

Public Hearing

CRC Public Hearing

Moderated by Ken Ngai

Tuesday, July 9, 2024

5:10 p.m.

Staten Island University Hospital

475 Seaview Avenue

Staten Island, New York 10305

Reported by: Patricia Venditti

Public Hearing

1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2 List of Attendees:

3 Ken Ngai-Chair

4 Carlo Scissura-Chair (by videoconference)

5 Edward Kiernan-General Counsel

6 Kyle Bragg-Commissioner (by videoconference)

7 Ruben Diaz, Jr.-Commissioner (by videoconference)

8 Dr. Hazel Dukes-Vice-Chair (by videoconference)

9 Lorraine Grillo-Commissioner (by videoconference)

10 Christopher Lynch-Commissioner (by videoconference)

11 Max Rose-Commissioner

12 Jackie Rowe-Adams-Commissioner

13 Stephanie McGraw-Commissioner-(by video conference)

14 Diane Savino-Execturive Director

15 Tom Hicks-Staten Island University Hospital Associate

16 Executive Director

17 James Clinton-Member of the public

18 James Moschella-Detectives Endowment Association

19 Rick Simplicio-Detectives Endowment Association

20 Michael Ryan, Executive Director New York City Board of

21 Elections

22 MR. Iginizo-Deputy Director of Board of Elections

23 Michael Arvanites-Member of the public

24 Michael Trollo-Member of the public

25 George Tormo-Member of the public

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A P P E A R A N C E S:

List of Attendees:

- Salvatore Monforte-Member of the public
- Agnes Van Dina-Member of the public
- Florence Petruzzelli-Member of the public
- Carla Mohan-Member of the public
- John Felci-Member of the public
- Bradley Tusk-Member of the public (by videoconference)
- Andria-Member of the public (by videoconference)
- Liz Andrie-Member of the public (by videoconference)
- Frank Rapacciuolo-Member of the public
- Frank Morano-Member of the public (by videoconference)
- Jasmine Robinson-Member of the public (by videoconference)
- Special Hagan-Member of the public (by videoconference)
- Edward C. Josey-Member of the Public (by videoconference)

1           THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, everybody.  
2 Welcome to the tenth public hearing of New York City  
3 Charter Review Commission. My name is Ken Ngai, I'm the  
4 Secretary of the Commission and I will be serving as Chair  
5 tonight. Our chair, Carlo Scissura is joining us tonight  
6 via Zoom.

7           I would like to recognize the Commissioners in  
8 attendance today. We have Commissioner Max Rose, we have  
9 Commissioner Jackie Rowe-Adams, we have our General Counsel  
10 Edward Kiernan and we also have other Commissioners that  
11 will be joining us virtually. As they're signing in I will  
12 be introducing them.

13           At this brief moment I would like to ask  
14 Commissioners present here to briefly introduce themselves  
15 before we get started.

16           COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: It is evening time;  
17 right? So good evening, everyone. I am Jackie Rowe-Adams  
18 again and I am so glad to see all of you here because it  
19 lets me know that you are concerned about what goes on in  
20 your community and in your City and that's what the  
21 Commission is all about, hearing some of the concerns about  
22 how you feel and what you need to see happen and what we  
23 can help you with. So thank you, thank you, thank you.

24           COMMISSIONER ROSE: Hey everybody, Max Rose.  
25 It's good to see some familiar faces here. Thank you all

1 for your service, I'm looking forward on hearing your  
2 thoughts.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: I'd also like to take this  
4 moment to introduce our Chairman who I know is joining us  
5 via Zoom, Carlo Scissura. Do you want to say a couple of  
6 words?

7 CHAIRMAN SCISSURA: Good evening everybody.  
8 Sorry I couldn't be there in person. We are winding down  
9 on some really really important work and I'm very excited  
10 about what we heard, what we're learning and I'm excited  
11 about the coming weeks.

12 I want to thank again as always our Executive  
13 Director, our General Counsel and to all our fellow  
14 Commissioners. I know it's been a lot of work in a short  
15 period of time and I know that we all appreciate the work  
16 that you are doing. So thank you very much, I look forward  
17 to hearing the testimony this evening.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Chairman.

19 We also have Commissioner Christopher Lynch  
20 joining us virtually. Chris, do you want to say a few  
21 words?

22 COMMISSIONER LYNCH: Good evening Staten  
23 Island, happy to be joining you by Zoom this evening.  
24 Unfortunately I couldn't make it out there today, but I'm  
25 just looking forward to your testimony this evening,

1 listening to see what Staten Islanders have to say and  
2 thank you again. Thank you for coming out and  
3 participating.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you to all the  
5 Commissioners. I would also like to at this time to thank  
6 Dr. Brahim Ardolic, the Executive Director of Staten Island  
7 University Hospital for hosting us today and I would also  
8 like to thank Tim Hicks of the Staten Island University  
9 Hospital joining us and would love for you to say a few  
10 word for us.

11 Thank you, Tim.

12 MR. HICKS: Thank you. Tim Hicks. I'm  
13 Associate Executive Director here at Staten Island  
14 University Hospital, so welcome to today's New York City  
15 Charter Commission.

16 This is a forum to review the Constitution of  
17 the City of New York and develop further valid questions of  
18 the voters on Election Day in November. This is the 13th  
19 of the 15 public hearings across all five boroughs and the  
20 third to be hosted here on Staten Island.

21 I would also like to thank Mayor Eric Adams and  
22 State Senator Diane Savino for choosing Staten Island  
23 University Hospital to host todays Charter Commission. I  
24 would also like to welcome James Clinton from Richmond  
25 County District's Attorney Office and a representative from

1 (in audible) office as well.

2 Staten Island University Hospital is a proud  
3 community partner and we are grateful to be part of this  
4 Democratic process.

5 At this time I'd like to turn this back to Ken  
6 Ngai who is Chair for this forum, who is also a native  
7 Staten Islander from Rosebank and former New York City  
8 police detective.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Tim, I  
10 appreciate that.

11 So we are here today to continue the Charter  
12 Revision Commission citywide listening tour. We have  
13 traveled to all five boroughs, most of them multiple times  
14 so far to hear suggestions from members of the public and  
15 experts on how we can change our City Charter to improve  
16 the lives of all New Yorkers.

17 Our Charter, which is like the Constitution for  
18 the city impacts our daily lives in many ways from public  
19 safety to sanitation and everything in between. That is  
20 why it's so important to hear from members of the public,  
21 elected officials, representatives of the city agencies and  
22 to consider what recommendations to present to the voters  
23 at the general election on November 5th.

24 I encourage everyone here who has not already  
25 done so to look please look at the Commissioner's

1 preliminary report and that includes a summary of what we  
2 have heard over the last month and staff recommendations.

3 We look forward to hearing from everyone here  
4 tonight and will be considering new suggestions until our  
5 final public hearing on July 22nd. Future hearing dates  
6 are on our website which is [www.newyorkcity.gov/charter](http://www.newyorkcity.gov/charter) and  
7 the comments may be submitted in writing to  
8 [Charterinfo@citycharter.New York City.gov](mailto:Charterinfo@citycharter.New York City.gov) between now and  
9 5:00 p.m. on July 12th.

10 Tonight we are going to begin by focusing on  
11 public safety and we will be hearing from James Clinton  
12 from the District Attorney's office of Michael McMahon's  
13 office. James Clinton.

14 MR. CLINTON: Thank you, Commissioner. I'll be  
15 providing testimony on behalf of the District Attorney  
16 Michael McMahon.

17 Good evening. This is a honor and pleasure to  
18 appear before this body today and thank you to Executive  
19 Director Diane Savino, the members of the New York City  
20 Charter Revision Commission and Mayor Eric Adams for  
21 organizing tonight's incredibly critical hearing for  
22 actively listening to the voices of hard working Staten  
23 Islanders and proceeding to approve the day-to-day  
24 functions of city government and the quality of life for  
25 all New Yorkers.



1           As Staten Island University Hospital Chief Law  
2       Enforcement Officer I remain deeply concerned that the  
3       public safety chapter facing all five boroughs are not  
4       being address with the seriousness and deliberative  
5       transparent process as necessary to restore both public  
6       safety, trust and peace of mind to all New Yorkers.

7           I'm incredibly proud of all of work we have  
8       done in my office together with our partners with the NYPD,  
9       neighboring law enforcement agencies and those who call our  
10      borough home. Unfortunately, crimes and issues with the  
11      public safety continue to dominate the concerns and mindset  
12      of every day New Yorkers who unequivocally tell us they do  
13      not feel safe in our city and do not feel that our  
14      legislative leaders are doing enough to address their very  
15      real concerns.

16          Mayor Adams said time and time again public  
17      safety is the pre-requisite for prosperity. I agree with  
18      that sentiment as I know many of you do as well, which is  
19      why this task before us is so personal.

20          It's my understanding that Mayor Adams has  
21      asked this Commission to focus on how New York City's  
22      Charter can better contribute to public safety by  
23      increasing civic engagement, community input and  
24      transparency when legislation is composed that would impact  
25      law enforcement and matters of public safety. I

1 wholeheartedly support and endorse these goals and look  
2 forward to learning of the proposal that you put forward to  
3 accomplish them in the months ahead.

4 As someone who has spent many decades of my  
5 life in public service, working in our legislative bodies  
6 first as a Council to the New York State Assembly, the New  
7 York City Council and then as an elected council member  
8 myself for several terms and as a member of Congress as  
9 well, I have a unique lens through which I view the  
10 legislative landscape that has taken hold of New York.  
11 This lens has been further sharpened after serving in the  
12 past eight and a half years as Staten Island District  
13 Attorney. Yet too often over the past several years, the  
14 demands are more transparent, equitable criminal justice  
15 system goals I and the men and women of my office  
16 wholeheartedly support, time and time again let the  
17 policies scraped, drafted and enacted without any advice,  
18 consent and consultation from those of us in law  
19 enforcement who knows these issues best. That needs to  
20 change.

21 Devaluation and discontinuation of a  
22 meaningful legislation process that is directly led to a  
23 seat change of rushed, ill conceived and ill planned  
24 criminal justice policies that have left police and  
25 prosecutor alike struggling to keep up and preserve public

1 safety. There is an inherent importance in listening to  
2 stakeholders from all perspectives and ensuring a  
3 deliberative, transparent and informed legislative process  
4 that includes input from experts from all sides on the  
5 policy and practical implication of the legislation, input  
6 from the impacted agencies and input from the public, input  
7 from fiscal agencies and watch dogs and honed and tested  
8 with rigorous debate and hearing on the legislative floor  
9 and in the free medium.

10 The public has had enough of legislation that  
11 is easily drafted by special interest and advocates.  
12 They're only behind close doors with the like minded  
13 legislators without real hearings or substantive presence  
14 by the public and press without independent budget analysis  
15 or the proper fiscal backing passed in the dead of night  
16 without any real understanding or debate by uniformed  
17 legislature.

18 We have seen so many developments in recent  
19 years and with so much at stake after this (in audible).  
20 When the stakes are so high as they are when it comes to  
21 public safety, this onslaught led us to displace public  
22 distrust. Perpetual fear that our government is unable to  
23 protect New Yorkers.

24 We propose that this Commission recommend an  
25 amendment to the Charter that ensures a more Democratic

1 transparent, fiscally sound and deliberative legislative  
2 process when it comes to issues of the public safety and  
3 therefore suggest that a Charter amendment be proposed that  
4 mandates any initiative that affects, directs or mandates  
5 practices of the New York City Police Department,  
6 Corrections, Probation, District Attorney's offices or  
7 related law enforcement agencies can all be enacted in the  
8 same manner that a Charter amendment be effectuated.

9 I thank you for the opportunity to submit  
10 testimony here tonight and I look forward to working with  
11 this body and its members to make Staten Island and indeed  
12 all of New York City a safer and more just place for all.  
13 Thank you.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, James Clinton.

15 Do any Commissioners have any questions or  
16 comments?

17 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: I want to thank you  
18 for that testimony. So my comment is you just keep up the  
19 good work in the DA's office and it's so important that we  
20 all, we all pay attention to public safety because we have  
21 to let our voices to continue to be heard. So just keep  
22 working with the mayor with the police department and I  
23 heard you mention the fire and all the city agencies and  
24 always know what is going on in your community. Very, very  
25 important. So I thank you for that.

1 MR. CLINTON: Thank you, Commissioner

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

3 Our Commissioner Chris Lynch also has a  
4 question and he is joining us on Zoom.

5 COMMISSIONER LYNCH: Good evening. Thank you  
6 again for coming out to testify this evening. I just have  
7 a question in regard to you had mentioned about public  
8 distresses that are happening or that is going on since  
9 some of these bills have been passed. From your office and  
10 through your lens, what are some of these distresses that  
11 you have seen that have been overwhelming in Staten Island  
12 that you have seen as a result of some of those bills.

13 MR. CLINTON: Sure, so I think in terms of the  
14 daily stresses Staten Islanders face when it comes to the  
15 public safety, it's, you know, rapid recidivism, adolescent  
16 crime. Last year we saw a 40 percent increase in felony  
17 juvenile arrests on Staten Island, that should be  
18 concerning to everybody in this room. I think everybody  
19 understands the impact that recidivism has had on our  
20 community. When we go shopping for basic household items  
21 and everything is locked behind key, right, we have to buzz  
22 to get some toothpaste. These are -- our quality of life  
23 has been diminished as a result of public safety threats we  
24 face, so it's really a cascading snowball if we don't first  
25 tackle public safety.

1 COMMISSIONER LYNCH: Thank you.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. James.

3 I want to take this moment also to recognize  
4 Commissioner Ruben Diaz, he is also joining us on Zoom.  
5 Ruben, if you have any words for our Commission today?

6 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Not at the moment. I'll  
7 just weight to see if I have any questions from the people  
8 that testify. I want to hear from the community, but good  
9 evening all.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Ruben.

11 So our next speaker is James Moschella from the  
12 Detectives' Endowment Association.

13 MR. MOSCHELLA: I would also like to address  
14 that Rick Simplicio vice-president of the DEA is also  
15 joining.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

17 MR. MOSHCELLA: Good evening, Mr. Chairman, Mr.  
18 Acting Chairman and Mr. Chairman who is on Zoom and  
19 distinguished Commissioners. As the Chairman said my name  
20 is James Moschella and I have the privilege of serving as  
21 General Counsel to the New York City Police Department  
22 Detectives' Endowment Association which is the union that  
23 represents the interest of some 18,000 active and retired  
24 New York City police officers serving in the rank of  
25 detective.

1           So on behalf of the DEA as we call it and it's  
2 members, we thank you for the opportunity to address the  
3 Commission this evening during your tour of New York City.  
4 I'm joined today by the vice-president of the Detectives'  
5 Endowment Association, Detective 1st Grade Richard  
6 Simplicio, 29-year Veteran of the New York City Police  
7 Department and life long leader and city resident as well  
8 as Detective 1st Grade Gregory Silverman joining us from  
9 the audience, 34-year veteran of the police department as  
10 well as a life long resident of this borough, the borough  
11 of Richmond.

12           The rank of detective is a special rank within  
13 the New York City Police Department. I don't think I need  
14 to say that to you, Commissioner. It is -- it serves the  
15 citizens of New York City in really some of the most  
16 diverse capacities you can imagine including patrol,  
17 detective squads, Emergency Services Unit, terrorism task  
18 forces, narcotics divisions, vice divisions, human  
19 trafficking divisions and the Special Victims Squad to name  
20 just a few of the specialized assignments that the 5,400  
21 active detectives perform every day in the City.

22           I submit that no other rank impacts the lives of  
23 every day New Yorkers and preserves public safety as much  
24 as the rank of New York City detective and so it is with  
25 that in mind that we address the Commission here tonight

1 because public safety in our mind is one of the most  
2 important, if not the most important issue impacting the  
3 City of New York. So we applaud the Commission for  
4 particularly focusing on public safety because our  
5 detectives risk their lives each and every day to preserve  
6 public safety here in the city and when people violate that  
7 public safety they find the people that perpetrate those  
8 crimes and bring peace and closure to the families who are  
9 victims by that.

10 So we are here to say tonight that the DEA  
11 unequivocally supports the proposed amendments put forth  
12 before the Commission and contained in the Commission  
13 preliminary report relating to the passage of public safety  
14 legislation by the City Council. Specifically their must  
15 be a period of additional public review and input prior to  
16 a vote by the City Council on any public safety related  
17 bill.

18 Far too often, from our perspective,  
19 legislation is passed such as what we submit was the ill  
20 conceived and poorly drafted How Many Stops Act which  
21 became law on July 1st of this year. Far too often this  
22 legislation is passed which greatly impacts public safety  
23 in the city with limited opportunities for vital input by  
24 those who the legislation impacts the most. But we are  
25 here to echo the concerns of District Attorney McMahon and



1 our sisters and brothers in the New York City Police  
2 Department and the Department of Corrections and other  
3 public safety agencies who previously testified before the  
4 Commission just several weeks ago about the dire need for  
5 input by experts, affected agencies and critical  
6 stakeholders such as New York City detectives, prior to the  
7 passage of public safety related legislation.

8 Having that additional time and obtaining that  
9 additional input and feedback is not only common sense, but  
10 it will strengthen public safety in our city, a goal I  
11 believe we all share. Having that additional time and  
12 obtaining that additional input can prevent knee jerk  
13 reactions and poorly drafted legislation which only makes  
14 our officer's jobs infinitely more difficult and thus  
15 effectively decreases public safety in our city.

16 The DEA is also here this evening to draw the  
17 Commission's attention to another issue impacting public  
18 safety in our city and that is an over zealous and  
19 aggressive Civilian Complaint Review Board, the CCRB. As  
20 we know, Chapter 18 Section 4040 of the New York City  
21 Charter which established the CCRB mandates that  
22 investigations of civilian complaints would be conducted  
23 fairly and independently and in a manner in which the  
24 public and the police department have confidence.

25 The CCRB has failed in that mandate.

1 Detectives do not have any confidence in CCRB's ability to  
2 be fair or impartial. We respectfully submit to this  
3 Commission that the CCRB is an agency that has taken recent  
4 amendments to the New York City Charter and created an  
5 agency hostile and abusive to members of the NYPD and we  
6 see that hostility and that abusiveness towards members  
7 from the very second they walk in the door at CCRB.

8           You know, the other day I was down  
9 representing at the Civil Complaint Review Board and they  
10 were being interrogated at length for what was a very basic  
11 civilian police encounter. We were in the room for about  
12 two and a half hours while the detective was listening and  
13 answering questions to that and as I was leaving at about  
14 12:30, we had gotten there at about 8:30 in the morning,  
15 and as I'm walking out I noticed there were still at least  
16 18 or 19 police officers who were still waiting in that  
17 waiting room from early that morning to be interviewed in  
18 regards to that and it just strikes me as a waste of  
19 manpower in the way that they bring these officers down on  
20 complaints that really could be screened at a very early  
21 stage and determined to be, you know, exonerated or notable  
22 to go forward to an investigation and we believe that the  
23 DEA recognizes, we recognize the need for oversight over  
24 the actions of police officers. The DEA would never  
25 suggest that the CCRB does not have a valuable role in the

1 checks and balances of our government.

2 No agency should have unbridled discretion in  
3 what they do, but yet CCRB has unchecked the discretion.  
4 Who is watching them? It's the unchecked manner and the  
5 aggressive manner in which they are pursuing our officers  
6 and in which they operate that is alarming to the DEA and  
7 it's something that we would like to bring to the  
8 Commission's attention.

9 We submit that the CCRB has gone way past what  
10 their Charter mandate originally was and you would be  
11 surprised to sit in on some of these interviews and some of  
12 these investigations are nothing more than knit-picking  
13 each and every word that an officer says during an  
14 encounter. A highly charged, a highly stressful encounter  
15 for which the officer is exonerated in the force that was  
16 used or the manner in which they stopped the individual or  
17 the police actions that they were taken, but yet CCRB  
18 substantiates a discourteous remark against them or because  
19 they failed to provide a business card at the end of the  
20 encounter and it brings charges and specifications against  
21 them that are now requiring a, you know, months long, if  
22 not year long process of adjudicating those charges.

23 So we truly believe that neither the public,  
24 the mayor or the Charter Commission know the extent of the  
25 issues within CCRB. For example, we just want to give you

1 one or two examples and not take up too much more of the  
2 Commission's time, but as you might know, final  
3 dispositions of CCRB complaints have to be by The Board,  
4 right, and the way they structure it is a three board  
5 member panel ultimately votes on the final disposition in  
6 that case. Well, prior to getting The Board, an  
7 investigator investigates a complaint and comes to a  
8 recommendation and that recommendation goes to The Board  
9 and The Board is supposed to independently evaluate that  
10 case and then make their own decision. But does anyone  
11 know how those votes are made by The Board? Does anyone  
12 know the process by which these votes by The Board panel  
13 members are made? The short answer is no. We believe that  
14 board members are ill prepared. They spend only a fraction  
15 of the time necessary to adequately evaluate these matters,  
16 matters which are vitally important to officers and if  
17 board members are not spending the time required to examine  
18 these cases and essentially what they're doing is just  
19 rubber stamping the conclusion of investigator who often  
20 times are right out of college, they're young, there  
21 inexperienced, unqualified and in many cases down right  
22 hostile to the idea of what New York City police officers  
23 do each and every day.

24 And although we have been requesting for years  
25 the actual board votes, we consistently have been denied

1 the access to how The Board votes on these cases. Just  
2 recently we have gotten, the last eight months, we have  
3 been given access to the last eight months of board votes  
4 on cases and you'd be surprised to know, we are not  
5 surprised, but it's shocking to know when an investigator  
6 recommends substantiation of allegations against an  
7 officer, some board members approve that substantiation 100  
8 percent of the time without fail. They never disagreed  
9 with the investigator's conclusions substantiating that  
10 case.

11 So not surprisingly, it is The Board members  
12 appointed by the New York City Council and the public  
13 advocate that exhibit this 100 approval rate of  
14 substantiations and I don't think anyone really knows that  
15 that's happening.

16 Now the police Commissioner is entitled to only  
17 three appointees on The Board. So only one police  
18 Commissioner appointee sits on any one panel deciding a  
19 case and it's not as if the police Commissioner appointee  
20 disagrees 100 percent of the time, as a matter of fact  
21 their approval rates of the substantiation run anywhere  
22 between 50 and 85 percent. So they are paying attention to  
23 the cases and when an officer does step over the line, they  
24 will recommend that the case be substantiated, but yet the  
25 City Council and public advocate employees 100 percent of

1 the time approve substantiated cases. How is that  
2 possible? How is that possible if there is actually, if  
3 they are actually adequately reviewing these cases or if  
4 they're not completely biased against the police to begin  
5 with. There is simply no way that would happen if they had  
6 the adequate time and did not have a pre-disposition to  
7 substantiate these cases.

8 So we believe there are important amendments to  
9 be considered to the Charter to Section 440 of Title 18A  
10 that would know that these votes are transparent, so that  
11 when members of The Board are voting they know that that's  
12 going to be subject to scrutiny by someone who is  
13 overseeing what they're doing, it's not a completely  
14 unchecked process.

15 So for example, measures of transparency could  
16 be that where board member votes are actually disclosed to  
17 the public and that could be either in the CCRB semi annual  
18 or annual reports. It can be on the CCRB website much  
19 like, and I'm going to get into that in just one second,  
20 much like they put our officers CCRB history on the their  
21 public website for everyone to see. The way The Board  
22 votes on these cases should be on the public website as  
23 well. There should be rules or amendments that expand  
24 adding at least one appointee that the police Commissioner  
25 gets to appoint to The Board to ensure a balanced and full

1 and fair review of these cases and these recommendations by  
2 the investigators and there should be rules establishing  
3 certain guidelines and measures and standards of full  
4 review because I submit to you again, we don't have access  
5 to what they're doing and their deliberative process, but  
6 there is no way in which three Commissioners, excuse me,  
7 three board members can review 100 of cases in one sitting  
8 and actually have the knowledge and the intelligence and  
9 the ability to independently, right, what does the Charter  
10 say, "fairly, independently and impartially look and  
11 analyze these cases." So we submit to you that amendments  
12 to the Charter would go along way to The Board voting  
13 process. And that is an important thing that this  
14 Commission could consider.

15 I also just as a side to that, this is an issue  
16 of the utmost importance to police officers and that is the  
17 abusive way that the CCRB website is used, published the  
18 CCRB history of our members. I don't think anyone realizes  
19 the extent to which the public display and the public  
20 parading of officer's CCRB histories are actually used  
21 against our officers and it is one of the biggest issues.

22 If you poll the 30,000 plus members of New York  
23 City Police Department, I guarantee you they will express  
24 frustration and dismay at how the website is being used.  
25 The CCRB puts every single allegation, even allegations

1 that are exonerated, unsubstantiated or even if they were  
2 substantiated where the member went to trial and was found  
3 not guilty at the trial of that allegation. That  
4 allegation remains on the CCRB website forever, never to  
5 come off and there is no process or procedure or due  
6 process.

7 Again, even if they go to trial and win, that  
8 stays on the public website for all to see. And I can't  
9 tell you how many officers have come to me that in  
10 retirement went to look for jobs, they have been denied job  
11 opportunities because of things that are contained on that  
12 website. I can tell you that officers see it as a big  
13 problem because it follows them throughout their career on  
14 the NYPD. It stops promotional and transfer opportunities  
15 and it inhibits them even post NYPD.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: James, let me interrupt you for  
17 a second. Would you say that the process of the CCRB  
18 thereby would curtail proactive policing that could hinder  
19 public safety?

20 MR. MOSCHELLA: Commissioner, I think that's  
21 exactly the case. I think, and certainly there is a public  
22 parading. You know, going down to CCRB, everyone has to  
23 answer for that job, everyone has to answer for action they  
24 take on their job. Police officers understand that. The  
25 vast majority of New York City police officers understand



1 that, you know, if they're involved in a situation and  
2 someone is injured or somebody feels they weren't treated  
3 fairly, they have to answer questions about that, but from  
4 the very moment they get called down to CCRB that they're  
5 questioned for hours by a young investigator, inexperienced  
6 investigator who has no knowledge of what it's like to be a  
7 police officer and the stresses and the dangers that they  
8 face on the street all the way through the end of the case  
9 when this disposition is parading on the public website,  
10 it disincentives officers from wanting to engage with  
11 civilians and ultimately that adversely impacts safety in  
12 the city.

13 The representative of the District Attorney's  
14 office talked about some of the stress Staten Islanders are  
15 going through. You know, to us there is a lack of respect  
16 for law and order that is going on in the city. I think we  
17 all see it. At times it's down right lawlessness that is  
18 happening and we see it in the little things. People  
19 double parking their cars anywhere they want to. People  
20 taking things from shelves without fear of any  
21 repercussions.

22 Police officers don't want to engage with  
23 members of the public because they know as soon as that  
24 happens, a complaint is filed, they lose -- their man  
25 powers is lost, they get dragged through the mill down at

1 CCRB unjustifiably. And again, we are so far from what the  
2 CCRB was intended to do. If an officer uses force and  
3 someone is injured and there is a significant, you know,  
4 incident, of course, they are going to have to answer to  
5 CCRB for that.

6 The knit-picking of each and every encounter  
7 that an officer has, it disincentives them from wanting to  
8 engage with people. When you disengage from the public,  
9 that's when people feel embolded, that's when the criminal  
10 element feels embolded and that's what we found exhibiting  
11 in the city.

12 New York City police officers will always do  
13 their job. Detectives will always do their job. They  
14 don't shy away from a difficult job, but the way the system  
15 is set up now, it's in complete disincentive.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: I want to thank you very much  
17 for your testimony in front of this Commission today and I  
18 think some of the points that you brought out does warrant  
19 a deeper look into CCRB.

20 With that being said, any Commissioners have  
21 any comments, questions?

22 COMMISSIONER ROSE: Thank you for your service.

23 MR. MOSCHELLA: Thank you, Commissioner.

24 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: Yes, thank you. You  
25 said a lot. You said a lot and --

1 MR. MOSCHELLA: I have a little more to say.

2 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: You said a lot, a lot  
3 of good stuff and serious stuff, but then some things that  
4 we don't know and not only the Commission, but people need  
5 to know. So what I'm asking, because you touched on when  
6 you talked about the appointment of the CCRB, are you  
7 saying to the Commission that you would like to see that  
8 that's one of the things that you would like to see change,  
9 how they appoint people? And then you touched on, it  
10 sounded like harassment of the police, CCRB and nobody is  
11 watching them. Are you saying that the Commission needs to  
12 look at who is monitoring the CCRB? So it's some things  
13 you said --

14 MR. MOSCHELLA: Exactly. I think first of all  
15 with respect to monitoring, that is a basic question, who  
16 is watching the watchers, right? Who is the oversight for  
17 them? You know, the police department has no less than ten  
18 agencies that now look at everything that they do; the  
19 CCRB, the District Attorney's office, the U.S. Attorney's  
20 Office, the Department of Investigations, The Inspector  
21 General's Office. The list goes on and on. The Attorney  
22 General has their own office of Special Investigation. The  
23 list goes on and on.

24 Is there an inspector general for the CCRB? I  
25 don't think so. Is there any agency that oversees what

1     they do? I don't think so.

2                   COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: So this is what  
3     you're asking for the Commission to look at to see, but I  
4     just want to say I hear you because I spoke to 615 new  
5     recruits this morning at the police academy and some of  
6     what you said, not only on the CCRB, was about public  
7     safety period and, you know, be careful how in the  
8     community the things that you do and the things have  
9     changed, you know. So I appreciate what you said and we  
10    hear you. So much stuff, so I guess we got to work on  
11    something.

12                   So once again, thank you and I feel that you  
13    all are doing great work. Is everything perfect, no, but  
14    we going to get it fixed together.

15                   MR. MOSCHELLA: Thank you, ma'am.

16                   THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker will be Michael  
17    Ryan, Executive Director of the New York City Board of Ed.

18                   MR. RYAN: Board of Elections.

19                   THE CHAIRMAN: Board of Elections, I stand  
20    corrected.

21                   MR. RYAN: We also we have Deputy Director  
22    Ignizio.

23                   THE CHAIRMAN: We also recognize Deputy  
24    Director Ignizio

25                   MR. RYAN: Good evening. My name is Michael

1 Ryan and I'm the Executive Director of The Board of  
2 Elections in the City of New York. Thank you for giving  
3 The Board the opportunity to offer some testimony.

4 I understand that there will not be a  
5 recommendation coming out specifically being related to  
6 elections, however I've had conversations with the  
7 executive director and it was agreed that it would be a  
8 good idea for the City Board to offer some insight into  
9 what's been going on with elections for the last several  
10 years.

11 It might seem arbitrary, but we picked a date  
12 going back to 2019, it's not as arbitrary as it seems.  
13 There was a legislative turnover if you will in 2019 that  
14 led to quite a number of legislative changes that directly  
15 affects elections in the city from the state level and in  
16 the City of New York.

17 I'm sure those of you that vote in municipal  
18 elections have voted with ranked choice voting going back  
19 to the 2021 primary elections in June which was also a big  
20 change.

21 We do not have prepared testimony for this  
22 evening, but we are here to offer some comments. I would  
23 like to add, though we had a discussion, I answer to a  
24 board of ten Commissioner and it was understood that there  
25 would be no question and answer back and forth which is the

1 circumstances under which I received approval from The  
2 Board of Commissioners to attend. Had I known there might  
3 be, I would have sought different approval, but I did not.

4 In any event, what I'm holding here is a  
5 printout of the legislative changes that went back from  
6 2019 to 2023 and there were 156 separate items of  
7 legislation over that four-year period that directly  
8 affected elections, some of that is housekeeping if you  
9 will regarding how elections are conducted, but the things  
10 that you would see as a voter are some of the things that I  
11 would like to touch on.

12 First, in 2019 which was a big year we had  
13 early voting that was established for the first time which  
14 is required for nine days starting with the first Saturday  
15 before the election, 11 days before the election for all  
16 contents, so that's general election, primaries and special  
17 elections despite the fact there is a compressed time frame  
18 for the conducting of special elections, so we still to do  
19 the nine days of early voting.

20 The good thing that also came along with early  
21 voting though was the permission to use electronic polls.  
22 For those of you that go to vote and vote regularly, I'm  
23 sure that you're as pleased with that advancement as we are  
24 and on the front end much more user friendly for the voters  
25 and on the back end also allows us to establish a history

1 in a much more seamless and error free way than we had in  
2 the past.

3 You also -- there has also been changes to the  
4 absentee ballot process and more recently changes regarding  
5 early mail ballots. In other words, you can request an  
6 early mail ballot separate and apart from absentee ballot,  
7 they function the same, but you can request such a ballot  
8 for almost basically any reason, you want to vote early and  
9 get your ballot out of the way.

10 The thing that voters need to understand with  
11 respect to that however are, if you request an absentee  
12 ballot, now the only way the vote is valid on Election Day  
13 is by affidavit ballot. You used to be able to request an  
14 absentee ballot and then go to the poll site and vote and  
15 if you voted at the poll site your absentee ballot would be  
16 voided. That is no longer permissible. If you request an  
17 absentee or early mail ballot, you will not be able to vote  
18 at a poll site on the voting machine. You can still cast  
19 an affidavit ballot.

20 There are another 13 or 16 or so additional  
21 changes to the elections process in 2024. I think the  
22 biggest one though of all of them is the John Lewis Voter  
23 Right Acts that was passed and went into effect for 2023.  
24 This document that I'm holding are the 26 pages of guidance  
25 given by the Attorney General's Office with respect to the

1 John Lewis Voter Rights Act. I didn't bring it simply as a  
2 prop, I brought it also to provide information that the  
3 voting process is complex and changes to the voting process  
4 are complex and the Attorney General's Office right now is  
5 dealing with the complexity of elections and the complexity  
6 of the Attorney General's office new responsibilities with  
7 respect to elections and they're working diligently with  
8 state and local elections officials to make sure that not  
9 only does the John Lewis Voter Rights Act live up to its  
10 spirit, but lives up to a need and that is still a work in  
11 progress.

12 Coming up in 2025 we have a second round of  
13 ranked choice voting for a second time in the history of  
14 New York, that's another level of complexity that we have  
15 to deal with at the city board. I vote for all of that,  
16 for the simple proposition that a lot of changes have  
17 already been made with respect to the elections process  
18 over the last several years and I think it would be  
19 understandable and advisable for this Commission to take  
20 the position that it did which is, you know, to defer down  
21 the road a little bit any changes we made to the elections  
22 process.

23 We have a lot on our plate both at the city  
24 and state level and some of these new things are taking  
25 route. We are certainly here to facilitate all of those



1 new changes. We are what they call a ministerially agency,  
2 so we don't necessarily advocate publically for legislative  
3 change, we certainly advocate and work diligently for the  
4 implementation of that change when the duly elected  
5 officials implement such.

6 Mr. Ignizio, do you have anything you want to add?

7 MR. IGNIZIO: No.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

9 MR. RYAN: Thank you.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Anyone have questions?

11 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: No, he spelled it  
12 out.

13 MR. RYAN: Thank you very much for your time  
14 and your hard work that you all are doing as well.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker will be Michael  
16 Arvanites. I hope I'm saying that correctly.

17 MR. ARVANITES: Very good, must be Greek.

18 Hello, how are you. Michael Arvanites on  
19 behalf of the Councilwoman Kamillah Hanks. I just wanted  
20 to say members of the Charter Commission, especially my  
21 former boss Diane Savino, hello, it's always great to see  
22 all of you. We have the impasse from Kamillah Hanks to  
23 present the changes she would like to see in (in audible)  
24 ballot.

25 First and most prominently is non-profit

1 funding issues, Chapter 5, Section 92 and Chapter 10  
2 Section 225. I believe the controllers already testified  
3 on this issue, it's intangible and unacceptable to expect  
4 non-profits to provide essential services and programming  
5 including payroll without timely payment.

6 While we demand these services to be  
7 delivered on time consistently throughout the year starting  
8 from July 1st of any fiscal year we often fail to pay these  
9 non-profit properly, often paying them in April, May or  
10 June of the following year. This leads them to incur  
11 out-of-pocket expenses, make poor financial decisions and  
12 we appreciate it if this situation didn't continue.

13 Secondly, revenue streams for Commissioners,  
14 you might be aware of recent succession of this in this  
15 borough, what we would like to see is a little bit more  
16 local control. Borough Commissioner has some sort of  
17 revenue stream that they can dedicate towards local  
18 projects that don't rise to the citywide level. This would  
19 be under Chapter 14 Section 374 franchising and concessions

20 For example, the Department of Environmental  
21 Protection has four facilities on Staten Island, they're  
22 all located in commercial or industrial zones. They can  
23 easily erect a billboard in a C4 zone and use those for  
24 advocating some revenue and taking money out of your pocket  
25 and my pocket for increase (in audible).

1           These revenues, dedicated revenue issues Borough  
2       Commissions could benefit for prioritized local projects,  
3       give you an example, Department of Parks and Recreation  
4       obtaining greater revenue from locally controlled  
5       concessions which they would be able to keep to improve our  
6       parks concessions. If you walk down the block there is the  
7       promenade and the boardwalk and we have empty Park's  
8       building because there is no concessions to be utilized  
9       because that money just goes back to the general fund, it  
10      doesn't go back specifically to Parks Department.

11           The Department of Transportation can generate  
12      revenue from speed and red light cameras for their actual  
13      -- to improve the actual road scape for pedestrians,  
14      bicyclists and drivers making it a safer road. The  
15      Department of Environmental Protection could, as I said,  
16      generate revenue by advertising at their facilities and the  
17      Department of Sanitation for instance collects hundreds of  
18      thousand of dollars in illegal dumping fines which again go  
19      to the general fund instead of the Sanitation Department  
20      allowed to prioritize local cleanups. This would provide  
21      each Borough Commissioner with the major Borough  
22      Commissioners with the dedicating funding stream for them  
23      to use at their discretion for borough-based work projects  
24      that are extremely important to the borough, but do not  
25      rise to the city level of New York such as the North Shore

1 Rail cleanup or the Allison Pond dredging that we are  
2 currently seeking.

3 And then two more points, modernizing  
4 documentation for city services. All documentation for  
5 city services should be allowed to be submitted  
6 electronically with the E-signatures for forms. We all do  
7 this in basically every other transaction that we have  
8 throughout the day. I recently sold my house, it was done  
9 on electronic signatures. This will create a database for  
10 any time that you interact with the city agency there is no  
11 need to obtain or keep original documents the agency would  
12 keep the records electronically any way.

13 And finally steps in the Office of Disaster  
14 Assistance. We recently introduced (in audible) 964, it's  
15 a bill that creates disaster assistance centers. OEM does  
16 big stuff. They prevent the Office of Emergency  
17 Management, just prepared people for major disasters,  
18 Hurricane Sandy of course comes to mind as we sit here in  
19 Ocean Breeze. This neighborhood was decimated by that, but  
20 the small fires, gas explosions, building collapses, there  
21 is no real mechanism to assist people that will have gone  
22 through that.

23 This could be a big disaster to a single family  
24 as Sandy was to thousands of Staten Islanders, South  
25 Brooklyn-ites and South Queens residents. So we, Office of

1 the Emergency Management, created new offices for disaster  
2 assistance to help New Yorkers who are not only with major  
3 weather events, but also the small disasters like fires and  
4 building collapse, housing recovery to new disaster  
5 assistance center which will allow OEM to facilitate those  
6 affected by these disasters both large and small from  
7 hurricanes to gas explosions and home fires and they often  
8 receive this direct assistance from the city, however, the  
9 affected families were devastated by that event.

10 And other than that, this just what (in audible)  
11 and testify to today.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
13 testimony today. Appreciate it.

14 Our next speaker would be Michael Trollo from  
15 the Concerned Citizens of Westerleigh Civic Association.  
16 Michael.

17 MR. TROLLO: Good evening. I'll preamble a  
18 little of what I'm here to add. My points are more general  
19 and go across the line of all the amendments that are  
20 proposed currently. The challenge being I support a lot of  
21 what was said tonight in terms of public safety and so on,  
22 but their has to be a mechanism in which the communities  
23 are more involved. Issues having to do with public safety,  
24 having to do with zoning. Unfortunately right now the most  
25 of the City Council are an entity under to themselves and

1     they don't necessarily reflect the wishes or tenor of the  
2     community their supposed to represent. There has got to be  
3     a means by which more of what is going on, things have to  
4     do with zoning, things like have to be brought for the  
5     public for votes, not just decisions made only by the City  
6     Council. Same thing with the issue as you mentioned with  
7     the CCRB, there is a lot that goes on with that group, I do  
8     not (in audible) that needs to be addressed. There is far  
9     too much in the New York right now that is being handled by  
10    independent (in audible) who run agencies. A lot of  
11    problems of having, currently having to do with migrant  
12    situations, crime situations all because we are allowing  
13    individuals to make decisions on behalf of the communities  
14    that they don't properly represent. That's all I really  
15    have to say.

16               THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much Michael for  
17    your testimony.

18               Our next speaker is George Tormo, Staten Island  
19    Strong.

20               MR. TORMO: (In audible.)

21               THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Tormo, please speak directly  
22    into the mic.

23               MR. TORMO: Yeah, this is going to be a little  
24    tough, I wasn't ready for this. Staten Island Strong is  
25    committed to upholding respect, care and support for our

1     esteemed veterans and seniors who have greatly contributed  
2     to our nation and community. We stand united against  
3     injustices and ensure that fundamental rights as  
4     acknowledge and safeguarded.

5             Recent events at Island Shores underscored the  
6     importance of prioritizing the well being and dignity of  
7     our elderlies and veterans over profit driven decisions.  
8     Our pledge is to prevent such injustice from being repeated  
9     and to ensure our seniors and veterans receive the honor  
10    and respect that they deserve.

11            As a critical step forward we advocate for  
12    enacting an Island Shores Law to protect veterans and  
13    seniors from wrongful evictions ensuring their rights are  
14    preserved. Through advocacy and awareness campaign we aim  
15    to cultivate a community where every individual, especially  
16    our veterans and seniors is valued. Let us join forces  
17    campaigning the enactment of the Island Shores Law  
18    guaranteeing that the veterans and seniors are never  
19    displaced for benefit of others.

20            Together, let's continue to unwaveringly support  
21    for those who will have selflessness, save nation and  
22    community.

23            I'm George Tormo. I'm from Midland Beach, I  
24    lived there 51 years. My family brought me over from the  
25    Bronx, we moved here when I was ten years old. I've seen

1 this neighborhood go up and down like a rollercoaster and  
2 there is a facility there that we have veterans and seniors  
3 and they were mislead. They told them they were selling  
4 the building, they were going into a different venue and  
5 actually, I'm looking at the sign, one of the people that  
6 went there to look to take over the building, Northwell.  
7 And once they got these seniors out, that I'm still in  
8 contact with a few of them and they're struggles, I have  
9 one veteran that is 95 years old being taken care of by his  
10 daughter that is over 60 years old, you know, and have  
11 another one that's in another nursing home gets \$5400 a  
12 month, they take 52, meanwhile he has co-pays for medicine  
13 and if he has to go to any doctor appointment, the  
14 ambulance, they're already in the red.

15 I'm trying to locate a lot of people trying to  
16 help them out. We are trying to organize and trying to --  
17 we want them back, you know what I mean. This facility has  
18 been a problem. About 30 years ago we had another problem  
19 with them. They housed unwed mother's and that was fine.  
20 Then it turned into men and then it turned into all kinds  
21 of drugs and stuff into the neighborhood.

22 The only piece of mind that we ever had here  
23 was when it was Island Shores for the senior living. And  
24 my father is a World War II vet, God rest his sole, and  
25 that's why I'm a little more committed being that it's my



1 neighborhood and being that my father was a veteran and the  
2 hardest thing that I had to do in my life was to put my  
3 father in a nursing home and God forbid that I had to get  
4 him out of there because of this move now and, you know  
5 what, I'm kind of happy he ain't around to see this.

6 My father was a true American. He loved this  
7 country. He came from Puerto Rico and he fought in World  
8 War II and I just really feel like it's a disgrace to not  
9 only to the people of Midland Beach, but the people of  
10 Staten Island because there is no research done, there is  
11 no like -- we have a civic there, nobody came down and sat  
12 down with us and proposed this. They just plopped it right  
13 into the neighborhood and the neighborhood is a beautiful  
14 neighborhood, you know. Like I said, we got destroyed by  
15 Sandy, we rebuilt from there. So many things that went on  
16 in this neighborhood.

17 And I didn't prepare no speech, I didn't  
18 prepare nothing. I'm speaking from my heart and, you know,  
19 I feel like I have to be there representing the  
20 neighborhood and I think there may be a few people on Zoom  
21 that will be here too, but I just feel like there was an  
22 injustice done.

23 I want my seniors and veterans back because,  
24 you know, I have nothing against the migrants or illegals  
25 that are in there, but, you know what, they're unvetted.

1 It's not their fault. They were given a free pass to come  
2 in here in which they took advantage of which I have no  
3 complaints of that, but it's the way it was done.

4 There was people there living. It wasn't a  
5 vacant building. They were living there. They were  
6 situated there and then they got thrown out. That's all I  
7 got. Thank you.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your service.

9 MR. MONFORTE: I'm with Salvatore Monforte.  
10 The mayor and the city signed a contract with us, Home for  
11 Homeless, \$9 million a year. They tripled the money they  
12 were making. We want the contract dissolved. They did  
13 this 30 years ago to the community, they shut it down.  
14 They opened the assisted living, we loved it. We want the  
15 mayor to come talk to us because nobody comes down to talk  
16 to us, you know.

17 We have been mistreated down in the community.  
18 We are out there protesting every night. We are peaceful  
19 protestors. We are there for our seniors and our veterans.  
20 The law has to be put in place, if you have assisted living  
21 they can't just turn it into a shelter. Thank you.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your service as  
23 well. Thank you for your testimony.

24 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: Hi, so I feel your  
25 pain. I hear your cry because I'm a senior. So what would

1 you like the Commission to do?

2 MR. MONFORTE: They have to put it into affect  
3 or law that could --

4 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: I'm sorry, I can't  
5 hear you.

6 MR. TORMO: Our point is that what is going to  
7 stop another facility, what is going to stop this from  
8 going on, you know what I mean. It's -- there is a lot of  
9 people in here that are affected. There is a lot of people  
10 that are scared to do anything. They're just muscling  
11 through this.

12 MS. ROWE-ADAMS. Right, right. I heard that  
13 part, I heard everything you said. We heard everything you  
14 said, but what do you want to see the Commission do?

15 MR. TORMO: We need to be heard, we need to be  
16 -- come down and see what is going on. Feel us, you know  
17 what I mean? Listen, we just want a safe place for our  
18 veterans and seniors. That's all we want. You know, I  
19 love my mother and father to death and you know what, as  
20 I'm getting older, I'm feeling the love for other seniors.

21 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you so much.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Our next speaker is Agnes Van  
23 Dina, Oakwood Residents.

24 MS. VAN DINA: Hi. My name is Agnes Van Dina.  
25 I'm vice president of Oakwood Residents Civic Association.

1 Oakwood is a neighborhood in Staten Island, it includes  
2 Oakwood Heights and Oakwood Beach.

3 And the reason we incorporated as a civic  
4 community a few years ago was one of our neighbors was  
5 viciously brutally assaulted when she arrived home to her  
6 home and pulled her car in front of her house. After the  
7 police investigated -- she was injured. She had a head  
8 injury, shoulder injury. When the police investigated, New  
9 York City police, they realized the man who assaulted her  
10 was just kind of hanging around. There is a lot of trees,  
11 he was hiding in the trees and the brush and he came off  
12 the train station. He was never found. So that's the  
13 reason that we incorporated public safety. And crime  
14 prevention is very important. That's the number one issue  
15 to our members.

16 Thanks to District Attorney McMahon at the time  
17 he got in touch with the MTA state police, they're  
18 responsible for patrolling our trains on Staten Island,  
19 not the New York City police. We are similar to the LIRR,  
20 we are not a subway. So we spoke with the Transit  
21 Authority police captain, he increased patrols, he  
22 increased the robustness of patrols.

23 We are a community that supports our law  
24 enforcement. We want the police funded. We don't want  
25 them defunded. We respect our police and when I brought

1 this up at other meetings, other city representatives had  
2 said, oh, you don't have crime on Staten Island, you're the  
3 safest borough. That's not by accident we are the safest  
4 borough, we work at it. We work within our families, we  
5 work within our community and we work with our law  
6 enforcement.

7 Just out of 30,000 police officers in New York  
8 City and Staten Island we only have 729 and we are half a  
9 million people. Our percentage of the population would be  
10 approximately five percent of New York City population. So  
11 five percent of 30,000 would be able 1500 police officers.  
12 We have only half, below half of that, so it's not enough.  
13 We want more police. We believe the presence of police is  
14 a deterrent to crime. And we pay taxes, a lot of taxes and  
15 we want some how that you will list the baseline for our  
16 police officers on Staten Island. 700 something is  
17 laughable, if it wasn't so potential deadly.

18 And we are losing our young families with  
19 children. As you know, the population of school age  
20 children in the City is declining precipitously. Families  
21 with young children are moving and not because of  
22 affordability, anecdotally from families that live here  
23 they're moving because of the crime. It's not just the  
24 crime on the streets, it's the crime in and around the  
25 school.

1           There was a shooting at Tottenville High School  
2           year before last. This past year there was a shooting on a  
3           school bus coming from an intermediate school where a young  
4           man was stabbed to death.

5           You know, if my family was young, I wouldn't  
6           stay either. You know, they're moving to New Jersey. It's  
7           not affordability, it's not the issue. The issue is crime  
8           and the safety for their children. So they're moving to  
9           New Jersey, Pennsylvania and they're paying the higher  
10          taxes if the schools are good and safe. They're not good  
11          and safe here.

12          So that's -- we would like the Charter  
13          Commission to increase the baseline for our police and  
14          re-fund them and also provide the qualified immunity again  
15          so the police officers can do their job, not dissimilar  
16          from what physicians have in terms of malpractice  
17          insurance. There has to be a way that the city can provide  
18          that to the police. So that's our thought on public  
19          safety.

20          The other thing I'd just like to bring up is  
21          there seems to be a loss of local control over our land use  
22          in the outer boroughs. On Staten Island we have community  
23          boards, but their land use decisions and votes are only  
24          advisory and we believe they need to be mandates.

25          For instance we recently have had a lot of

1 community board participation because of planned placement  
2 of the state licensed cannabis stores, marijuana stores.  
3 People don't really want them here. As you saw in Bay  
4 Ridge, we had community board meeting where we had parents  
5 and parishioners and clergy and school parents testify they  
6 don't want it there. The community boards have voted no.

7 Their policy now on Staten Island, Community  
8 Board 2 and 3, anything that is coming down from Albany  
9 they're sending back no, we don't want it, but we need to  
10 have local control, you know. For the values of the  
11 communities here we need local control of land use. The  
12 City Council doesn't represent us. We didn't vote for --  
13 there is 51 City Council members, we only voted for three  
14 of them on Staten Island. So the other 40 something,  
15 whatever is left, don't represent us and they shouldn't be  
16 making policies that affect us independent of what we want  
17 on Staten Island.

18 And that's it. So we hope that you would do  
19 something to improve public safety, crime prevention. We  
20 don't want crime. Violent street crime is no on Staten  
21 Island. We don't tolerate it in our communities and if you  
22 could increase the baseline number of police for us, for  
23 every borough based on population, if the crime rate is  
24 higher in some areas and then they'll need more types of  
25 police officers, but we need a baseline. 700 something is

1     terrible and also we want control over our land use. There  
2     is too much centralization of the power to City Council now  
3     or to people in Manhattan, city agencies, you know.

4             The Borough President we elect, he appoints for  
5     our community boards and that's how land use should be  
6     determined.

7             THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you very much.

8             MS. VAN DINA: Thank you.

9             THE CHAIRMAN: Our next speaker is Florence  
10    Pertruzelli.

11            MS. PETRUZELLI: This is a little out of my  
12    comfort zone, but I feel the need to address certain  
13    issues.

14            First of all, with the election my daughter has  
15    been in living Florida for over 20 years now. She has  
16    called The Board of Elections, I have called The Board of  
17    Elections, she is registered to vote in both states. I'm  
18    sure she is not the only one that has that issue. If we  
19    were different people she can vote in both states in  
20    person, so that's one thing that really needs to be  
21    addressed.

22            As far as I want to reiterate what Mike was  
23    talking about earlier about the community not being  
24    informed of what is going on. Until I got involved with  
25    the migrant situation at Villa I was unaware of a lot of



1 things that were happening within our own community such as  
2 the City of Yes and talk about taking care and watching out  
3 for the safety of the people. The battery dispensaries  
4 that are going to be put on Staten Island, that's not safe,  
5 no matter how you look at it. These are issues that need  
6 to be brought to the forefront so the people can make the  
7 decision, not the people who don't live here. There are so  
8 many things.

9 Who do we address? The last time I went to this  
10 meeting I was told that the City of Yes had nothing to do  
11 with this, the dispensaries had nothing to do. Where do we  
12 go? Who do we speak to? How do we address it?

13 THE CHAIRMAN: No, that's a great question. In  
14 regards -- this is the City Charter Revision Committee, so  
15 what we are here to do is to review the entire Charter  
16 which is the Constitution for the city. What we are doing  
17 here is examining that and if it doesn't fall under our  
18 purview here, we are here to listen to everyone. So we  
19 would like to probably move you over to one of our staff  
20 members here that can direct your concerns to the proper  
21 channels to be reported, but again, this is a Charter  
22 Revision Committee. We are examining each of the things  
23 that are outlined in the Charter so that we can take a good  
24 look into it and make revisions that we feel are necessary.

25 This doesn't, I don't think fall under that,

1 but again, I think we can move her over to a staff member  
2 that can definitely help you address those concerns and  
3 make sure it lands at the right door step.

4 MS. PETRUZELLI: Okay, that's fair.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
6 testimony today.

7 Our next speaker is Carla Mohan.

8 MS. MOHAN: Good evening. Thank you. I was  
9 not prepared to speak, but I feel compelled as always. I'm  
10 a mom, I'm a Staten Islander, my neighbors, I must  
11 reiterate their concerns. Public safety, City of Yes and I  
12 will have to say the Sanctuary Cities issue of New York  
13 City.

14 Last year a federal judge, Judge Wayne Ozzi  
15 ruled in favor of the residents living next door to St.  
16 John's Villa that the executive orders put upon our city  
17 and the emergency that was caused was a mandate and that  
18 also those executive orders couldn't -- did not  
19 substantiate what our city is being tasked with, that's  
20 sustainable to care for the hundreds of thousands of  
21 illegal migrants that are now living in our city that is  
22 put upon not only in Staten Island. At first Staten  
23 Islanders were frowned upon when we voiced our concerns,  
24 now it is the whole city that is concerned.

25 Judge Ozzi also ruled that, and you mentioned

1 the Charter being as the Constitution of our city, that the  
2 Sanctuary Cities Act was just policy and not law and when  
3 it was created back in, I believe the seventies, it was  
4 created in mind for the folks living in the Bowery and they  
5 were New York citizens. And I would hope that the Charter  
6 would look deep into the language and a federal judge  
7 ruling on this specific major concern that is crippling our  
8 city, our citizens, so many, so many New Yorkers that have  
9 -- that need services are either -- that's being strained  
10 because of outside now stress.

11 So that's probably my main concern that I  
12 would hope that the Charter Revision Committee will  
13 definitely look into. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
16 testimony.

17 Our next speaker will be John Felci. How are  
18 you?

19 MR. FELCI: All right, how are you?

20 THE CHAIRMAN: All right.

21 MR. FELCI: All right, the first thing I want  
22 to say is thank you for having me. I'm not a professional  
23 speaker as most people in here are. I'm a little out of my  
24 comfort zone. I'm also a 21 year throat cancer survivor,  
25 so if I should say something that you don't understand,

1 please ask me, all right.

2 As most people in this room have expressed I  
3 know most of the people in this room, I'm here for myself  
4 tonight, I'm not attached to an organization, however I am  
5 involved with many of the groups in this room. Bear with  
6 me because I wrote this in between working today, so you  
7 really have to bear with me. I promise you I'll get there,  
8 this is short.

9 I'm presently a geriatric case worker and I  
10 advocate for the older adult population on Staten Island  
11 predominately. However, through the city and through the  
12 country we know the older population is increasing. I also  
13 spent 21 years as a peace officer in the City of New York,  
14 so I'm a life long New Yorker.

15 Here is what I'm here to request from you guys  
16 tonight and I really did not do my homework on this which I  
17 usually do, I will write a full testimony and submit it to  
18 you guys. I'm requesting the Commission review the New  
19 York City Sanctuary policy. As we know it's not a law,  
20 it's a policy. I'm not throwing down the mayor, and again  
21 I'm going through my notes, bear with me. I'm not throwing  
22 down the mayor, but I do have a hard time following his  
23 flawed concepts on not only Sanctuary Cities, but Life to  
24 Shelter.

25 I have been involved with the asylum seeker

1 actions on Staten Island, so this is not anti migrant  
2 statement. What this is is just my interest for you guys  
3 to look at Sanctuary Cities and where it falls under  
4 keeping everyone safe, all right. We have outside people  
5 coming here and they are where they are however unvetted.  
6 NYPD under Sanctuary Cities does not, and if I'm wrong, I'm  
7 wrong, I'll add this in my written testimony if I'm right.  
8 Under the Sanctuary Cities NYPD does not communicate with  
9 any federal authorities if a crime occurs in the city. So  
10 a low level crime occurs, nobody's communicating. We have,  
11 let's just say a lawsuit is done, so that is kind of in a  
12 nutshell. And again, I apologize -- this is not an anti  
13 migrant approach, but it's a safety and common sense  
14 approach.

15 So I will again just request that you guys  
16 review Sanctuary Cities and let's fill in the holes where  
17 they need to be filled in and I thank you for your time and  
18 listening.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Felci.

20 We are now going to move over to our  
21 participants in Zoom and the first one from Zoom is Bradley  
22 Tusk.

23 MR. TUSK: Hi. Can you hear me?

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

25 MR. TUSK: Can you guys hear me okay?

1 THE CHAIRMAN: We can hear you, yes.

2 MR. TUSK: Great. Thanks so much. Great.

3 Thank you so much for having me.

4 Back in 2002 I was the Director of the Charter  
5 Commission, so I remember these hearings both fondly and  
6 slightly painfully too depending on how they went. Thanks  
7 for the opportunity to testify. I'm not from any specific  
8 organization. I'm a venture capitalist in New York City,  
9 got a political background, I was Michael Bloomberg's  
10 campaign manager in 2009, I own a book store in the lower  
11 east side of Manhattan, I have a consulting firm and a  
12 bunch of other things like that and I write a column for  
13 the Daily News. With respect to my column that ran  
14 yesterday and it's what I think the Charter Commission  
15 ought to consider putting on the ballot.

16 So if you ask yourself what are most New  
17 Yorkers concerned about and you look at any polling at all,  
18 it's pretty clear. They're concerned about crime and  
19 they're concerned about quality of life. They want things  
20 to feel less chaotic. And you know what, they're tired of  
21 judges letting career criminals loose regardless of their  
22 prior record, regardless of their specific actions,  
23 regardless of who they hurt or the damage that they cause.

24 There is example after example of judges who  
25 refuse to do their jobs, refuse to protect the public.

1 Their extreme ideology trumps everything and the  
2 shoplifting epidemic has lead to a cycle, mentally ill  
3 people will be released backed into the street and subways  
4 so they can terrorize us all. It's a very strong  
5 projection that the city is unsafe and that hurts business  
6 growth, it hurts tourism, it hurts retail sales, it hurts  
7 taxpayer retention and more.

8 I would love the Charter Commission to propose  
9 a ballot measure to rein in judges whose decisions are out  
10 of tune with the views and the needs of the people. Allow  
11 the voters to trigger a hearing to determine whether the  
12 mayor should recommend the governor and state Senate recall  
13 certain judges. The Commission would choose a percentage,  
14 like between 10 and 20 percent of the number of voters who  
15 participated in the most recent judicial election to sign  
16 and file a petition authorizing a hearing to determine  
17 whether the mayor should refer a particular judge to the  
18 state for recall. If the judge is then recommended for  
19 recall by the governor and removed by the Senate, a special  
20 elections is held to replace them. They're mayoral  
21 appointee, they mayor appoints someone new. The judge  
22 would also then be disqualified from ever serving on the  
23 bench in New York again.

24 The State Constitution does not allow for  
25 recall of state or local judges. There have been several

1 bills in Albany over the years created a direct recall  
2 mechanism in New York, but none has succeeded. Doing so  
3 would require amending the Constitution which as you know  
4 Charter Commission has no purview over. However, the State  
5 Municipal Home Rule law lays out the powers that local  
6 governments have to adopt and amend those laws. Although  
7 it specifically prohibits the city from passing any law  
8 that supersedes a State statute relating to the courts, it  
9 does allow local government to adopt or amend local laws  
10 regarding a number of subjects so long as they are not  
11 inconsistent with State laws. By performing a hearing  
12 rather than recall, this proposal is consistent with State  
13 law. The most specific benefit of the idea is removing bad  
14 judges from the bench and keeping them off forever, but  
15 even if the judge isn't ultimately removed, the risk of  
16 removal and public humiliation and force the vast majority  
17 of judges to finally start balancing their own ideology  
18 with the future needs of the public.

19           Once a few judges face potential recall, that  
20 will impact the thinking of virtually every judge in the  
21 system and help deter decisions that are egregiously out of  
22 line with both common sense and public safety. Judges are  
23 human beings, human beings hate shame, stigma and  
24 humiliation. They will go to incredible lengths to avoid  
25 it. When judges can behave without any real scrutiny,



1     accountability, consequences, some will let virtually every  
2     criminal loose, we see that too often. But under a public  
3     microscope, most will start behaving more responsibly and  
4     those who do not now be removed for life.

5             Of course direct voter recall of extremely bad  
6     judges would be even better. The far less Albany and  
7     political parties own judicial patronage machine means that  
8     is not going to happen any time soon, but the voters of New  
9     York City can take matters in their own hands and change  
10    judicial culture that all too often seem completely  
11    indifferent to the needs of the people. If we want to  
12    safer city, if we want a better city, it's up to us to make  
13    it happen and that starts with you, the Charter Commission,  
14    deciding they're sick of a revolving door of criminals set  
15    free to strike again and doing something about it. Thank  
16    you.

17            COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

18            THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
19    testimony.

20            Our next speaker on Zoom is Frank Morano.  
21    Frank, are you with us?

22            THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, we will give him a moment  
23    to come back on. We will move onto the next speaker, that  
24    will be Andria.

25            MS. LAMBERTON: Hi, good evening. Thank you

1 very much for your time. Can you hear me?

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, we can hear you

3 MS. LAMBERTON: Okay, great. Just wanted to  
4 check.

5 Okay, here we go. Thank you. Hi, I'm Andria  
6 Lamberton, Manhattan resident and professional American  
7 sign language interpreter. Thank you for the opportunity  
8 to testify to the Commission. I will keep my comments  
9 brief. I have three proposals for the Charter that will  
10 benefit 30,000 deaf New Yorkers who use American sign  
11 language.

12 Number one is add a chapter to the Charter  
13 titled ADAs Law and Disability Access. I have read the  
14 titles of all 79 chapters and scanned these chapters for  
15 the words Americans with Disability Act and I do not see a  
16 direct reference to the ADA, the mass text law that  
17 mandates reasonable accommodations for people with  
18 disabilities, specifically mandating ASL interpretation.

19 While New York City does follow the law and  
20 does a good job providing ASL interpreters for public  
21 services, as a New York citizen I know that I feel better  
22 knowing that the law has been officially referenced in the  
23 Charter. This would provide the legal cornerstone the deaf  
24 community can point to when private businesses, private  
25 dentists, veterinarians and even lawyers do not provide ASL

1 interpreters stating it is not their responsibility and  
2 will not pay for one. And as an interpreter I can testify  
3 that this still happens routinely here in New York.

4 Number two is CEC Local Law 30 recognizes ten  
5 designated citywide languages that must be translated, but  
6 ASL is not one of them. I ask for a Local Law 30 to be  
7 amended to add American sign language as a designated  
8 citywide language so reading materials such as websites,  
9 article, documents and news will be translated. This will  
10 require budget and staff of fluent signers to take printed  
11 information and create ALS videos. But agencies and  
12 schools that serve the deaf, as well as deaf run businesses  
13 and services do this routinely already.

14 According to the New York City language access  
15 webpage, interpretation is defined as the facilitation of  
16 spoken communication between users of different languages.  
17 Translation is the transferring of written information from  
18 one language to another. ASL has no written form, however,  
19 the average deaf New Yorker does not read beyond a fourth  
20 grade reading level. This is a well documented fact that  
21 is the National average and has not been updated. It is a  
22 well-known fact among those working within the community,  
23 but there is a cultural taboo about keeping this  
24 information private and there are reasons, there are a  
25 great number of deaf New Yorkers who are functionally

1 illiterate that would be happy to answer and I will be  
2 committing my written testimony with further explanation,  
3 but suffice it to say that it is a misnomer that providing  
4 written material is an equivalent reasonable accommodation  
5 for deaf people whose primary language is ASL.

6 And finally, I propose the creation of a New  
7 York City Commission for the deaf that provides guidance  
8 and support, ADA enforcement and creates the translations  
9 for all New York City agencies into ASL videos. This  
10 Commission could also help create a citywide process for  
11 obtaining interpreters and case management across social  
12 services.

13 I have specific ideas on how we can make that  
14 happen such as that the American Dental Association has done  
15 which is to create a code that follows patients needing  
16 interpretation across the system. A New York City  
17 Commission for the deaf can ensure that interpreting  
18 services are not missed causing deaf people to then have  
19 delayed surgeries, surgeries without interpreters present,  
20 court dates delayed or even wait in jail cells longer  
21 because there is no executive body in charge of this ADA  
22 titled to service needed for 30,000 New Yorkers.

23 I thank you for your time and I look forward to  
24 answering any questions.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your

1 testimony. Any questions?

2 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: No. Thank you.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

4 Our next speaker is Liz Andrie here.

5 MS. ANDRIE: Good evening. My statement is  
6 regarding Sanctuary Cities status. When this was put  
7 through by Mayor Koch with City Council that was in 1989,  
8 it was a much safer world. 35 years later where the world  
9 is extremely dangerous, this should not be the policy any  
10 longer. If the politicians think it's such a good thing,  
11 but a referendum on the ballot. Let the citizens of the  
12 City of New York, it's their taxpayer money that has to  
13 fund everything, it is there lives that is being  
14 jeopardized. Put it on a referendum. Let the are voters  
15 decide, not politicians. Politicians live in safe havens.  
16 They are protected. Normal citizens aren't. That is the  
17 first thing.

18 The second thing is the Right to Shelter, which  
19 is not a law. Again, the citizenship is being burdened  
20 with millions if not billions of dollars to feed, cloth,  
21 house to provide medical transportation all for people who  
22 broke the law of the United States by entering the country  
23 illegally and you have citizens of the United States that  
24 were never given the chance to go live in the Roosevelt  
25 Hotel, they're on the street, whether they be regular

1 citizens or military. This is disgusting that we treat  
2 people that come here illegally, not knowing who they are,  
3 what their intentions are, treating them to a better life  
4 than our own citizens.

5 Anything that is affecting the citizen's  
6 pockets that we have to pay, put it on a referendum and let  
7 us decide. Thank you.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
9 testimony.

10 Our next speaker is Frank Rapacciuolo.

11 MR. RAPACCIUOLO: Good evening. Thank you for  
12 having me. I couldn't think of a better person to give me  
13 an opening act than the woman before me.

14 I'm here on behalf of Council member minority  
15 leader Joe Borelli. I would like to bring up a matter of  
16 tremendous impact to public safety which is the current  
17 migrant crisis. A bill recently introduced By Council  
18 Members Borelli and Holden and co-signed by several members  
19 of the (in audible) seeks to repeal and roll back our  
20 Sanctuary City policies, something we believe a large  
21 portion of New Yorkers agree with and I believe most people  
22 in the room tonight especially.

23 Seeing the rise in crime associated with these  
24 illegal migrants is becoming a near daily occurrence and  
25 the crimes seem to be getting worse each time. The fact

1 that New York City policy prevents federal law enforcement  
2 agencies like ICE from assisting anybody that is in need  
3 and removing anybody who has caused an issue. There are  
4 countless people who currently reside in our city who spent  
5 thousands of dollars and several years to pursue  
6 citizenship the legal and correct way. They understand  
7 that this is the necessary process and sacrifice to become  
8 a citizen of our great nation.

9 We also have thousands of homeless veterans and  
10 other individuals who have seemingly been forgotten. Many  
11 would rather brave the elements and live on the street  
12 rather than enter our shelter system. I'm sure if the were  
13 offered, most would greatly appreciate living in an all  
14 expenses paid New York City hotel room, something that many  
15 people who traveled simply can't afford and to receive  
16 pre-paid debit cards for their daily spending, something  
17 now we are realizing might be an issue with people selling  
18 them and other things. Such a program would no doubt help  
19 these people get back on their feet in many cases.

20 By definition the City Charter Revision  
21 Commission may propose a broad set of amendments that  
22 essentially overhauls the entire Charter or may narrowly  
23 focus its proposal on certain areas. We request that one  
24 of those areas be changing our city Sanctuary policies and  
25 rolling them back. Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

3 Okay, we'd like to take us back to Zoom now and  
4 call on Frank Morano.

5 MR. MORANO: Hello everybody, can you hear me  
6 now?

7 THE CHAIRMAN: We hear you fine.

8 MR. MORANO: Great, thank you. Very  
9 frustrating to be screaming at a computer set and nobody  
10 can understand what I'm saying.

11 Couple of quick things, I know you had a long  
12 day already and I won't keep you. I appreciate more than  
13 most being a life long Staten Islander how difficult it is  
14 for the non Staten Island members of the Commission to  
15 travel out here.

16 One is I have been, since this Commission was  
17 announced, trying to wage the same battle that many of you  
18 have been trying to wage very admirably in trying to get  
19 people to participate and one of the things that I keep  
20 running up against, and this has been brought out in some  
21 newspaper editorial boards, some activist groups, some  
22 governmental group. They have tried to cast a little bit  
23 of appaul on the work that you guys are doing on the  
24 Commission because they believe that it's being done to  
25 just kind of big step the City Council and prevent certain



1 measures from being on the ballot. Maybe that's true,  
2 maybe it's not, but I don't necessarily think it should  
3 stop people from participating because the measures that  
4 you come up with and put on the ballot are going to count  
5 just the same as if they were a result of two-year  
6 Commission that everybody's work was being praised by.

7 So what I want to do here, and I extended a  
8 number of proposals to you and I hope you'll consider all  
9 of them, but given the condensed timeline here, I'd like  
10 for you guys to consider the things that can be put on the  
11 ballot without necessarily a great deal of study and that  
12 the voters don't necessarily need months and months to  
13 consider. And one has to do with the kind of asterix that  
14 many people are going to place on whatever work you come up  
15 with.

16 Currently, as you guys know, and a lot of  
17 people watching this know, any mayoral appointed Commission  
18 gets to take the place of a City Council question that is  
19 put on the ballot. It also gets to take the place of any  
20 question that is put on the ballot by the voters. What I'm  
21 asking you to consider doing is putting a question on the  
22 ballot to have all Charter Revision changes be considered  
23 equal. Meaning if there is a mayoral appointed Charter  
24 Revision Commission, that can put questions on the ballot,  
25 but it doesn't prevent 50,000 New Yorkers from collecting

1 signatures and putting our own question on the ballot.

2 Because time and again over the course of last 30 years,

3 really since terms limits in '93, people have brought up

4 the issue of oh, I'd like to put this on the ballot, I'd

5 like to put that on the ballot. And inevitably someone

6 will say, why don't you just collect the signatures and

7 then someone who has a little bit more political pragmatism

8 then realism will say, well because if they don't want it

9 on the ballot the mayor will simply appoint a Commission

10 and get it bumped off.

11 I'm asking you guys to make that change so that

12 that doesn't happen. This would be good for you and your

13 work and the work of all future commissions because no

14 longer would anybody be able to say that you're being done

15 as some sort of a pillon (phonetic) to prevent questions

16 from being on the ballot.

17 Additionally, by letting the voters know that

18 if they go out and get those 50,000 signatures to get a

19 Charter change of their own on the ballot, I think it might

20 engender a new spirit of civic activism which seems to be

21 in short supply these days. It's not that people don't

22 care about their community, they do. It's not that they're

23 not knowledgeable about their community, they do, but there

24 is just this pervasive sense of synasism where they feel

25 like they can't make a difference, they can't fight City

1 Hall.

2 I think if you were to make that one change,  
3 simply have all Charter Revision proposals created equal,  
4 no Commission bumps any other question off the ballot, I  
5 think would go along way towards that.

6 Additionally I'm grateful for the mayor  
7 appointing this Commission, but right now if you want a  
8 Charter Commission change, unless you're willing to go to  
9 the length of getting 50,000 signatures on the ballot or  
10 let the City Council write its own Commission which has  
11 only happened once, you're really dependent upon the mayor  
12 to do so.

13 So what I'm asking this Commission to do is follow  
14 the lead of the State Legislature in that every 20 years  
15 there is a question on the ballot asking the voters should  
16 there be a Constitutional Convention and if there is, there  
17 is a process by which the Constitution Convention is formed  
18 that they can propose amendments to the State Constitution,  
19 they can do away with the whole State Constitution. And  
20 what I'm asking you to do is give New York City voters that  
21 same opportunity with the City Charter. Give us in stride  
22 in the charter every 20 years the opportunity to answer the  
23 question "Shall a New York City Charter Revision Commission  
24 be formed." Those two small changes can easily be put on  
25 the ballot this year and I think they would leave you guys

1 with a really great legacy and a place in history and a  
2 history of New York City Charter Revision Commissions as  
3 somebody that really changed the whole paradigm as to how  
4 the Charter Revision process is viewed prospectively.

5 Lastly, I have been speaking a great deal about  
6 empowerment of community boards, I proudly serve on  
7 Community Board 3, not to be confused with the chairman of  
8 Community Board 3 who is also named Frank Morano. Our  
9 community board is not even able to have full board  
10 meetings in person. We are told that's because we don't  
11 have the budget to rent a facility to do that.

12 I have to tell you, and those of you that have  
13 participated in these meetings in person versus via Zoom,  
14 know what a difference an in person meeting makes,  
15 especially when it comes to public engagement. Really what  
16 I think we need is a baseline increase in community board  
17 budgets that's independently inscribed as a certain  
18 percentage of the budget. We can discuss what that  
19 percentage should be, but there is no reason that community  
20 board members should have to come begging hat in hand to  
21 the City Council every year hoping that they can get money  
22 for technology upgrades, hoping that they can get money for  
23 staff, hoping that they can get money for something as  
24 simple as just holding a meeting.

25 So what I'm asking you to do is inscribe in the

1 City Charter or at least give us the opportunity to vote on  
2 that, independent budgets for community boards with a  
3 baseline increase each fiscal year. At this time community  
4 boards are being able to -- are being asked to do more than  
5 they've ever been asked to do with less resources and  
6 that's something that I think you can absolutely look at.

7 And of course, as far as my previous testimony  
8 on electoral reform goes, the two easy fixes that wouldn't  
9 require any sort of approval from the John Lewis Voting  
10 Rights Act, are one, eliminating signature requirements to  
11 run for office, allow people to run for office with simply  
12 a filing fee and the other is make ranked choice voting in  
13 place for the general election. Having it in place for  
14 primaries and special elections is great, but it really  
15 doesn't make much of a difference except in a handful of  
16 ranges in terms of who gets elected. Having ranked choice  
17 voting in the general election, that's a real game changer  
18 and that's something that I think I would love to see this  
19 Charter take up, this Commission take up.

20 Thank you very much, I appreciate all your  
21 work. Happy to answer any questions if you have.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
23 testimony Frank. Any questions?

24 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: No.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Next speaker on Zoom is Jasmine

1 Robinson.

2 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, hello.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Hi, how are you?

4 MS. ROBINSON: Hi, I'm fine, thank you. I  
5 would like to acknowledge Mr. Ed Josey, he has been trying  
6 to raise his hand. I would like to, if permissible, if he  
7 can speak before I do. He's been trying to use his raise  
8 his hand feature. I don't know, I think there might be a  
9 problem, but he's been trying to use his raise his hand  
10 feature to speak.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, we do have him scheduled  
12 to speak. We do acknowledge his hand being raised, so why  
13 don't you take this time to testify first.

14 MS. ROBISON: Okay, all right. Thank you so  
15 much. I just wanted to acknowledge Ed Josey.

16 Thank you so much to the Commissioner for  
17 having this event and also to making it available in person  
18 and also via Zoom. As we know that Staten Island is a bit  
19 of a transportation desert and so we do have a hard time  
20 depending on where you live, you know, going out to certain  
21 parts of the borough. With that being said, my name is --  
22 I'm the Honorable Jasmin L. Robinson. I am female district  
23 leader of the 61st Assembly District and I'm also first  
24 vice-president of the NAACP.

25 At this time I would like to give a special

1 shot out to President Dukes on the call and I just want to  
2 say thank you for being on the call as well and showing  
3 that Staten Island, the branch is showing up and doing our  
4 due diligence. And also to Diane Savino, thank you. And  
5 also congressman Max Rose, your leadership is missed.

6 Staten Island is often defined as the forgotten  
7 borough, but I would like to say we are the underestimated  
8 borough. We are considered having no ability, no influence  
9 or value, however that is not the case. We are represented  
10 very strongly and boldly on this call and we do show up  
11 time and time again.

12 I do believe that there needs to be a ballot  
13 question or ballot proposal regarding the issue of  
14 Sanctuary Cities. Everyone that arrives to the United  
15 States deserves an opportunity of a better life. We should  
16 not be in the practice of warehousing folks. Asylum  
17 seekers should not be housed in basements or schools.  
18 There are many vacant apartments that could house asylum  
19 seekers. People should be housed with dignity.

20 The burden of shelters are often placed in  
21 black and brown communities that are over saturated with  
22 shelters and other facilities and I'm speaking for this as  
23 a Port Richmond resident. We should not be demonizing  
24 anyone. I do agree there should be a ballot amendment  
25 regarding Sanctuary Cities and also to with regards to the

1 other ballot proposals and recommendations in the  
2 preliminary report. I do agree that with most of  
3 everything that is in the report and thank you for your  
4 time and attention to what I have to say. That concludes  
5 my testimony. Thank you.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
7 testimony.

8 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Our next speaker is Special  
10 Hagan also on Zoom.

11 MS. HAGAN: Good evening everyone.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Good evening.

13 MS. HAGAN: I am glad to participate in  
14 tonight's I guess session as well. I had a question about  
15 the -- I guess the citywide training initiative that is  
16 being proposed by the Deputy Mayor of public safety. It  
17 seems as if that is going to be an initiative that is going  
18 to put the city on the map and there is a question as to  
19 whether or not -- my question pertains to whether or not  
20 it's going to be actually be an amendment to the Charter to  
21 ensure that suppose let's say this mayor doesn't get  
22 re-elected, that the actual build out of the facility  
23 actually accomplished and actually realized in fruition and  
24 also if the mayor plans on passing an executive order to  
25 support the building and construction of a universal train



1 facility. That's it.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
3 testimony. Now we move to Edward Josey on Zoom. Edward  
4 can you hear us?

5 MR. JOSEY: Good evening. Can you hear me?  
6 Thank you very much. My name is Ed Josey, I'm the  
7 President of Staten Island NAACP. Now my concerns are not  
8 very deep or that important. I'm under the impression that  
9 the community board has no say where these shelters go for  
10 the migrants. If it's true or not, I don't know, but I'm  
11 concerned about that. I heard that many times.

12 Also, I read somewhere most of the shelters in  
13 New York City have to be in the poor neighborhoods, if that  
14 is true it should be corrected because you're already  
15 taking a bunch of people that have issues to begin with and  
16 adding more issues to that community. So there should be  
17 some way to not, we will say add more issues to these  
18 poorer communities.

19 In the New York Post this past weekend there  
20 was a map of New York City identifying where most of the  
21 shelters are and most happen to be in poorer neighborhoods.  
22 So those are my concerns. I hope you do something about  
23 that. Thank you.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your  
25 testimony. Do we have any comments or questions from our

1 Commissioners either here or online?

2 COMMISSIONER ROWE-ADAMS: I just want to thank  
3 everyone for coming out. I love the borough of Staten  
4 Island and let's keep spreading the word that the  
5 Commission is very concerned about making sure that  
6 everyone gets a chance to hear what is going on and have a  
7 voice. Thank you and get home safe.

8 MEMBER OF AUDIENCE: In the future when you're  
9 going to have a meeting, tell us what part of the hospital.  
10 The mayor sends out a thing, the mayor send it out says  
11 Staten Island University, 475 Seaview. It's a frigging big  
12 hospital. I had to get on Zoom to send a message where  
13 exactly is the meeting. It should have been published  
14 where. It's like they don't want you to come.

15 MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE: Will we have another  
16 meeting on Staten Island?

17 THE CHAIRMAN: No, this is the final one.

18 MS. SAVINO: This is the final Staten Island.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Will it be in Brooklyn?

20 MS. SAVINO: In the Bronx. Bronx is Thursday.

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: What about Brooklyn?

22 MS. SAVINO: There will be one another one in  
23 Queens on the 22nd, but all of them will also be available,  
24 you can participate in Zoom. If you don't want to travel  
25 you can log in and participate.

1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: The 22nd. What about  
2 Brooklyn.

3 MS. SAVINO: That's the last one.

4 MR. CATALDO: That's the 25th. It's not a  
5 hearing, it's just to vote.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. Manhattan is done?

7 MR. CATALDO: Yes. Manhattan is done

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Diaz, do you have  
9 any comments? Commissioner Chris Lynch?

10 COMMISSIONER LYNCH: I'd like to say thank you  
11 to everyone that came out this evening to offer testimony  
12 to us. It's enlightening, brought in some great  
13 information today. So please just inform friends and  
14 family that live in different areas of the borough, we  
15 still have some meetings that are coming up. Thank you  
16 again for coming out.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

18 Well I just want to say it's been a great  
19 session listening to everyone here on Staten Island  
20 testifying this evening. We have heard your concerns and  
21 your input will be taken into careful consideration. Thank  
22 you for taking the time to participate in this important  
23 process and I want everyone to get home safely. Have a  
24 safe evening and thank you again.

25 MS. SAVINO: Ruben want to say something?

1 Ruben Diaz, Jr.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead, Ruben.

3 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Yes. Thank you. Thank  
4 you. I just wanted to say it was great to hear from  
5 everybody here in Staten Island. Yesterday we had an  
6 incredible evening in Harlem and so as a resident of the  
7 Boogie down Bronx I just invite everyone, whether you live  
8 in the Bronx or not to come and join us on Thursday. We  
9 will be at Fordham University. You come early, get a bite  
10 to eat at Arthur Avenue.

11 Nonetheless, more importantly, come out and let  
12 your voting be heard, whether you're from the Bronx or not.  
13 Come to the Bronx and let your voice be heard on what you  
14 think we should be considering in revising the Charter.

15 Good night to all and I'll see you all there.

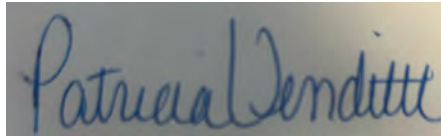
16 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you.

17 MR. KIERNAN: Just a reminder that any written  
18 testimony can be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on Friday at  
19 Charter info, one word, at City Charter, also one word  
20 NYC.gov. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Motion to adjourn. We can a  
22 adjourn. Thank you.

23 (Whereupon, at 7:04 p.m, the hearing was  
24 adjourned.)  
25

1  
2 I, Patricia A. Venditti, a Notary Public for  
3 and within the State of New York, do hereby  
4 certify that the above is a correct transcription  
5 of my stenographic notes.  
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