your list,
21	as opposed to some of the other suggestions that
22	have been made?
23	MS. LERNER: Yes. It is high up on my list.
24	MR. PERALES: John.
25	MR. SIEGAL: So we're going to have a panel

1	later.
2	But if I understand your testimony, you're
3	saying there are problems with the Board of
4	Elections, that it hasn't implemented relatively
5	ministerial mandate to prepare a Charter
6	Revision. And if so, go slow on election reform.
7	But the principle thing we should do is
8	completely overhaul the ballot and the way that
9	votes are counted and hand that to this agency
10	that you're complaining about. And I really I
11	wonder about that. Like can we put the merits of
12	rank-voting aside
13	MS. LERNER: Right.
14	MR. SIEGAL: Can it be implemented by this
15	agency that Perry has indicated is the last
16	bastion of partisanship and that you've indicated
17	doesn't carry out small mandates, can we really
18	trust that that will be implemented properly?
19	MS. LERNER: I think that there have been
20	instances where the Board has been forced to
21	comply, for instance, with federal law. And when
22	a system has been set in place, where the
23	requirements are clearly spelled out, they
24	actually managed to do it. It's more a question
25	of the clarity of direction and setting up a

1	clear management system. We, at Common Cause,
2	were forced to sue the Board for compliance with
3	the National Voting Registry Act. And the
4	settlement based setting up a procedure for the
5	Board to comply. And it appears that they are
6	following that procedure. So I think it
7	definitely can be done. And I think it has to be
8	done. I think the voters of New York require an
9	improved election administration. And the first
10	step to that is bringing the New York City Board
11	up to the requisite accountability and
12	transparency.
13	MR. SIEGAL: Thank you.
14	MS. WEISER: Thank you for your testimony.
15	A few questions.
16	So one is on the New York City Board of
17	Elections.
18	Do you what have you thought about
19	other mechanisms to ensure that they comply with
20	the law? Things like actually a private right of
21	action for some of the and have you thought
22	about the limitations that it's also a creature
23	of state election law and how does that affect
24	your recommendations?
25	MS. LERNER: Yeah. I would actually be very

1	supportive of a private right of action that is
2	specified in the Charter, in addition to just an
3	Article 78, which is something act no
4	proceeding. Which is something that we look at
5	on a regular basis.
6	And, I'm sorry, the second part?
7	MS. WEISER: And then I'm just wondering if
8	there are other robust ways that you've thought
9	through to ensure the Board actually complies or
10	put in place through the (inaudible) of
11	mechanisms. Because it sounds like the budget
12	recommendations you were making are not actually
13	Charter reforms that you're requesting. Or are
14	they?
15	MS. LERNER: They are. Yes, they are. And
16	I think the impetus behind conflict of interest
17	requirement is specifically influenced directly
18	through the appointment process to be sure with
19	people who appointed to the Board. Also
20	prioritize the interest of the political parties,
21	as required by the State Constitution, but also
22	hopefully required by the City Charter, the
23	interests of the voters of New York City.
24	MS. WEISER: And then the last question
25	relates to the VAAC recommendations.

1	Are you recommending that the VAAC be
2	removed from the Campaign Finance Board, be made
3	independent and merged with the Office Of Civic
4	Engagement? Or are you or do are you
5	recommending that the Campaign Finance Board be
6	part of that, as well?
7	MS. LERNER: I would separate it from the
8	Campaign Finance Board. And I think the entity
9	that I'm thinking of is Service NYC. And what I
10	really hope we do not see at the end of the
11	process is that the mayor sends out some
12	independent civic engagement officer that the
13	VAAC exists in the Campaign Finance Board and now
14	we create some new office of civic engagement and
15	they're all basically trying to do versions of
16	the same thing without coordination and in
17	duplication of costs and staff. That's why what
18	I'd like to see is one unified body that really
19	thinks about this process. This is a continuum
20	that all City agencies should be involved in and
21	that there should be a vigorous public education
22	and agency education process to hold all of the
23	City activities accountable for encouraging more
24	public participation.
25	MR. PERALES: We're going to need to move

1	on.
2	Catherine Gray.
3	MS. GRAY: Thank you very much for inviting
4	the League of Women Voters. We're a multi-issue
5	nonpartisan volunteer organization.
6	Assuring fair and transparent elections and
7	encouraging active and informed voters has always
8	been the mission of the League. For many years
9	members have regularly attended weekly meetings
10	of the commissioners of the Board of Elections.
11	Every Tuesday we have somebody there taking
12	notes. We've had small successes by raising our
13	hands and asking questions there. Such as
14	convincing the Board to get rid of those little
15	voter cards that was recommended in the Justice
16	report and the Commission the independent
17	commission that they hired. We got the Board to
18	put the voting instructions on the privacy
19	sleeves and tabs on poll books. A lot of people
20	think that's kind of small, but it speeds up
21	finding the button voters name in the book.
22	Because it seemed to be that a lot of co-workers
23	didn't know the alphabet. They didn't know R

came -- didn't come after B.

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The other qualification I have is I am a

1	coordinator. I had a poll site in Brooklyn.
2	I've been working in the polls since 1998.
3	Coordinators from 2-06, I think. When we
4	proposed and created a poll site, specific street
5	addresses instead of the big fat book for Kings
6	County. And we work with college and with other
7	good government grant groups to get sample
8	ballots on the Board's website. We've also made
9	suggestions and election night reporting that has
10	reduced the waste of paper, time and accuracy.
11	We have been frustrated by the Board's insistence
12	that they are administrative agency created by
13	New York state Election Law and not compelled to
14	comply with New York City laws or directions.
15	So here's my recommendations that might
16	improve the functioning. Because my direction
17	was how to make the Board function better. All
18	full-time jobs should be covered by the New York
19	City Civil Service Law. Some suggestions are
20	in the same suggestions are in this report and by
21	the outside contractor. Right now it's partisan
22	and nepotism is the way you get your job there.
23	You do not post. Better poll worker training,

which used mock poll sites and emphasize hands-on

training instead of lectures. Making -- giving

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the poll worker and the coordinator real-life situations to practice so that when they are confronted with the situations, they'd handle it better. Establish same-day registration for municipal workers. Increase the poll worker pay. Section 3420 of the New York State Election Law allows the mayor of the City of New York to raise the poll worker pay by an executive order. The rate of the pay should be reviewed every five years. People complained that for an 18-hour day, the pay is not good enough. I know that you get paid -- you pay -- what you pay is what you get in workers. So if you're not paying for high quality workers, you don't get high quality workers.

The second is in the state law. If split shifts are now not only written in the law, but there now don't have to be half days. They could be four hours. The New York City Board does not want to consider the administration of this task, but it should be fairly easy for them. Because every poll worker gets a single bar code. And that would -- it would be all electronic. In my poll site, we did split shifts twice to -- the Board allowed our poll site to have split shifts

1	and we had no problems. Improve voter
2	communications. Currently the state law requires
3	the Board only to send out one notice. And it
4	looks like a CBS flyer. And it gets lost in the
5	shuffles. We would like to see something sent
6	out right before the Board the general
7	election saying, "please vote." A form should be
8	created to allow family members to sign an
9	affidavit notifying the Board of Election of a
10	death in the family. This form should be at the
11	poll site. When you're working in the polls, I
12	can't tell you how many people tell us that their
13	person is their family member's dead. And it
14	sometimes 20 years and it's still in the books.
15	This would help, you know, lots of ways to cut
16	create the books to be clean. Early voting for
17	citywide elections, electronic poll books,
18	improve Wi-Fi connectivity in all poll sites,
19	increase the oversight of the control by the
20	controller of city agencies in compliance with
21	Local Law 29, which requires anybody that is
22	working that has contact with the City agency
23	should be able to get their signature or the wet
24	signature sent to the Board of Elections and be
25	able to do more. We also believe highly in civic

1	education should be more mandatory in all ages of
2	schools. And the League supports instant run-off
3	voting.
4	Thank you for this chance to talk about
5	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
6	Any questions from the commissioners?
7	Liran.
8	MS. ANGELO: My question is this, if we've
9	been hearing nothing but problems in the Board of
10	Elections. Why do we think any of these reforms
11	could ever actually happen? Particularly the
12	E-poll books. Because if the poll workers
13	couldn't do the alphabet, how can we expect they
14	could deal with E-poll books?
15	MS. GRAY: I do believe the E-poll books are
16	things that they are looking forward to doing.
17	And they can see the value of that would
18	reduce on their work by having a every E book
19	has a whole voter registration and it could be
20	updated hourly. I don't think there's any
21	problem there. They've implemented iPads at the
22	poll sites. That is for the instruction of
23	helping poll worker direct the voter to the right
24	ED table. So they're not that far off.
25	MR. PERALES: I'm going to ask a follow-up

1	question. I think you can answer it.
2	It has to do with the fact that do you
3	think that the City Charter should include a
4	description of E-poll books or any other
5	ministerial part of the election process?
6	MR. GROSSMAN: I think clarity and legal
7	drafting is a good idea. I think that, to the
8	extent the Charter can give more direction, the
9	better. At the same time, the challenge is not
10	to go so far that you end up limiting yourself,
11	to where you define E-poll books into a way that
12	cabins innovation later. But do I think that any
13	definition of E-poll books? Yes. And I would
14	actually define E-poll books in the Charter
15	consistent with state law. If you look at off
16	the top of my head, I want to say it's 5
17	Election Law 5-106, which provides specifications
18	for poll books. You can describe E-poll books
19	that should be used by the Board of Elections to

sure that the City is on -- is on all fours with
the technological solutions it's suggesting at

the Board events.

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25 And if I may just go back to your question

conform to the levels of resolution and clarity,

efficiency, speed. All those things. To make

1	about the Board of Elections, or something
2	Mr. Siegal raised earlier, is the Charter needs
3	to be a vital document, right. And so Susan's
4	caution that we don't want to throw too many
5	proposals out there because, you know, we don't
6	want to make things too difficult for
7	administrators and whatnot. You know, those
8	are those are good prudential cautionary
9	things. But at the same time, the City should
10	make good public policy. And the City should be
11	willing to stand by that public policy. The
12	Charter should be the best statement of the
13	City's public policy. And if the Board of
14	Elections is going to be recalcitrant, then the
15	City should enforce it and make the Board of
16	Elections adhere to the best statements of the
17	City's public policy. So I would say, let's not
18	back down from the challenge just because we're
19	facing resistance. I would say let's let's go
20	stronger and and have a charter that reflects
21	our our best ideas and brings as much force as
22	we can to ensuring that New Yorkers have access
23	to their state constitutional rights to vote.
24	MS. CLARKE: I just want to find out from
25	either of you who have already testified, but

1	more particularly the Board of Elections.
2	When 10, 15, 20 percent of registered voters
3	can decide who the elected official is, is there
4	something that we're not doing right? We'll go
5	out, we register people. How do we get them to
б	the polls and for them to believe that in the
7	democracy, that is the way it work and,
8	therefore, as a person they have an obligation?
9	Is there any thought on that?
10	MS. GRAY: It's something the League is
11	challenged with on a daily basis, how to get the
12	vote out. We're starting to use e-mail. I do
13	believe the Board of Elections should have e-mail
14	to keep telling the voters an election is coming.
15	Especially for those special opens, when a
16	thousand votes or 300 votes where actually one
17	vote made a difference on a special election. I
18	think education is needed in the high school so
19	people understand why it is and what their jobs
20	are supposed to be a good citizen.
21	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
22	Oh. You were going to say something before
23	we move along?
24	MS. GRAY: Yeah. This is a question.
25	Technically right now there are different

pilot project where we're using text banking to occasional (inaudible) voters. And we increased their turnout rate for the New York -- from the 2016 presidential election to the City election by a considerable amount. From about 20 percent to about 32 percent turnout. It's the only group of voters I'm aware of that are large enough for the City election than turned out for the presidential election in New York State. There are techniques, but I think it requires, again, a willingness to use creative solutions.

MR. PERALES: The next name on my list is Jerry Vattamala.

MR. VATTAMALA: Good afternoon. Thank you for having me. It's a -- we're always pleased when the Asian-American perspective can be heard. I am the director of the democracy program at the Asian-American Legal Defense and Education Fund. AALDEF was founded in 1974. We're headquartered right here in New York. Some of you may be aware that we conduct a national Asian-American exit poll and poll monitoring program every major election. Including the presidentials, the midterms, but even elections like last year for

the New York City for New York City mayor and
city council elections. We have several hundred
volunteers that are stationed outside of poll
sites that conduct interviews with voters after
they have voted or been denied the right to vote.
We also have teams of attorneys that conduct poll
monitoring that are inside the poll site. So my
comments are really going to focus more on
language access. Particularly for Asian-American
voters.

In 1990, after Chinese was covered for
Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens, there were many
problems with -- the New York City Board of
Elections had. They had dispatched
Mandarin-speaking interpreters to Chinatown,
where everybody spoke Cantonese. The
Cantonese-speaking interpreters in Flushing,
where everybody spoke Mandarin. And they came
back to us and said, "Well, isn't it the same
thing," right? And so we -- we had some big
problems there.

In 2000, after Korean was covered in Queens County, we had Korean interpreters in Chinatown.

We had Chinese interpreters in Bayside, Queens, in Korean-speaking neighborhoods. So there were

a lot of problems. The -- one of the worst problems that we actually observed was in the 2000 primary election. The Chinese ballot in Brooklyn was mistranslated. And Democrat was mistranslated as Republican. And Republican as Democrat. We eventually had to sue the Board of Elections in 2006 for their failure to comply with Section 203 for Chinese and Korean language assistance.

We still had a view with the City that requires them to have meetings with language advisory groups and to comply with their obligations. They still, unfortunately, consistently do not have the minimum number of Korean interpreters at the poll sites that are covered for language assistance. It's a consistent problem that we've seen over the years and it's still not being addressed.

We also had to sue the Board of Elections in 2013 for failing to comply with Section 203 for Asian-Indian language assistance in Queens County. The designated Indian language there is Bengali. The Board failed to provide Bengali ballots for five consecutive elections after that language was designated. The only way we were

able to get Bengali ballots in Queens was through litigation. We had to sue the Board in 2013.

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In settling the case with us, the Board refused to establish a Bengali language advisory group. We have the same equivalent groups for Chinese and Korean. They refused to acknowledge or establish that advisory group, which we think is very problematic.

We have also apprised the Board of a demonstrated need for Bengali language assistance at targeted poll sites in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Now, the Board is not covered under Section 203 for Bengali language assistance in those boroughs. But if there was a way that, through some type of language in the Charter that could require the Board to provide language assistance when a certain magic number is reached, that would be extremely helpful. There are such provisions, for example, in the D.C. --Washington, D.C. Language Access Act in 2003. The magic number there is 300. If you have 300 residents that need a city service that also require language assistance, or they don't speak English at all, the D.C. Language Access Act requires that agency to provide language

assistance in those -- in those languages that
show a demonstrated need.

Under that provision, we were able to send a demand letter before the 2014 midterm elections demanding that Chinese language assistance be provided at certain targeted poll sites. And the D.C. Board of Elections provided Chinese language assistance. We similarly did the same thing before the 2016 presidential election, requesting Vietnamese language assistance at a targeted poll site in Washington D.C. And the -- the Board there again complied.

So those are, you know, some of the issues that we're seeing is the lack of interpreters.

Sometimes it's the wrong interpreters. Having the advisory groups established and having them meet with us twice a year, or having the Board meet with the advisory groups twice a years is very helpful. Because of the MOU for Chinese and Korean, we have these meetings twice a year. Our next meeting is on Monday, June 18th. And it's very helpful. If the Board had such meetings with the Bengali advisory group, having it establishing it and meeting with them, that also, I think, would like likewise be -- be very

1	helpful.
2	We have comments that we'd like to submit
3	regarding redistricting and rank-choice voting.
4	But I understand there's other hearings on those.
5	So we will reserve our comments for that.
6	MR. PERALES: Thank you very much.
7	Rachel.
8	MS. GODSIL: Of the concerns that you
9	described, is there language specifically for the
10	Charter that you would recommend that would
11	address as holistically as possible to set up
12	concerns that you described?
13	MR. VATTAMALA: Yeah. So we we would
14	have to conduct some more research on our end
15	before, you know, submitting something. Because
16	we're not we're actually not sure what if
17	it could be enforced, what we're seeking. I
18	mean, I'm laying out the problems to you and
19	leaving it to you to figure out and see if it's
20	something that could be enforced. We're happy to
21	work with you on that. We just haven't done the
22	research to see if there were something in there
23	that would require something beyond what the
24	federal law provides if that could be enforced.
25	MS. GODSIL: So basically you're inviting

1	you're inviting various solutions to the set of
2	concerns you addressed?
3	MR. VATTAMALA: Right. Right. Regarding
4	specifically Asian language assistance. And we
5	know where the need is and where it's not being
6	met.
7	MR. PERALES: Marco.
8	MR. CARRION: You mentioned the D.C.
9	Language Act. Two questions with that.
LO	The first is, is this you said there was
L1	a threshold. Now, is that when services is
L2	this any City agency?
13	MR. VATTAMALA: Right. It's very broad. It
L4	says City services.
L5	MR. CARRION: Okay. Could this also be
L6	pegged to students in a school? I know we look
L7	at that and we look at language needs, as well.
L8	MR. VATTAMALA: Right. So it could
L9	absolutely be included for City services,
20	including for students and schools and the
21	families that are limited (inaudible) borrowing
22	services from the school.
23	MR. CARRION: And when you say "broad," is
24	it open to any language any language need? Or
)5	is there a subset of languages that are

1	MR. VATTAMALA: There's no restriction.
2	MR. CARRION: So it could be any language?
3	MR. VATTAMALA: Right.
4	MR. HO: Thank you very much for your
5	testimony, Mr. Vattamala. I understand you're
6	not prepared today to suggest, you know, a
7	particular language that could go into the
8	Charter. And that's fine. But I think something
9	that might be helpful in a subsequent submission
10	would be if were to adopt something along the
11	lines of the D.C. law that you mentioned at a
12	particular numerical threshold it wouldn't
13	have to necessarily by D.C.'s, it could be
14	something else. It could be pegged to a
15	particular geographic unit. Some understanding
16	of, you know, how that would change New York
17	City's existing language assistance obligations,
18	which languages might then be covered in which
19	places, you know. And some sense of what that
20	might mean practically and cost-wise I think
21	would help this body make an assessment as to
22	whether or not that it's something that we
23	should put on the ballot for November.
24	One question about something that you didn't
25	address. Which is some suggestions that we heard

1	at some of our public hearings in the boroughs
2	for changing eligibility requirements for voting
3	in local elections.
4	Do you have any thoughts or views on
5	proposals, say, for noncitizen voting in local
6	elections?
7	MR. VATTAMALA: Right. You know, we're part

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MR. VATTAMALA: Right. You know, we're part of the coalition that's working on that effort to make that happen here in New York City.

We do believe New York City has the authority to implement noncitizen voting. And I should say restore noncitizen voting. We've had noncitizen voting in the City for several decades in the school board level. It was a bit different because that was enacted through state legislation. But the process has been done before and we didn't have any problems. And for Asian-Americans, actually, that was the one place before a certain time period -- and, for example, the 1990's -- the only place where there was Asian-American electoral success. Where Asian-Americans were being elected to the school board at very high numbers. But we are in support of noncitizen voting, restoring those rights. But we are still trying to work out --

1	there are several issues there. Some possible
2	unintended consequences of noncitizens mistakenly
3	voting in state or federal elections. And we're
4	still trying to work within our group to have the
5	best possible resolution to prevent that from
6	happening.
7	MR. HO: Do you have any sense for how
8	citizenship rates vary in the City among
9	different race and ethnic groups?
10	MR. VATTAMALA: Actually, I do not know the
11	differences between the different racial groups.
12	I do know that the turnout rates are low for all
13	racial groups, unfortunately, but for
14	Asian-Americans. So we tend to have one of the
15	lowest turnout rates.
16	In terms of citizenship, that's something
17	that part of our whole package that we do in
18	the democracy program of encouraging
19	naturalization and registration, coming out to
20	vote. In certain neighborhoods there's actually
21	a majority of residents that are noncitizens.
22	For example, the city council level. And
23	restoring voting rights to noncitizens would have
24	a drastic and we think positive effect at city
25	council, state assembly, and especially some of

1	these	smaller	legis	lative	level	ls.
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2 MR. PERALES: I'd like to move on now to 3 Andrew Wilkes.

MR. WILKES: Good afternoon. Thank you to the Commission for allowing us the opportunity to share in the theme of meaningful participation in I serve as Generation Citizen's elections. director of policy and advocacy. And for context, Generation Citizen is an eight-year-old civics education organization, whose mission is to ensure that every child receives an action civics education. I lay out that mission because it's in response to what one of the members mentioned in terms of as part of the solution to making sure that we can have folks prepared to exercise their right to vote in a turnout. And I think civics education is a part of the answer there.

Generation Citizen in New York is our largest of six sites. And we remain honored to provide an experiential civics education to students in each of the five boroughs. Since 2011 our democracy coach and teacher-led models have equipped over 18,000 young New Yorkers with the civic knowledge and skills and dispositions

1	needed to be engaged civically over the long-term
2	for our democracy.
3	And to strengthen the democracy, there are
4	three specific positions that I want to put
5	before the Commission for consideration.
6	The first is we propose that New York City
7	should consider lowering the voting age in
8	municipal elections from 18 to 16. This voting
9	reform is being successfully implemented in a
10	number of cities in Maryland, including Tacoma
11	Park, Hyattsville, and most recently Greenville,
12	Maryland. It's also being implemented within the
13	student elections of Berkeley, California. And
14	is currently being considered by the city council
15	in Washington D.C.
16	Lowering the voting age would enfranchise
17	tens of thousands of New Yorkers. We believe it
18	would instill the lifelong habit of voting within
19	the context of support a family in wider
20	community network, as opposed to apparently less
21	simple context of college or some other post

Secondly, we encourage the Commission to implement and consider preregistration, authorizing individuals to register once they

secondary environment.

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1	reach the age of 16. Allowing prospective voters
2	to preregister before they reach the age of 18.
3	We feel it's a commonsense policy that can
4	improve the likelihood of young New Yorkers
5	casting a ballot once they're eligible to do so.

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Then finally, I'm going on the remarks of my colleague. We recommend that New York City adopt the policy of noncitizen voting. This is a policy that affects our students and their families and is something that we want to put forward for consideration. Implementing this provision is projected to impact potentially over one million New Yorkers and would ensure that their ability to contribute to our local political system would mirror the contribution that's already being made to our local economy. Notwithstanding our support for this provision, we are concerned that -- in the administration of this policy, as an inadvertent outcome, that a substantial population of New Yorkers could potentially be exposed to risks concerning citizenship status and things surrounding their country of origin. So given this concern, we would urge the Commission, should it move forward with this proposal, to exercise discretion and

1	maximum precaution on persuing this policy
2	recommendation.
3	Thank you for your time and consideration of
4	our testimony.
5	MR. PERALES: Una.
6	MS. CLARKE: Because New York City is a city
7	of immigrants, I'd like to say not all
8	communities are sophisticated about voting,
9	registering, and the fact that there are so many
10	communities that are now on in the nervous
11	breakdown around issues with ICE, have you
12	thought of any of those kind of sweeps that may
13	take place once we give an okay that certain
14	communities should participate civically and they
15	start it? Have you thought of it?
16	MR. WILKES: I think that's an important
17	consideration that I think that a number of
18	groups are giving some some thought to. We're
19	speaking specifically from the vantage point of
20	students and their families wanting to
21	participate in the process. Some of whom are

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already participating in the City's municipal ID

their political participation. But you certainly

note a consideration, I think, requires further

program and would like to expand the range of

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1	investigation in order to implement with the
2	sense of safety for those who are taking part.
3	MS. CLARKE: So then, would you do both
4	civic education with caution that communities
5	would really understand what some of the impact
6	would be, inasmuch as there's an upside, that
7	there may be a downside? How do you conduct the
8	civic education during that?
9	MR. WILKES: Well, again, at our level,
10	we're speaking most directly on behalf of our
11	students that said I think what you proposed
12	in terms of risk management is important. To
13	make sure that the benefits are clearly
14	understood, as well as what some of the potential
15	risks assumed and incurred could be from
16	expanding the franchise in this way.
17	MR. PERALES: Angela.
18	MS. FERNANDEZ: You mentioned that there's
19	pre or early registration voting in Maryland.
20	And do you have any information about what the
21	impact that actually has been in increasing the
22	participation of voters when they turn 18? I
23	want to so I would like to see the connection
24	between registering to vote at 16 and that it
25	actually does deliver more voters at 18.

1	MR. WILKES: So just a quick clarification.
2	In Maryland, I spoke about lowering the
3	voting age, and so as opposed to
4	preregistration. What we've seen in Tacoma Park,
5	for instance, is that voters between the ages of
6	16 and 18 tend to vote at higher rates thus far,
7	than what younger voters do in the category of 18
8	to 24. And so the results are preliminary.
9	Tacoma Park is obviously a smaller city than New
10	York City is. But we do see that as a promising
11	case study of the fact that once 16-year-olds are
12	enfranchised, they show at least, in this
13	instance, enthusiasm for exercising that right.
14	MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you.
15	MR. HO: Thank you very much for your
16	testimony, Mr. Wilkes.
17	Have you given thought to how to administer
18	a system in which we have different
19	qualifications for voting for local elections, as
20	opposed to state and federal elections? And, you
21	know, I wonder what the experience of cities that
22	have, you know, 17 16- and 17-year-old voting
23	or noncitizen voting, what it looks like there,
24	just sort of a practical matter.
25	Does the City maintain a separate voter

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registration list for these voters? Are there
separate ballots that these voters in particular
get?

MR. WILKES: Sure. So in all of the cases that I've mentioned, it's specifically voting in a municipal and/or school board context. What happens in the case of Maryland cities is that there is a discrete and, I believe, separate voter database for those who participate solely at the City level. Not participating at the state level.

MR. HO: And then what happens if someone -when someone turns 18? Do they then have to
reregister in order to be eligible to vote for
state and federal elections? Or does the City
somehow transfer that information over to the
state so that that person no longer has to
register again? I'm just wondering. And also
with respect to noncitizens who, say, naturalize.

MR. WILKES: Sure. I'm not certain of the particulars of that specific point that you raised. In terms of what it could mean in the context of New York, I think what you intimate sounds like a reasonable path. Which would be having the local Board of Election make sure that

1	that information is fully captured for
2	participating once you're 18.
3	MR. HO: Thank you.
4	MR. PERALES: With that, I want to thank the
5	panel. We've we could go on forever with the
6	five of you. But we've got another panel
7	waiting. And again, my heartfelt thanks.
8	MR. GEWOLB: Well, Mr. Chair, as the next
9	panel gets settled, do just a quick bit of
LO	introduction. We expect our some of our
11	panelists to cover some of this material. But
L2	just a couple of brief notes for the
13	commissioners.
L4	Rank-choice voting, which is the topic of
L5	this next panel. The state election law now
L6	provides for a run-off where no candidate for
L7	mayor, comptroller or public advocate receives
L8	40 percent of the vote in a party primary. That
L9	run-off is held two weeks after the primary.
20	Under current law, there are no run-offs at the
21	primaries for city council or borough president,
22	just for the information for our commissioners.
23	Mr. Chair, I would now hand it back to you
24	for the introduction and the beginning of the
25	second panel.

1	MR. PERALES: Thank you, Matt. Let me
2	quickly introduce the panelists.
3	Rob Richie, president and CEO of Fair Vote.
4	Jerry Vattamala, who was with us just a few
5	moments ago.
6	The same goes for Susan Lerner, from Common
7	Cause.
8	Grace Wachlarowicz, Assistant City Clerk,
9	Director Of Elections And Voter Services from
LO	Minneapolis.
11	David Kallick, the Deputy Director and
12	director of immigration research at the Fiscal
L3	Policy Institute.
L4	And Professor Craig Burnett, associate
L5	professor at Hofstra.
L6	With that, let me immediately call on
17	Mr. Richie.
L8	MR. RICHIE: Thank you. And good afternoon
L9	to you all. And I'm I'm excited that you're
20	doing this. This is terrific. And I wish every
21	city in the United States would regularly do
22	this. But I think the the kind of discussion
23	about encouraging participation dealing with our
24	rights as citizens in our democracy is
25	exceptional and important. So thank you so much.

So I'm Rob Richie. I work nationally with
the organization Fair Vote. But we do plunge our
work directly into a lot of cities. And we are
particularly focused on rank-choice voting,
instant run-off voting and so it's great to
have an opportunity to discuss it.

So there's a handout that I assumed you've seen. I won't try to go through every one of these, what essentially are slides. But I'll just try to go through it quickly and be here with the panel to answer questions.

So first, this is not a new idea. This actually has been -- been out there for more than a century. We have, in fact, a century of use of it at a national level at Australia. It's in Roberts Rules of Order. So you see lots and lots of nongovernmental organizations using this system of rank-choice voting. The Oscars use it for best picture. It sort of has a lot of interesting uses. And there's a growing number of cities that are using it in the United States. And we're interested particularly because today the State of Maine is actually voting with rank-choice voting for their statewide primaries with crowded primary fields that really speak to

1	the	discussion	about	how	it	could	work	here	in
2	New	York City.							

And there's one thing I wanted to mention. 3 There is a handout that you'll see at one point, 4 but I think not today, which is the ballot that 5 they're using in Maine. Which is different than 6 7 they use in Minneapolis. And it's tied to the 8 advances in voting equipment that we're seeing 9 which are helping with the election administration, the rank-choice voting. 10 11 where you list the candidates once -- we have the 12 handout shows a kind of a little example of it. 13 Where you would have the candidates listed once and then relatively narrow columns, where people 14 15 have numbers and they can rank. And that seems 16 to work quite well. The City of Santa Fe used 17 rank-choice voting for the first time this year. 18 And 99.9 percent of voters in a five-candidate race for mayor cast a valid ballot and about two 19 in three ranked all five candidates. And that's 20 21 what we're seeing is, you know, voters are kind 22 of embracing the rank-choice ballot. There's 23 some different handouts here I wanted to 24 highlight one because of your focus on voter 25 participation is that there's some -- in some

1	questions about whether rank-choice voting has an
2	impact, pro or con, on on voter participation.
3	Where it's clear is when it's allowing the
4	replacement of an election that typically has low
5	turnout. It, of course, increases turnout over
6	that election. So you'll hear from Minneapolis.
7	And they used to have winnowing primaries. And
8	that had a very low turnout. And where you have
9	post post election run-offs, you typically get
10	a decline of a participation of about 35, 40
11	percent. And you'll see, though, that you were
12	also starting to see is, I think, candidates
13	learn how to run rank-choice voting elections and
14	it's kind of the playbooks getting out there into
15	American political culture. You're seeing that
16	the incentives it creates, which is, you know,
17	reaching out to people, seems to be having this
18	positive impact on turnout. So there's one
19	handout just showing for recent city elections
20	and their sort of patterns of participation I
21	think it's quite promising.
22	San Francisco just voted with rank-choice
23	voting last week. And in an interesting factoid,
24	more people voted for mayor in a rank-choice
25	voting ballot which was down ballot, than voted

1	for governor at the top of the ballot or voted
2	for senator. So that, you know, that was the
3	race that seemingly was driving participation.
4	So I won't go through how it works, but there's a
5	series of slides that does that. But it's so
6	some key principles is the voter has one vote.
7	They don't have a vote that counts for more than
8	one candidate at a time. But through their
9	ranking candidates, one, two, three, those
10	rankings provide direction on how they vote
11	they would want their vote to be counted if their
12	first choice loses or their first choice finishes
13	last. To just jump to the final two candidates,
14	so the two candidates who get the most first
15	choices, would advance to a second round of
16	counting. Everyone else's ballot would count for
17	one of those two, based on on whether which
18	one is ranked higher. Or you can do it
19	sequentially, which is how most places do it.
20	Where you knock the last person out. So there's
21	sort of two clear ways we've seen it being
22	considered and adopted in the United States. One
23	is to replace run-off elections. And so New York
24	City has your citywide run-off election, and
25	that's been the focus of debate. One handout I

Τ	have I just wanted to flag is the analysis we did
2	about the 2013 citywide run-off for public
3	advocate. And the composition of the electorate.
4	One, it dropped precipitously in just overall
5	participation. But also the electorate changed.
6	And was sort of one example by age, turnout in
7	the primary in the primary over 70 voters were
8	31.5 percent of those who voted in the run-off
9	there were over 40 percent of those who voted.
10	So you get kind of older, whiter, wealthier
11	electorates that participate in these typically
12	lower turnout run-offs. And run-offs have a lot
13	of other, you know, issues that you get a
14	second look at the candidates, but there's a lot
15	of downsides that often mean people want to
16	replace them with an instant run-off. You also
17	can have these crowded primary fields. And
18	that's what we're seeing a lot this year across
19	the country. More than two people running. And
20	when you have more than two people running, you
21	often, as a voter, may want to say there's
22	something than just one. You might as well I
23	actually do have a second choice or a third
24	choice and just allows the voter the freedom to
25	do that. And to use the freedom and it allows

L	you to basically have winners win with more votes
2	over a traditional plurality system. And New
3	Yorkers may address that more.

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So there are, of course, pros and cons. There's no perfect system. And that will be absolutely clear, that that's true. I do think the evidence is -- is strong that rank-choice voting is an improvement of plurality, an improvement over run-off elections. But you do have to do things, like deal with the voting equipment issues and deal with your vendor. And the good news from our perspective is that's all getting better. There's a group called the Rank-Choice Voting and Resource Center. provides lots of good information about how that's happening. You need to address legal issues and look closely at state and city law. But, you know, those are ones that obviously can be surmounted. And I know one of the discussion points is going to be how voters handle the ballot. Are there any differences by income, race and so on. I think there is some really encouraging evidence on that perspective. We're going to hear, I think, something about -talking about the history of rank ballots in New

1	York City. Which are actually quite promising
2	from a voting rights perspective. But I'll give
3	one example that I'll end with from San
4	Francisco. Which is in this mayoral election
5	that just took place, the the candidate who
6	did quite well but ultimately didn't make the
7	final two was a Korean-American woman named Jane
8	Kim. And she was particularly sort of strong
9	among younger voters and among Asian-American
10	voters. And she went out. And when she went
11	out, almost all her ballots stayed in play. 95
12	percent of her voters ranked someone second or
13	third. And so that meant that they sort of
14	stayed part of that conversation in San Francisco
15	stayed part of the most of the great majority
16	of them stayed part of the final decision. I
17	think in a run-off election, if she had not been
18	there, those voters might not have been there.
19	At least not in the same in numbers. Because
20	that was true and the candidates knew it, there
21	is a dynamic where they start trying to reach out
22	to more people. And San Francisco, the top two
23	candidates were both ranked by more than 60
24	percent of voters. So both the final two, where
25	they were limited to three rankings there, had

1	done an effective enough work in an
2	eight-candidate bill to be ranked in the top
3	three. Which was filled with the incentive of
4	the system to reach out to people.
5	So thank you.
6	MR. PERALES: Do we have any questions?
7	Angela, and then John.
8	MS. FERNANDEZ: Thank you for your
9	presentation.
LO	I was looking at the graphs that you shared
L1	and I had a question. I noticed that Oakland, in
L2	rank-choice voting, the participation went down.
L3	And then I also noticed that in Santa Fe, I don't
14	see a graph or line graph connected with
L5	rank-choice voting. But with pre-rank-choice
16	voting, there seemed to be a slight up-tic. And
17	those two look very different from Minneapolis
18	and St. Paul. And so I was wondering if you
L9	could walk us through why that is.
20	MR. RICHIE: Yeah. Thank you.
21	So in Santa Fe, there's little little
22	different color of numbers for the our city
23	election. So Santa Fe first used rank-choice
24	voting this year. So the only rank-choice voting
) F	election was in 2018

1	MS. FERNANDEZ: Oh. I see.
2	MR. RICHIE: So in fact, turnout was was
3	up and the highest it had been in a long time.
4	I'm going back to, I think, '98 or something like
5	that. Or some pre-2006.
6	Oakland had a particularly, I think,
7	exciting election for voters maybe in 2010. And
8	it was like a very strong front-runner who was a
9	senate majority leader who spent a whole lot of
10	money. And and he ultimately was defeated by
11	an Asian-American woman, who kind of pulled
12	together an electoral coalition. And I think
13	that election kind of just happened to kind of
14	catch catch a wave. It also was part this
15	happens at the same time as general elections.
16	So what's going on nationally this happened
17	these are November of even-year elections. And
18	so that does affect who was voting. So it's not
19	just the City election driving turnout.
20	Santa Fe was the the top of the ballot
21	was rank-choice voting. In Minneapolis, the top
22	of the ballot was rank-choice voting. And
23	St. Paul, top of the ballot was rank-choice or
24	was the mayoral race. So that is kind of, in
25	some ways a clear indicator of of where the

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1	system	or	the	dynamics	of	the	campaigns	are
2	having	an	effe	ect.				

MS. FERNANDEZ: This incumbent that won, that you said was in 2010, this exciting candidate one in 2014, the participation, the turnout, went down. But was she incumbent?

MR. RICHIE: She was the incumbent and she was a disappointment to some people. And she actually lost that -- that race. And -- but I would say, to be fair about participation in that -- those is that the top of the ticket races, governor -- which 2010 was when Jerry Brown was first winning. And back when he was running against Meg Whitman. It was a pretty big race. He was kind of coasting in 2014, the reelection. And that kind of affected the overall turnout. So that's why I think these other ones, where it's at the top of the ticket.

It is, I think, indicative, though

because -- because you have to make these

decisions. Every system has these trade-offs.

Oakland used to have a system where you would

vote in June. You could win in June if you got

over 50 percent. So when Rob Delanos won in

2006, he got just over 50 percent in June. So he

1	didn't go to a November election. So that
2	obviously meant the participation was lower. And
3	you always have to sort of make these tradeoffs
4	when you're having two rounds of election. Which
5	one's going to be the lower turnout one. And
6	that's one value of rank-choice voting, as you
7	just said. This is the one to vote in and voters
8	have that. The candidates know that and you just
9	focus all your energy on it.
10	MS. FERNANDEZ: Okay. Great. Thank you.
11	MR. PERALES: John.
12	MR. SIEGAL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
13	I have an open mind about this proposal,
14	which I'm just learning about. And I must say
15	that the the advocacy that we've seen from
16	this proposal through this process and the local
17	New York advocates, clearly there's an organized
18	effort. And they're doing a very effective job.
19	I want to ask three questions.
20	First, is there any system you know of where
21	rank-choice voting is used, but the threshold is
22	not 50 percent, but something more like the
23	40 percent, which is the New York Election Law
24	for city-wide offices?
25	MR. RICHIE: There where it's used today

1	it's all 50 percent and, because you can do
2	that in one election I think the tendency is
3	to do that, right. But you could establish the
4	threshold what you will. If you establish it as
5	lower than 50 percent, there is one feature that
6	you really need to do. Which is to make it a top
7	two form of instant run-off. Meaning that you
8	would only advance the top two candidates. Not
9	doing the sequential elimination. And you can
10	realize why. Because if you have a 50 percent
11	threshold, only one candidate can get over 50
12	percent. You have a 40 percent threshold, two
13	candidates could get over 40 percent. And the
14	order of elimination in over 40 kind of
15	arbitrarily, right. So we would strongly suggest
16	if a 40 percent threshold were maintained,
17	essentially, in New York, although we would argue
18	that's really not worth maintaining. But if you
19	did maintain it, to only advance the top two
20	finishers to the second round of counting.
21	MR. SIEGAL: Second question. The charge of
22	this commission is to enhance democracy. And
23	we've had two national elections in the last
24	20 years in which the candidate who got more
25	votes was not elected. We had one election in

1	which there was a prolonged election count,
2	ending in what many of us considered to be a real
3	tragedy for the electoral and legal system in the
4	country. And I look at the San Francisco
5	situation, where a week after the election,
6	they've been counting votes. It's totally
7	unclear what's going on. And so it's sort of two
8	subparts to this. One is, wouldn't it be a
9	more which enhances democracy more; if in San
10	Francisco Breed and Leno had been campaigning
11	this week on their competing philosophies on
12	vision of government, or the citizens sit there
13	and watch some algorithmic count that's not
14	really transparent? And I I guess the
15	provocative way to ask the question is, would
16	this create some sort of algorithmic local
17	electoral college, where we're going to end up
18	with a lot of elections, where the number one
19	vote-getter doesn't get elected?
20	MR. RICHIE: Good question. I think one
21	part I want to be clear about. Which is the
22	count in San Francisco, the time it takes to do
23	has nothing to do with rank-choice voting. If
24	you follow California elections, all their races
25	take days and days to count. Hilary Clinton's

1	margin grew by millions literally millions
2	between election day and like three weeks later
3	in California because it just takes them a long
4	time to process ballots. Once they process
5	ballots, it's they're actually in the first
6	(inaudible) 45 minutes after the polls closed
7	with the processed ballots, they have they
8	just haven't processed the rest of the ballots.
9	It has actually nothing to do with rank-choice
10	voting. I do agree there's like a perception
11	to that as the count comes in and its really
12	close and it changes, I think part of it is that
13	that perception issue would happen anyway if it
14	were really close and the margin was changing,
15	right. If this was a run-off and it took one day
16	one person moved ahead and one person moved the
17	other, it's like, oh, my gosh, it changes. And
18	it's a close election, right. It's it's
19	within .3 percent.
20	MR. SIEGAL: Well, in a close election. You
21	would agree it was ten percent ahead after the
22	votes.
23	MR. RICHIE: Well, she was with 36 percent
24	of the vote, right. So 64 percent didn't vote
25	for her and they have never elected anyone in San

1	Francisco without a	majority. Th	ey actually have
2	a majority system.	It's just whe	ther you do
3	run-offs or whether	you do an ins	tant run-off.
4	And if they had ball	ots processed	instantly, they
5	would have instant r	esults.	

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Santa Fe, as sort of one example, and actually using technology that's more like what New York has, you don't have nearly as many ballots to take as long to count, basically, as California. I guess you have some. But anyway, it takes a long time to get there. But Santa Fe doesn't have many ballots like that. They -they have the results the night of the elections, you know. And -- and I think Minneapolis -we'll hear from the Minneapolis clerk. But they had multiple races that did change hands. So the City council president was defeated after leading in first choices. She was defeated by an African-American transgender man in a really interesting election. But they've used it three The media reports elections and people accept it. And actually, there was a survey done in Minneapolis that we may hear more about. But what's really interesting to me was the percentage of people that don't want to keep

1	rank-choice voting keeps declining. So it's
2	actually down to only 16 percent don't want to
3	keep the system. The system has really kind of
4	become accepted, essentially, in three through
5	uses of it. But it is there's a transition to
6	it and it's accepting the fact that, you know, a
7	candidate with 36 percent may not win. I think
8	London Breed actually will win, by the way, in
9	San Francisco and you know, at the end of the
10	count. And I will say, also, that's an
11	interesting finding is that since they've used
12	rank-choice voting in the Bay area, there's 53
13	offices elected by the system. In the four
14	previous elections for those 53 offices, people
15	of color, one two of those out of five of
16	those races, a little less than 40 percent. With
17	rank-choice voting, they've won about 60 percent
18	of those races. So people of color are actually
19	winning more offices. London Breed's likely
20	success is kind of that pattern. And I think it
21	comes with a having maximum turnout and those
22	voters having sort of real choices. And I think
23	the candidates having incentives to try to run
24	affirmative campaigns rather than negative
25	campaigns. And I think that's been good for

1	democracy.
2	MR. SIEGAL: If I might, just one more thing
3	that's a New York specific thing that I think we
4	need to correct the record on here.
5	The 2013 public advocate run-off, which
6	you've been citing, is a total aberration. It
7	was a race in which there were two candidates in
8	a run-off. Each of whom were elected officials
9	in Brooklyn only. No city-wide recognition. No
10	city-wide base. After a mayoral primary, where
11	the two leading candidates were also from
12	Brooklyn. And there was extraordinarily low
13	turnout in the run-off. But when we've had
14	mayoral run-offs in New York, the participation
15	and the turnout is huge. And I have the numbers.
16	I would like to read them in the record.
17	We've had three mayoral run-offs. In 1973,
18	we had 783,133 voters in the primary. The
19	run-off had 900,538. So significantly increase.
20	In '77, it went the other way. 900,217 voters in
21	the primary. With 787,835 voters in the run-off.
22	Probably the disaffection of many Sutton and
23	Badillo voters. I don't know. People argue
24	about saving money I think most New Yorkers

would pay 10 million dollars to watch Ed Koch and

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Mayor Cuomo campaign. That's in hindsight. In the most recent run-off, 2001, the participation went up by 5,000 votes in the run-offs. So it was 785,365 in the primary. 790,019 in the run-off. We can argue about what would have happened in those elections and who would have won with instant run-off versus run-offs. But I just think that we need to think long and hard about adopting a system on a premise that voter turnout is so low that we need to change the voting. Because when we have mayoral run-offs, they are a huge participatory and democratic in the small lead sense events.

MR. RICHIE: Well, I will let New Yorkers comment more on that. But I will say this. I think of the numbers you gave, one had a very sharp up-tic, that 73 one. I think the next one is indicative. You have the people of colored candidates didn't make the run-off and turnout went down into presumably disproportionate among people of color. I think if you think about, say, the 2013 race that did not got to a run-off. But you think about John Liu. You think about his candidacy and how the other candidates treated his base. Which he did very well among

1	Asian-American and Chinese-American voters. And
2	they didn't seek his voter second choice, right?
3	Because he was going to be their chose. With
4	rank-choice voting, it would have been plausible.
5	People would have thought he was not going to
6	make it. They would have been aggressively
7	pursued, right. So so it's not only who is at
8	the polls, but how they're treated when they're
9	there and the incentives that it creates among
10	the candidates to reach out to more people. And
11	I will say again, you know, we will hear that
12	like, oh, you know, Mark Leno, or London Breed,
13	whoever wins, will not get, you know, 50 percent
14	in the final round or the first round. However,
15	they were ranked by more than 60 percent of the
16	voters. They made connections that were
17	affirmative and important connections that they
18	thought could help them win. And that's, I
19	think, the politics that rank-choice voting
20	creates.
21	MR. SIEGAL: Thank you.
22	MR. PERALES: Any other member of the
23	Commission with a question?
24	Dale.

MR. HO: Just a short one.

25

Τ	Thank you for your testimony today.
2	Mr. Richie, you know, we have I'll just
3	make this really simply.
4	Are there different considerations for
5	city-wide as opposed to district-based elections
6	with respect to rank-choice voting? Because we
7	have, you know, a different run-off system for
8	city-wide elections here. And just if you're
9	looking at our current status quo, are there
10	different things that we need to take we need
11	to think about when we're thinking about shifting
12	to rank-choice voting for some or all offices?
13	MR. RICHIE: That's a good question. I
14	mean, it's it's interesting. Over the
15	years and we've been responsive to people in
16	New York, right, who have said, hey, this makes a
17	lot of sense to do instant run-off. Like
18	replacing that run-off, which is expensive,
19	creates campaign finance changes and often
20	creates lower turnout, but not always, that it
21	would makes sense to to go to an instant
22	run-off. What I'm hearing now, and in some ways
23	what we're, perhaps learning from the more
24	greater use of rank-choice voting is that it
25	could make sense for the non-run-off elections,

1	right, the the City council and borough
2	presidents. And I touched based in my slides
3	about the fact there are actually quite a number
4	of races that are running pretty low. I think it
5	was eight City council district races in the
6	primaries in 2013, where one was less than
7	37 percent. So now, those winners could very
8	likely be very credible, you know, accurate
9	winners. But they didn't win as many votes as
10	they would with the rank-choice voting system,
11	right. And and essentially the system would
12	have created incentives for them to try to make
13	connections with with more voters. I think
14	the voters can handle a mix of balance. That's
15	one factor, you know. A rank-choice contest and
16	a non-rank-choice contest, we've seen a mix of
17	of ballots and handled that fine. In fact, the
18	San Francisco ballot was like that, right. They
19	used rank-choice voting for mayor, but not for
20	the state and federal offices. But I think there
21	is a certain voter education opportunity to say,
22	hey, that's how we vote in these primaries and
23	let's rank them for mayor and let's rank them for
24	the city-wide offices. And let's go ahead and do
25	that for borough president and City council.

1	And, you know, it's up, in a sense, to the
2	candidates to step into that space and organize
3	with it and try to reach out to more voters. So
4	at this point I would suggest, or at least it's
5	a it's a different consideration than in some
6	ways we had, over the years talked about in New
7	York, which is to consider it for all the
8	primaries just as a way to to encourage
9	candidates to to try to get more votes.
10	MR. PERALES: Let's move along.
11	Thank you very much.
12	MR. RICHIE: Thank you.
13	MR. PERALES: Jerry, let's move along,
14	please.
15	MR. VATTAMALA: Thank you to the Commission
16	again for letting us testify here.
17	Our comments will be very brief. AALDEF has
18	supported rank-choice voting or instant run-off
19	voting in the past. We're very supportive of the
20	system that we had in place for school board
21	elections. And we also submitted a letter of
22	support, I think when San Francisco was
23	considering rank-choice voting. So we've been
24	supportive in the past and we've seen that it's
25	worked very well when there's a large pool of

voters. So when looking at the school board
elections, as I mentioned in the last panel, that
was open to noncitizens, including undocumented
parents. The only requirement was that they had
a child in the New York City school system. So
when you had that large pool of voters, including
noncitizens and undocumented folks, in addition
to citizens, there are it produced very good
results for the Asian-American community. The
school boards were the only place where there was
Asian-American electoral success and it was
because of rank-choice voting in large part.

We did resist and object to the Board of Elections' move to reduce the rank-choice voting from picking the top nine candidates to going to the top four. That was back when we had preclearance. The Department of Justice agreed with us and prevented that change, which we believe would have resulted in fewer Asian-Americans being elected to the school board. So basically, we do support it. There --it's not a perfect system. But we've seen it work well. And to the extent that we could recreate the type of environment, the situation that we had for the school boards, we could see

1	1t	working	very	well	agaın	ın	New	York	City.	
2		Thank	you.							

MR. PERALES: If there are no pressing 3 questions, I'd like to move right on to Susan 4 Lerner. And then we can ask both the last two 5 speakers questions.

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MS. LERNER: Great. Thank you. And thank you for the opportunity to address this topic, as well.

We believe that it is time in New York City conceptually to move beyond the idea of instant run-off voting to rank-choice for all of the races because I think we need to recognize one of the strengths and benefits of our campaign finance system. Which is that we are the beneficiaries of very competitive races. Particularly at the City council primary level, where the campaign finance board allows community members to be able to run. And it is not at all unusual in an open seat to see anywhere from four to eight candidates supported by the campaign finance system running. We believe that rank-choice voting is a way in which to ensure that the ultimate elected official has aggregated enough support within the district to be

representative and to that using rank-choice
voting ensures a healthier democracy, where more
of the council constituents have an investment
and have chosen have ranked the particular
winner of the election. And that's why we're
arguing that we should be talking about
rank-choice voting and moving beyond a limited
concept of instant run-off. Which most voters
don't expect to see on a regular basis. But that
the primary actually is something that everybody
engages in. I'd like to also point out there's a
reason why rankings are clickbait. People do
instinctively understanding ranking system. So
our experience in other states and other cities
indicates that the voter education is very
doable.

And I'd also like to caution the panel.

From our point of view as voting rights and election administration modernization advocates, that there can sometimes be a turnout trap. That if we focus only on the question of, well, will this guarantee five percent or ten percent more turnout on an election, that we limit our purview. Because, frankly, our experience is there were virtually no silver bullets for turn

1	out. And the things that do seem to reliably
2	increase turnout, increase them at relatively
3	small percentages. But there are a lot of
4	factors that influence whether people feel
5	connected to their elected officials and have
6	confidence in their elections that have nothing
7	to do with turnout.
8	So I believe that a healthy democracy
9	requires that we look at a plethora of factors in
10	determining what election reforms we should be
11	engaging within. I was very encouraged by the
12	mayor's instruction that the panel should look
13	towards a healthy democracy and not just focus on
14	turnouts. So I know that is often very
15	compelling, for people to just focus on that.
16	But I urge you to look beyond it.
17	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
18	MR. SIEGAL: Questions?
19	MR. PERALES: I'm looking for questions.
20	And I know that John Siegal is really into this
21	subject, but he doesn't have a question.
22	With that, we will move on to the City of
23	Minneapolis.
24	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: Thank you, Mr. Chair and
25	commissioners. My name is Grace Wachlarowicz and

1	I am the Assistant City Clerk, Director Of
2	Elections and Voter Services for the City of
3	Minneapolis.
4	On behalf of the City, the City Clerk, Casey
5	and Carl and I, it is an honor to be here before
6	you today to provide you with information on
7	administering that rank-choice voting from the
8	Minneapolis Method or the Minneapolis model.
9	Before you, I provided several materials, as
10	well as a flash drive. We have extensively
11	documented every aspect of the process. The
12	journey from when it began in 20 2006 through
13	last year's election. It would be impossible to
14	go through all the details in two to
15	three minutes. So I provided that information so
16	at your leisure you can review it.
17	Today I'd just like to touch real high on
18	the administration of rank-choice voting and
19	voting outreach and education.
20	First off, the City of Minneapolis has the
21	municipal elections once every four years. We
22	have all municipal offices up, 22 of them. Which
23	includes the mayor, 13 council members,
24	represented of the wards, and various park board
25	and board of estimentation. So it's a

1	combination	of	all.

In 2006, the voters in Minneapolis chose to use rank-choice voting as the method to vote for their municipal office. Previous to that, it was the traditional balloting of a primary and then subsequently a general election with the two top candidates.

So the next thing I want to talk about is the process in which we do the tabulation. And I want to bring this up specifically because, even if you have an automated system or not, the process that we call the Minneapolis Method is an -- is an easy way to understand the process of tabulation.

So briefly I'll just kind of go through that on a high level. First and foremost, you need to understand that in Minnesota, The Election Law requires that voting equipment, both the hardware and software, must be certified by the standards of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

Currently there are no standards to certify a rank-choice voting system. So we are forced to use creative ways in which to tabulate our ballots.

We came up with what we call the Minneapolis

1	Method. Which is the process of sorting ballots
2	and counting the unique three-choice combination
3	for each ballot excuse me each office.
4	Then we have data entry and analysis that is
5	performed in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.
6	Using it's basically a large calculator using
7	only cut and paste and basic math functions, we
8	are able to do replicate the concept of
9	actually manually touching those ballots.
10	Specifically piling, distributing it by voter
11	intent, which in rank-choice voting we call
12	normalization, and by just actually counting the
13	ballots. So that process expedited it. The City
14	of Minneapolis has 240,000 registered voters. So
15	we're tinier than you, but a lot of ballots that
16	we cannot manually count them, as the City of St.
17	Paul does.
18	With that, the key best practice is to
19	really focus on process improvements and lessons
20	learned. It's really critical after each process
21	that you look at the system honestly,
22	objectively, and identify the components and
23	steps that should be eliminated, enhanced or
24	replaced. By doing so, we were able to
25	significantly expedite the tabulation process

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from 2009 to '13, from 2-13 to 2017 without

compromising the integrity or accuracy of the election.

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Most significantly is the purchase for new equipment in 2013. The same equipment that the City of New York has. Which is the DS200 Optical Scan Tabulator, with its operating system ElectionWare from the company Election Systems and Software. Through this system, there is a software that can generate a record or a report data analysis that can combine those three unique choices for each office. And from that, we were able to export it into that Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to continue with the tabulation. That in itself reduced a lot of time for us. I'd like to -- you can consider it just from an educational standpoint, as also as an election administrator, it's very helpful to understand how to implement that.

Quickly with voter outreach and education, I want to just point out that we were very focused on consistent messaging. That we provided materials, videos and informational forums in order to keep that message constant. We provided this information on our website, so it was

1	downloadable so that all outreach organizations,
2	campaigns and the media has the same information
3	and the same materials.
4	Regarding in the informational forums, that
5	was open to the public, campaigns, and also the
6	media. This also reinforced the consistent
7	messaging and it promoted that transparency. The
8	key is one week before the election to have that
9	public forum to explain what to expect on
10	election day. It was there that we demonstrated
11	the actual tabulation process so everyone
12	understood it. We also explained how the results
13	would come in, how it would look, when it would
14	be posted, when the winners would be declared in
15	a realistic timeframe in which this whole process
16	will be completed.
17	With that, I thank you for your time and I'm
18	welcome to any of your questions.
19	MR. PERALES: Yes, Liran?
20	MS. ANGELO: I'm somewhat worried about the
21	complexity of the internal calculations. I mean,
22	I'm a Ph.D in economics and I could not follow
23	you. And I and I think that there's just
24	it may just be something really good about
25	saying, you know, she got 500,000 votes and I got

1	500,010 and I win. Because we kind of all
2	understand that. So I just wanted to share that
3	with you.
4	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: I appreciate that. I'll
5	be honest with you, I started with the City of
6	Minneapolis in 2012. My boss, City Clerk Casey
7	Carl, started in 2010. We did not develop the
8	process. We were not there in 2006, when it was
9	passed, or in 2009. We implemented the 2013
LO	election. We learned it, we processed it, and
L1	provided significant process improvements. It's
L2	very simple and basic. And I strongly encourage
L3	you to look at the videos and the information
L4	information on your flash drive. Because it is
L5	simple, but it takes time to explain it and
L6	keeping the consistent messaging.
L7	But I do appreciate your concern.
L8	MR. PERALES: Does anyone else have a
L9	question?
20	Go ahead, Annetta.
21	MS. SEECHARRAN: I apologize if I if I
22	missed if this was covered in the previous
23	testimony that I missed.
24	But I wonder what was the cost implications
25	for the City in implementing rank-choice voting?

1	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: I have limited
2	information on the preparation and implementation
3	in 2009. But I can say anecdotally that it
4	was there was an outlay of expenses to prepare
5	for it and to process it. We were the first ones
6	that did it in this particular manner, so we had
7	to go through a lot of we did a lien process,
8	in fact, to get down to the effective processes.
9	I can tell you in 2013, in 2017, there really was
10	no different than the cost of doing our
11	traditional primary to now just our single
12	election. The cost, quote unquote, savings where
13	the money we would have expended for a primary,
14	we focused on voter outreach and education. So
15	that's so it really was no change in cost.
16	MS. SEECHARRAN: So I understand that you
17	have the same voting equipment that New York City
18	does. And apparently one of the concerns that's
19	been raised for New York City about rank-choice
20	voting despite, obviously, a lot of strong
21	arguments for it, is that the equipment
22	malfunctions will potentially kind of imperil the
23	whole enterprise with computer malfunctions, if
24	there have been any.
25	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: Fortunately, that is one

1	that I can say that I have not had to worry
2	about. We have not had any malfunctions with the
3	tabulators. It had nothing to do with
4	rank-choice voting, per se, if it did. No, that
5	was not an issue whatsoever.
6	MS. SEECHARRAN: And just to reiterate my
7	colleagues question.
8	If you were to explain the process and why
9	you think rank-choice voting creates a healthy
10	democracy, and several other panelists have
11	argued to a voter in sort of a few sentences,
12	what would you say?
13	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: First and foremost, this
14	is a nonpartisan position. I am at the pleasure
15	of our policymakers. It was the choice of the
16	voters. I have no opinion, so I cannot promote
17	or not, as far as
18	MS. SEECHARRAN: I'm not I'm not asking
19	you to promote. Simply to explain.
20	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: I just wanted to make
21	that on the record.
22	The simplest one we state is, go to the
23	restaurant. You have turkey, ham and chicken.
24	You have three choices. You want to have turkey,
25	geez, they're out of it. What is the second

1	thing you want? Ham. I'm fine, I'll take ham.
2	They're out of ham, we'll go with the chicken.
3	So you're ranking your choices based on your
4	preferences.
5	Another example that I use is the primary
6	scenario, where it's whittled down to two. You
7	vote for somebody in the primary. They didn't
8	make it. Don't you make a second choice in the
9	general, with the two candidates that are left?
10	That would be your second choice. So there's a
11	lot of comparisons. And our voters have not had
12	an issue with understanding it in that respect.
13	MR. HO: Thank you so much for coming up all
14	the way from Minneapolis.
15	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: Thank you.
16	MR. HO: It's nice to hear the perspective
17	of an election administrator.
18	Just one quick question.
19	Other than the public education piece, are
20	there other election administration challenges
21	that were issues that have arisen in the move to
22	rank-choice voting? Or is that really the
23	principle issue?
24	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: I hope that the City of
25	Minneapolis has developed enough of a foundation

1	from our lessons learned that my fellow
2	colleagues around the country who are considering
3	rank-choice voting can use our experiences and
4	it's not that difficult. It's a different
5	method methodology. But I administer this
6	election no different than a traditional
7	election. It's just slightly different, but not
8	something you cannot overcome.
9	MR. PERALES: Thank you very, very much. We
10	do appreciate your travelling to New York City.
11	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: It was a pleasure and an
12	honor. Thank you.
13	MR. PERALES: David Kallick.
14	MR. KALLICK: Thank you. Thank you for
15	inviting me.
16	I so I'm the deputy director of the
17	Fiscal Policy Institute. And I'm going to say a
18	little bit about why I care about this issue and
19	also why I think, of all the people you've heard
20	from, why you should pay the least attention to
21	me.
22	So I think the it's to me, what's
23	really important about rank-choice voting is it
24	allows people to have a candidate in the election
25	that they really care about and really excites

1	them. And I think that is what I mean, in
2	terms of voter turnout, I think that is what
3	makes for people voting. I think there's long
4	evidence of that. And I think if you compare the
5	idea of an instant run-off or instant run-off
6	or a rank-choice voting system to the idea of
7	what we do today, you kind of have to combine
8	what would be the impact of both of those
9	elections. And I think that there's good reason
10	to think that you would have not the higher
11	turnout in a single rank-choice voting system, or
12	maybe even higher than that because you have
13	everybody in. If you imagine, for example, you
14	know what would happen within the Puerto Ricar
15	community if there's a Puerto Rican candidate or
16	within the Chinese community if there's a Chinese
17	candidate, or from Staten Island, if there's a
18	Staten Island candidate in a in, for example,
19	a mayoral race. A big turnout for that. If you
20	have that even from that constituency. If in
21	the if then in the run-off, the person who is
22	from that base isn't there, you have you have
23	a lot of drop-off in exactly that same
24	constituency. And I think you actually I
25	haven't looked at this before, but Rob Rob's

1	numbers I think show that, right. In this so
2	the run-off election, as I pointed out, is the
3	run-off just for public advocate. And even
4	though run-off elections generally skew more
5	towards whiter, wealthier what you see
6	actually is an increase in the black turnout from
7	the compared to the primary. But a
8	decrease significant decrease in the Latino
9	turnout because you have a black candidate but
10	not a Latino candidate, I would surmise. So I
11	think it's I think it's important to have a
12	candidate in the race who you're excited about.
13	And then I think it's also important what the
14	dynamics are within the election itself. So Rob
15	touched on this, but it seems to me that, you
16	know, when you have a candidate who is clearly
17	going to dominate because Staten Island I'm
18	making this up, right, to take it away from
19	personal. If you have a Staten Island candidate
20	who is running for mayor or for comptroller, very
21	likely you would have other candidates saying,
22	I'm going find my base because I'm going to run
23	with and, you know, not much point in spending
24	time in Staten Island because how am I ever going
25	to get those votes. Whereas if you have a

1	rank-choice system, you do the opposite, right.
2	You're going to say, oh, that person I like. I
3	kind of think they're not going to win anyway.
4	Of if they do, then I guess I don't win. But so
5	I'm going to go after not only my base, but also
6	the people who I think might be most likely among
7	the other candidates to put me as their second
8	choice. I think that makes for a healthier
9	election and more engagement not just turnout,
10	but more engagement from the voters all around.
11	All right. So I think, in fact, I just I
12	think you can say you get to vote for someone you
13	love and you're more likely to get someone you
14	like, or at least somebody you don't hate.
15	So why pay least attention to me? I was
16	asked to talk primarily about the fiscal impacts,
17	since we spent some time looking at this. In
18	fact, I'll say we're going to put together a
19	report, a short report, that we'll publish within
20	the next couple of days. I'm sorry I don't have
21	it published already. But so this I I
22	would say don't cite these numbers yet. But if
23	you could wait a few days, I'll send you final
24	ones. But I'm pretty confident these are pretty
25	close to right, at least.

1	So my main takeaway would be on why I
2	would say don't pay too much attention to me is I
3	don't think there's a big fiscal impact one way
4	or the other. I think that it's never a big
5	impact around the country and New York City. In
6	fact, I think there would be a savings by going
7	into the system. But I don't think that's why
8	you should do it or not do it. I think,
9	obviously, it's about democracy.

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All right. So let's talk about the numbers. Where's my second page? So in terms of the best analysis that we've seen so far of the fiscal impact has been in Maine, where I spent some time talking with the Secretary of State. And there was a letter from the Secretary of State about this. I'm sorry. The Secretary of State's office. Okay. Telluride, (inaudible), as well, but it's a very small city. So in Maine, I would say in terms of the cost relevant to New York City, what they saw was -- was, leaving aside the question of voter education and voter -- and voter outreach, which I would say we should think about separately and I would say just spend more time thinking about. But leaving aside the question about outreach and education, the cost

1	relevant to New York City were about \$50,000 this
2	year. So a tiny fraction of what they spend in
3	Maine. And about 20,000 next year. So this
4	would be the first year of implementation,
5	\$50,000. In a kind of bare bones version of it.
6	Maine is smaller than New York City, but in
7	terms of population. Although bigger in terms of
8	geography and different kind of (inaudible),
9	which might be a factor. Most of the costs would
10	be about the same, though, because it's primarily
11	about the program and the software.
12	In any case, we're talking about an order of
13	magnitude that it really, in my opinion,
14	negligible in the service of of democracy. So
15	those costs are primarily about so in in
16	Maine, the costs were primarily about poll
17	workers I'm sorry. This was this is the
18	problem with not having a finished report.
19	Thank you.
20	In Maine the that was primarily about
21	that's not the right thing. Well, maybe I'll
22	come back to that.
23	All right. Okay. In terms of the cost
24	relevance in Maine that's what I have here
25	it it was just about the programming costs.

Τ	And then they had some other issues about how do
2	they transport the ballots things that aren't
3	really relevant in New York. And they also
4	they had an initial estimate that was much higher
5	than some of you may have heard. That
6	essentially was an error on their part. They
7	have included outreaching costs, which are there
8	anyway. And they also changed how they transport
9	their ballot system.
10	MR. PERALES: Is there a bottom line, David?
11	Is it did they didn't save much money? Is
12	that what you're saying?
13	MR. KALLICK: It didn't cost much money.
14	MR. PERALES: It didn't cost much money.
15	MR. KALLICK: So in Maine what I have is
16	maybe I can shift gears to what I can see in
17	front of me clearly. But so but in Maine it
18	cost it cost them about about \$110,000
19	total this year. 384,000 in total for next year.
20	And of the cost that would be relevant for New
21	York City, those costs in Maine were more like
22	15,000 this year and 20,000 next year. What I
23	want to say is I think that you can save a good
24	deal of money doing it in New York because we
25	have this run-off system. So every time you run

1	an election a run-off election, it costs			
2	money. There's been some so 2013 is the last			
3	time we you know, we have some good numbers on			
4	that. It cost about 11 million dollars for us to			
5	run that election. Now again, I would say,			
6	11 million dollars would be well spent on an			
7	election if it makes it a better a more			
8	democratic process. But I think that if you can			
9	save 11 million dollars and have a more			
10	democratic process, as I think you do, all the			
11	better. In fact, what I would do is turn that			
12	money back into voter outreach and voter			
13	education.			
14	MR. PERALES: Thank you.			
15	Wendy, you have a question.			
16	MS. WEISER: This is one question which I			
17	don't know which panelist would be best equipped			
18	to answer it. But it was occasioned by your			
19	testimony.			
20	In the places that have already used			
21	rank-choice voting, are there people who don't			
22	rank or just rank their first choice? And if so,			
23	what percentage of people, so that it doesn't			
24	actually function as a ranking system?			
25	MR. PERALES: Maybe Minneapolis can tell us.			

1	Is there a lot of bullet voting, as they said?
2	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: It will vary based on
3	your office and the candidates. The majority of
4	our we have a survey which will be provided on
5	your we have a detailed report. We've
6	actually done a rank-choice voting survey both in
7	2009, 2013 and 2017. And that does address that,
8	as well.
9	We've seen an increase of more individuals
10	ranking one or two, but occasion for the third
11	choice. So as it progressed, it increases. But
12	again, it sometimes determines on who the
13	candidates are. If it's and the choices. It
14	always comes down to who's on the ballot. But
15	traditionally, it does increase.
16	MR. RICHIE: I know Craig's going to get
17	into this, so let we'll let him share his
18	important numbers. But I'll say that one of the
19	New York City school board elections were some
20	data you can look at, right, because those the
21	one reason why the Department of Justice didn't
22	preclear a change away from the system is that,
23	in fact, voters were were really ranking
24	candidates. And that was for nine seats, right.

So it was a pretty long ballot. But people, more

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1	than one very, very are commonly. When you're
2	only electing one person, there's almost a
3	different psychology. But we're seeing that when
4	the race is like mayor, it's typically 85 to
5	90 percent of people will rank more than one.
6	But that does mean not everyone's doing it.
7	There is a pattern that the people most likely
8	not to rank are supporting the frontrunner. And
9	there's a real logic to that to that decision
10	because their ballot will almost never you
11	know, super unlikely to not go to their first
12	choice only. I think your ballot only goes to
13	your second choice if your first choice loses,
14	right. So but you know, that's that's kind
15	of seemingly the pattern about one out of ten,
16	you know, big race will choose to only vote for
17	one person in a one winner race.
18	MR. PERALES: Now we can pass to Burnett and
19	maybe he can move right into his comments.
20	MR. BURNETT: Thank you to the Commission
21	for having me. And thanks to for the
22	promotion. I'm still assistant professor, for
23	the record.
24	I'll I'll give you the numbers you asked
25	for. I think you guys got this as as part of

1	the pre-packet. I included my publication on
2	this this question. In Oakland, the year
3	under study that I was look at, it was 87 percent
4	had one candidate only. In Pierce County,
5	Washington, it was 26 percent. San Francisco was
6	11.7 percent. And San Leandro County was 16.4.
7	I don't have the current numbers in San
8	Francisco. We'd have to do ballot scans to be
9	able to do that, the numbers that I have in front
10	of me. So I'll just start. What I would tell
11	you guys, the first thing I would note is that
12	every electoral system has a tradeoff. There's
13	no perfect system. Rank-choice voting is not it.
14	Primary run-off system is not it, either. There
15	are you can devise elections in any way you
16	want and there is going to be a deficiency of
17	some kind. There's just to solution there.
18	One I one thing I would point out is
19	is, you guys, an opinion about quality democracy
20	here is to ask yourselves what is the solution
21	you're trying to drive here? Is there a problem
22	you're trying to solve? In the case of Maine,
23	what we are now actually experiencing, oh,
24	state-wide rank-choice voting. They have a
25	problem, All right. They have a third party.

And sometimes that third party -- he was a strong independent streak and a plain spoiler. And they had experienced this into something voters wanted. It's not clear to me exactly how that fits in with the New York case. But this is something that you guys, as your ears to the ground, would know better, certainly, than I would.

So we talk a lot about primary run-off systems and I think we can identify some ways in which they fall short. Certainly, Mr. Richie has done a good job of laying out how perhaps rank-choice voting is better than that system.

But I would like to -- to spend some time talking about ways in which rank-choice voting may not be as good as -- as a primary run-off system.

For me, it has two important deficiencies to consider. The first is a concept we call ballot exhaustion. This is something where your ballot, no matter how it was filled out -- and it could be you had one choice ranked, two choice ranks, or perhaps even the entire allowed candidates to rank. But your ballot does not make it to the final round of tabulation. This means that, effectively, when it comes to decide the winner,

1	your ballot does not factor into that number.
2	This is not an avoidable problem. We've seen
3	this everywhere. This is now, I think, pretty
4	well documented. It's not something we can
5	simply just legislate out. It is a part of a
6	process. That doesn't mean this always happens,
7	but it does happen
8	MR. PERALES: Can you explain that a little
9	better? How does the ballot not get counted in a
10	vote?
11	MR. BURNETT: So if you say it ranked three
12	candidates. Your allotted systems allow you to
13	rank three. So let's stick with that. You rank
14	three. You have a preference. You identify your
15	first choice, your second choice and your third
16	choice and then send your ballot in to be
17	tabulated. In the process of tabulation, your
18	first choice is eliminated. Then you go to your
19	second choice, right. That's where your vote
20	would count. Your second choice gets eliminated.
21	You get distributed to your third choice. Let's
22	say third choice gets eliminated. Now you're no
23	longer a part of the process. Your ballot has

been cast and it's been cast completely and

correctly. But in terms of actually weighing in

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1	on the final
2	MR. PERALES: I must be missing something.
3	What if I voted for there were five
4	candidates and I voted for one of the ones that
5	got the least votes. Are you saying my ballot
6	was not very valuable or worthwhile?
7	MR. BURNETT: Well, it depends. It depends
8	on who you ranked second
9	MR. PERALES: No. If I didn't rank any
LO	on the current system, if I just vote and it's
11	somebody who doesn't do well, I mean, you're
12	suggesting my ballot was worthless.
L3	MR. BURNETT: Not worthless. You got to
L4	express your voice. And it's clear to us who you
L5	prefer. Then you subsequently have a chance,
L6	potentially, if there was a run-off. So going to
L7	weigh in on weigh in on
L8	MR. PERALES: I see. I get it now.
L9	MR. BURNETT: In this case, in this example,
20	though, you're not afforded that opportunity.
21	This is why I them as fundamentally different.
22	And that when your ballot is exhausted the
23	winner is declared. No matter what, Right. We
24	do arrive at a winner. Under a primary run-off
25	system, you are afforded the opportunity to go in

1	and weigh in again. Whether you choose to do
2	that is up to you as the voter. Or you can
3	express yourself by actually not going to the
4	polls. But that is an expression that we can
5	understand what that is. Under exhaustion, it's
6	nearly impossible to know what the intent of the
7	voter actually was. We don't know. We can't
8	say, well they might have voted for this person
9	or maybe they just didn't see anybody who was
10	worth voting for. We don't know, all right.
11	It's a great unknown and, unfortunately, I think
12	this is a deficiency that we should think about.
13	Especially when we're thinking about quality of
14	democracy and we're thinking about
15	representation, how well people are being
16	represented being represented in the process.
17	What are the rates of exhaustion? It ranges.
18	And it depends on the quality of the election.
19	It could be as low as, say, a couple of percent
20	points. It could be zero. It could be as high
21	as almost 30 percent. And I've seen it in the
22	work I presented to you guys. That is actually a
23	number that's true in San Francisco. It reaches
24	27 percent of us. So unlike these people who
25	show up, and they show up in the run-off, who are

afforded a chance, those voters don't get a chance to do so.

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The second issue that I would like for you guys to consider when you're thinking about rank-choice voting is the fact that it doesn't usually produce a majority winner. It actually produces a plurality winner. And if you do the calculations in the way that most people who study electoral systems would, which is we would consider the percentage of votes for the winner, divided by the total number of votes cast. just the total number of votes that are still left. That often reaches in the 40 percent. 44, 45. Depends on the election you're looking at. But that means that that person, whoever is the eventual winner, did not actually receive a majority from all of the people who showed up in that election. They received a plurality of the vote.

For example, if you look at one of the handouts that I provided today, this recent election in San Francisco, one that we're actually still counting, one, the exhaustion rate was eight and a half percent. Meaning, we don't understand what those eight and a half percent of

voters would have done if they had had a chance
to weigh in in some sort of run-off format. We
just don't know.

The second is that the winner's total share as of Monday is 46 or 45.6 percent. Not a 50 percent majority. And this is something we observe in many elections. In my paper we have four elections here. None of them received the majority, either. This is actually -- tends to be, I think, more common than not, actually, from what I've observed in my own observations.

The third thing I would say is that there are some new concerns that are emerging in the rank-choice voting formats. One is a question about how well the system does with racial and ethnic minority groups. Jason McDaniel, professor at San Francisco State, has done some work on this. And he actually finds that it doesn't necessarily do well for turnout amongst these groups.

And part of the packet I provided, I'm giving you hot off the press research that I've been conducting that looks at how it shakes out in terms of the precinct and its racial and ethnic minority makeup, and how it looks in terms

1	of exhaustion and completeness. And the
2	take-home point is this. Generally speaking,
3	racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to
4	provide a complete ballot. Which means that
5	they're actually at a higher risk of exhaustion,
6	right. Because we know that if you don't
7	complete your ballot, you're more likely to be
8	exhausted. However, due to the nature of the
9	elections under consideration here in San
10	Francisco and Oakland, racial and ethnic minority
11	groups each had a candidate that they strongly
12	preferred. And that candidate made it to the
13	last round of tabulation. So they actually
14	didn't end up getting exhausted as much.
15	However, that doesn't mean that they couldn't in
16	future elections, right. If your candidate
17	doesn't make it to the last round of voting,
18	you're actually more likely to be exhausted. So
19	this, to me, the take-home would be that it is
20	the potential to harm. It doesn't necessarily
21	mean it will harm. But that the capacity is
22	there.
23	I thank you for your time.
24	MR. PERALES: Thank you very much. I'm just
25	curious.

1	Mr. Richie, do you have a comment to the
2	contrary to what's just been said?
3	MR. RICHIE: Thank you.
4	Let me let me start off by agreeing with
5	Craig that there's no system that's perfect,
6	right. So we're talking about relativity here.
7	I think that on the issue of exhaustion, there's
8	sort of two points of comparison. When you
9	compare it to the plurality of voting
10	elections it's kind of the point that you were
11	making about the current system, where you only
12	get a single choice, and that's it, right, if you
13	vote for someone who doesn't who finishes
14	last, you know, that's it, right. And this would
15	allow you to have a say in the final two. Or
16	this is sort of the classic way that people think
17	about, you know, rank-choice voting states
18	through the context of a presidential election,
19	let's put Ralph Nader on the ballot or some such
20	election. Then compare it to so it's doing
21	more than you can with plurality. When you are
22	looking at a run-off election, there are times
23	that turnout does go up. It's actually quite
24	unusual in general. Like so we looked at all the
25	federal run-offs. A lot of states, particularly

1	in the south, have run-off elections. Texas just
2	had a run-off election, for instance, for
3	governor. And, you know, some big offices. The
4	turnout dropped more than 50 percent in Texas.
5	The average decline in turnout in run-offs
6	federal primary run-offs over the past, 200 of
7	them is more than 35 percent. So yes, there will
8	be exhaustion in that sense of like in the San
9	Francisco race San Francisco mayoral race it
10	was 8.5 percent. So that consent was a turnout
11	decline. One way of measuring it of 8.5 percent.
12	But the relative changes is usually much more,
13	when you're looking at the run-offs. We looked
14	at the last well, we looked at all the
15	rank-choice voting elections that have taken
16	place with multiple rounds in the United States
17	since in the last 20 years of usage. So there
18	are 77 of them. The winner on average, the sort
19	of the median, was 48 percent of the first round.
20	So correct, the median was just under 50. The
21	median of run-off elections in San Francisco,
22	when they had had run-off elections was 37
23	percent. The median in those federal primary
24	run-offs was also 37 percent. So again, I would
25	say rank-choice voting is standing up quite well

1	by a measure of participation versus run-offs.
2	And, of course, versus plurality voting, it's
3	always getting higher.
4	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
5	Rachel.
6	MS CODSIL: So I'm qurious Professor

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MS. GODSIL: So I'm curious, Professor Burnett, how you would compare the concerns that you raised about ballot exhaustion with the two points made by the previous panelist. One is this notion that with rank-choice voting, there is considerable incentives for the candidates to pay attention to a broader swath of voters, being more robust (inaudible). So that was one sort of upside to rank-choice voting. And then the second is, in thinking about ballot exhaustion and the effects that you described, isn't under our current system, where we -- one only gets one vote, isn't it the case that a significant percentage of voters will take into account who they think will win in deciding who the single person will vote for will be. Whereas a rank-choice voting system, absent a more nuanced way of conveying one's choice. And so I'm just curious in thinking about, first, the point that Mr. Richie made, as well, this idea of only

playing to one base and the reasonable choice made in a traditional primary or traditional method with rank-choice voting. There being different incentives and this idea of being able to reflect our preferences more honestly in a sense in a rank-choice voting system than we can if there's a primary, where we're concerned that, frankly, to the Chair's point, if we vote for someone who's not a frontrunner, what's the point anyway because he will lose.

MR. BURNETT: Okay. So with regard to candidates coordinating, there is going to be some idiosyncrasies to every election. So it may be on average there is incentive to coordinate. That essentially was what a partisan primary does, right. It requires the party to focus on a single candidate to put forward, So (inaudible). But that doesn't mean that if I'm a candidate who thinks that I'm going to win, maybe I don't want to coordinate. If I don't think that I need your second votes, it may actually not be in my best interest to, right. Because I don't necessarily want to expand the size of my coalition if I don't need to. This is speaking about how most politicians usually view elections, right. They

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1	don't necessarily,	if they don't	think they need
2	it, reach out to o	ther voters.	

MS. GODSIL: Just for a second.

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Isn't the whole purpose of rank-choice voting the inconsistencies of very competitive elections in which there's not a clear frontrunner, otherwise this is all kind of resolved and moot anyway? So isn't that a slightly not particularly helpful response?

MR. BURNETT: Well, there are oftentimes (inaudible) don't quote me, but they don't coordinate with other candidates. In fact, most candidates will (inaudible). In those elections, the coordination will probably be near zero. So perhaps in competitive elections you could see it. I'm just saying. It is competitive. Yes. Unfortunately, I can't give you some sort of step by step playbook in every single election. It just happens to be who's running, are they an overwhelming frontrunner? If they are, then they don't need to pay attention to other candidates. They don't seek the votes, their second choice or third choice votes. If it's ten candidates running, they all got about ten percent, perhaps, right. And maybe in a city like New York, where

1	it's easier to get polling data because there's a
2	lot of money in campaigns, that's possible.
3	Yeah, I'd say that, you know, knowledge about
4	where you stand is maybe a little easier to
5	discern. But that's probably not true in a lot
5	of places.

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So to your second question, though, about strategic voting. That again requires the voters to know who they think is going to be a reasonable shot to win. And my experience in looking at local elections tells me that voters are not very good at figuring that out. And the data suggests that's true, too. In three of the cases I looked at in the 2015 paper, even the people who marked three candidates, the exhaustion rates were 7.8 percent in Oakland, 22.5 percent in San Francisco, and 2.7 in San Leandro. (Inaudible) because there are only four people were running and they filled out three. So your chances of exhaustion are fairly low. But the analogs are closer to Oakland and San Francisco in New York, where you're going to get more candidates running. And probably even closer to San Francisco, because like San Francisco, New York has reasonably generous

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1	public financing for elections. That's San
2	Francisco's case in a nutshell. So I think
3	you're more likely to see the types of elections
4	where 10, 13 people, 15 people are running. And
5	voters are not going to necessarily going to know
6	of those 10 or 13 who is going to be in the final
7	two. That's actually a fairly sophisticated
8	piece of information that most voters won't have.

MS. CLARKE: I just wanted to -- I wanted to just find out from who has the greatest information. The power of incumbents. When an incumbent who is already known is running, versus some young bright person who may do just as well as the incumbent, how do you factor in for the power in the incumbency, somebody who's already known, to an unknown?

MR. RICHIE: Like most elections, when there's an incumbent running, a lot of challengers will just not enter the race. The few cases I've looked at, though, a turnout in San Francisco in 2015 was down because it's pretty well understood that Ed Lee was going to win and he did, Right. There was no need to count. There was no need to coordinate. So that doesn't mean you'll find cases where that's true,

1	where a poll you could have somebody who is a
2	challenger that could build a broad coalition.
3	And that's probably going to be easier to do in a
4	rank-choice environment. I'd certainly agree
5	with that.
6	MS. CLARKE: And and in communities of
7	minorities, where a where they now feel that
8	my community is matured enough, we've paid our
9	price in the democracy and we want to get up and
LO	run, how do you account for new energy in in
L1	the process?
12	MR. BURNETT: In terms of rank-choice
13	voting?
L4	MS. CLARKE: Yeah.
L5	MR. BURNETT: I mean, I actually would defer
L6	to to Rob on that. I'd let him speak about
L7	that.
L8	MR. RICHIE: Why don't we stop for a moment
L9	with Grace and then I'll
20	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: Okay.
21	MR. BURNETT: Can I tell you something, too?
22	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: Thank you. I just have a
23	few comments from the Minneapolis perspective.
24	First off, I'm not an expertise, as far as
25	campaigning. However, I can give some anecdotal

1	information, as far as the incumbent in the
2	campaign process.
3	In 2017 our incumbent did not win. So it
4	does occur. Most of our campaigners have
5	different it's a different way to campaign,
6	period. It's different from what you are used to
7	right now. When you are going out, you do have
8	to develop a base other than your primary base.
9	Most of our candidates, for example, say okay,
10	you work for a candidate X. I appreciate that.
11	I respect it. But would you choose me as your
12	second choice? And so you're building that
13	broader base. And, in fact, that was one
14	strategy that occurred in 2013.
15	I'm not an expert. I can't promote it. But
16	I know there are different strategies. It's just
17	a different education, both for the candidates,
18	as well as the voters.

As far as exhaustion rate, I think you need to understand there's a difference in how elections are being administered in general.

You, from what I understand, have the primary and then the instant run-off. So then Craig's surmising uneducated voters or lack of education, they need that second run-off would be valid. If

1	you don't have a run-off system like in
2	Minnesota, it's the majority wins. Our voters
3	are educated on every level because they know
4	that is the choices that are going to make it to
5	the general or the final vote. So it really
6	depends upon what your voters are used to and how
7	to educate them appropriately. But I do think
8	our voters do understand.

And as far as our diverse populations, it's relative to any election. It does not make a difference whether it's rank-choice or not. So I have to respectfully disagree on that point.

MR. BURNETT: If you don't mind, so I just wanted to follow on what Ms. Clarke was saying, and also Ms. Godsil.

I think we haven't talked about the longer term impacts. So I think a lot of the focus and I think it's right, it's about in a given election what is the dynamic going to be. And I think you got people -- you know, you got the people turning out for their community or their particular. But I think there's also the question of, what does that tell you, regardless the information, what's the revealed choice of voters when somebody has been actively appealing

1	to them, what does it look like then the next
2	time, right. Then so you just have a much better
3	sense of in a community that's been under
4	represented, for example and maybe the mainstream
5	candidates are thinking, ah, well, they don't
6	vote very much. We're not going to what
7	happens when you've got somebody they're really
8	excited about and who do they what does that
9	look like. And I think that has an impact, of
10	course, in the election where that's happening.
11	But it also has an impact on the political
12	parties on the candidates that time around and
13	the coalitions that are going to be based around
14	it.
15	MR. RICHIE: So lots of good questions.
16	I'll just touch base on a few things.
17	The one on incumbency, it's interesting, we
18	run into that question, not surprisingly
19	sometimes when we talk to city councils about
20	this. And we did a deep dive in the Bay area
21	where they've had the most use, 53 offices. And
22	interestingly, it was exactly the same incumbency
23	retention rate pre and before. I think that a

you know, a weak incumbent will have likely more

competition and -- and have to, you know, stand

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1	up and earn their 50 percent. But, you know, it
2	seems like incumbents are good at doing that,
3	so but they at least have to work for it.
4	On race, there's some interesting dynamics.
5	One is, we are seeing and I don't think it's
6	coincidental an increase in people of color
7	winning and the sort of diverse like Minneapolis,
8	St. Paul. First elected black mayor in the most
9	recent election, the Bay area. In the Bay area,
10	we looked at the nature of the electorates from
11	which candidates were winning to. And where the
12	biggest increase was was in white plurality,
13	non-white majority districts. That's where the
14	biggest increase of people of color candidates
15	winning was. Which I assume is tied to a certain
16	kind of coalition building dynamic that
17	rank-choice voting promotes. And it's really
18	the Bay area is like New York, exceptionally
19	diverse, within its diversity. And it's
20	interesting to think about that in relation to
21	some of these conversations about two-step
22	elections. Like Boston had an open seat mayoral
23	race in 2013. The first and second finisher in
24	the run-off were two white Irish candidates.
25	White men. The third through sixth candidates

1	were people of color candidates. And none of
2	them advanced, right. So it was the just two
3	top two finishers. In Minneapolis, if you
4	translate their first choices in 2017 into what
5	could have happened under their old system, where
6	they used to have a primary, the top two
7	finishers were two white men. And then there
8	were several also women, people of color, behind
9	that. One of them was a woman named Nekima Levy
10	Pounds. Who is an interesting woman who had led
11	the Black Lives Matter movement after some of the
12	police shootings that had taken place in
13	Minneapolis. And she has become a big fan of
14	rank-choice voting. In part because she was in
15	the debate. She was in the discussion. She was
16	raising her issues. And felt the other
17	candidates addressed them. And she's a good
18	person to talk to about how how she feels
19	about the system. And then, right, because she
20	wasn't knocked off in some low turnout primary.
21	And what was the last thing I was going to
22	say?
23	Last thing I actually will say. Which is, I
24	think, is just this interesting aspect of
25	engagement and why you might see some exhaustion.

1	Like so one thing to keep in mind for San
2	Francisco or all these cities that we're talking
3	about is their nonpartisan general elections, in
4	a sense. Not probably what you're looking at
5	here, which used to fit in the primaries. Maybe
6	not as stark as like a person of a different
7	party. But just, you know, they just really
8	don't don't connect with their final choices.
9	And that's their option. However, the woman who
10	won, London Breed, or probably has won, London
11	Breed, African-American woman. She's a Democrat.
12	But she did a mailing to republicans in San
13	Francisco, making the case, actually, their
14	opponents said, look, she's reaching out to
15	republicans. How shocking. But, you know, she's
16	trying to get votes in what ended up being a very
17	close election. What I found fascinating is that
18	if you look at the top two finishers, she and
19	I kind of Mark Leno, who is the other top
20	finisher, they were ranked second or third by at
21	least 20 percent, both of them, every other
22	candidate in an eight-candidate field. So they
23	had done their work, or had done their homework.
24	They had done their connections with people. And
25	that's the kind of, I guess, consensus building

1	that you're encouraging. You never achieve it,
2	but you're encouraging it. And that seems to be
3	happening in these elections.
4	MS. CLARKE: Have you look at the influence
5	of money on the elections (inaudible) because

of money on the elections (inaudible) because
that ends up being the influence of money on -on politics.

8 MR. RICHIE: I'll talk briefly and then hand it to Susan.

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It completely does away with it. No. No. Money is still a factor. It is interesting. I would say this. We are seeing less of a connection in some ways of a certainty of a connection. And I think that it does promote a style of campaigning earning those second and third, fourth rankings. And I'll say, by the way, just in that sense of using the word fourth ranking, Santa Fe allowed more than three rankings. And, you know, two out of three people ranked five. Some of the exhaustion that you're seeing in San Francisco, about a third of the ballots this year were people who had ranked three who weren't in the final two. So I think if you allowed, say five rankings, you're more likely to have more votes count. And in Santa Fe

1	96 percent of ballots were counting in the final
2	round. But anyway, Santa Fe's mayor's race, the
3	person who spent the most money won, right, with
4	some that's going to happen. If London Breed
5	wins in San Francisco, she had more money at her
6	disposal. However, you are not seeing in some
7	ways the the direct connection. Because I
8	think earning those second and third rankings
9	seems to be connected well with engagement that
10	is earning respect. And so that Oakland mayor's
11	race in 2010, the candidate who lost outspent
12	everyone by about five times, if you count his
13	independent expenditures. But it's he didn't
14	get out much. He didn't go to the debates. He
15	wouldn't even go the neighborhoods. And that
16	actually sort of, at the end of the day, means
17	you you don't earn that kind of respect. So I
18	think the last thing I'll say is it seems like
19	particularly the independent expenditures are
20	seeing patterns where you're still going to see
21	them, people are going to try to win. They're
22	going to use them, of course. But it doesn't
23	seem like they are as effective as I think they
24	are in, say, a two-person race.

MS. LERNER: So I did want to add a note

1	anecdotally from my colleague in New Mexico, who
2	I talked about the Santa Fe mayor's race. And
3	said what was striking to her is that at least in
4	Santa Fe this is the first time that they used
5	rank-choice voting.

In contrast to earlier mayor's race, the independent expenditures went way, way down because they couldn't figure out who to attack in a rank-choice voting system. So that's only one instance. But I think that that may be very helpful and somewhat relates to what Rob was saying. It — it appears to diminish the impact of independent spending. Which is — I see a huge problem and helps candidates connect more directly with voters. Which is what we in Common Cause want to see.

MR. PERALES: Thank you. We have -- I'm going to give John Siegal the last question because we have gone beyond our expectation in terms of when we would finish up.

John.

MR. SIEGAL: So at the risk of Commission exhaustion, is there like -- is there a threshold point of the number of candidates where this system makes sense? And do you find that it -- I

1	get that it it somehow empowers the voters of
2	candidates who would otherwise be also-rans. We
3	have a long history of people in third and fourth
4	place just dropping off the political map in
5	September. Do you find that in a current so I
6	get that kind of keeps their voters in the mix.
7	But does it encourage more candidates to run? Do
8	you see a more increase in the number of
9	candidates in the field? And is there some
10	number like five, six, seven, eight, that really
11	is needed before it optimally is effective?
12	MR. RICHIE: I'll comment briefly. It might
13	be interesting to hear from Minneapolis. They
14	had 35 candidates for mayor in 2013.
15	MR. SIEGAL: Yeah. And I counted, there are
16	16 here. There were eight in San Francisco.
17	MR. RICHIE: Right.
18	MR. SIEGAL: We tend to have four.
19	MR. RICHIE: Yeah.
20	MR. SIEGAL: Three or four.
21	MR. RICHIE: Well, I'll I'll give you an
22	example. There were governor of California,
23	there were, I don't know, 34 candidates or
24	something for governor in a single choice
25	election I think a lot of it is really and

1	there were eight candidates for for mayor of
2	San Francisco. I will say, by the way, this stat
3	that jumped out to me. There were seven San
4	Francisco voters, they were seven times more
5	likely to invalidate their ballot when voting for
6	governor in a single choice election than for
7	mayor with a rank-choice election. And more
8	likely to skip the race, as well. So I think,
9	you know, people are handling the rank-choice
10	ballot in that measure well in San Francisco.
11	But I think that you know, that's more
12	probably more a question of ballot access rules
13	and things than I think the system. It's really
14	you might maybe see a little up-tic. But I would
15	think in particularly and we're talking about
16	the uses that you're talking about here, I would
17	say probably it's not a connection. I will say
18	you have a three-candidate race, it's a useful
19	instrument if you have more than two candidates
20	because you're allowing the voter to say
21	something about two people rather than one. If
22	you have ten candidates, it becomes even a more
23	useful instrument. And when New York City uses
24	the school boards and they have their their
25	complexities but I think one aspect of it was,

1	there are nine candidates I mean nine seats.
2	A lot of people ran. And, you know, voters
3	actually handled the ballot well enough that the
4	DOJ, you know, denied preclearance when they were
5	trying to trying to change it.
6	MS. WACHLAROWICZ: Yes, we had 35 candidates
7	for mayor in 2013. I think it has to do a lot
8	with the culture and your community environment.
9	First and foremost, our city elections are
LO	nonpartisan. We do have political party
L1	endorsements. However, our each candidate has
12	their political party or principle written. And
L3	in 2013, mayor, for \$20, you could be on the
L4	ballot and convey your political principle. So a
L5	lot of those candidates, it was an opportunity
L6	for them to have that exposure to particular
L7	causes. We subsequently increased our filing fee
L8	to 500, which reduced it to 16. Not to say that
L9	money is the only issue. Individuals who can't
20	afford it, they do have a petition process. So
21	it is still open to anyone interested. But it's
22	a community culture. It's an opportunity to

candidates that run, I wouldn't see it

express. If you typically have four to five

significantly change.

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1	MR. PERALES: The assistant professor will
2	have the last word.
3	MR. BURNETT: Great. I'm sure my students
4	would love that.
5	So I will say, you know, a couple of things
6	just to to give Rob's points, too, about the
7	machine not allowing enough people to rank, to
8	rank as many candidates as they want. In
9	Portland, Maine, there were 15 candidates on the
10	ballot. The exhaustion rate was about 18 percent
11	and they were allowed to rank up to all of 15.
12	So it's not entirely because they weren't allowed
13	to rank.
14	Now, the question about what is, sort of, an
15	optimal number of candidates. That's hard to
16	know. I will sort of give you some general
17	thoughts on it. Which is that the more you ask
18	people to do cognitively at the voting booth, the
19	harder it is for them to figure it out, right.
20	So if you're going to ask them to think about 10,
21	12, 15 candidates, that is a pretty difficult
22	task. And thinking about how to rank 15 anything
23	is actually pretty difficult. Something you
24	might even know pretty well. You know, come up
25	with your 15 favorite movies, for example. You

1	would spend way more time thinking about it than
2	you probably should. So the fewer candidates
3	there are, the easier it becomes.
4	And so for me, once you start to leave that
5	threshold of five or six, I think then you're
6	reaching a part of that area where voters are
7	just they're going to struggle pretty
8	mightily.
9	MR. PERALES: Listen, we have reached
10	Commission exhaustion. But it's been
11	fascinating, interesting, and more importantly, I
12	think we've learned a great deal up here.
13	So thank you very, very much.
14	MS. GODSIL: Motion to adjourn.
15	MR. PERALES: Is there a motion?
16	MS. GODSIL: Motion to adjourn.
17	MR. PERALES: Is there a second?
18	MS. WEISER: Second.
19	MS. CLARKE: Second.
20	MR. PERALES: We are adjourned.
21	(Whereupon, at 4:08 P.M., the above matter
22	concluded.)
23	
24	

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1	CERTIFICATE
2	
3	STATE OF NEW YORK)
4	: SS.: COUNTY OF NASSAU)
5	
6	I, KEVIN HAGHNAZARI, a Notary Public for and
7	within the State of New York, do hereby certify:
8	That the above is a correct transcription of my
9	stenographic notes.
10	I further certify that I am not related to any
11	of the parties to this action by blood or by marriage and
12	that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this
13	matter.
14	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
15	this 16th day of June 2018.
16	
17	Mein Haysmore
18	KEVIN HAGHNAZARI
19	
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