Written Testimony Submitted to the Charter Revision Commission

April 30, 2025

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Christina DiChiara [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 02 Apr 2025 12:47:12 +0000

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During primary elections, most New Yorkers remain excluded from important decisions about our city's future, while a limited group of party members shapes our electoral outcomes. In a city of 8.8 million residents, restricting participation based on party registration creates unnecessary barriers to civic engagement. Open primaries would allow all voters to participate in these critical early stages of our electoral process, bringing diverse perspectives into our democratic system. This change would ensure our elections truly reflect the full spectrum of New York's population.

Christina DiChiara

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Carolyn Kresky [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 02 Apr 2025 12:47:32 +0000

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Like many New Yorkers, I have spent much of my life being unable to vote in competitive elections. Too often, the winning candidate is a foregone conclusion by the time of the general election. New Yorkers like me find themselves locked out of the races where the winning candidate is chosen simply because we do not choose to or want to belong to a political party.

By opening this system, many New Yorkers will be newly enfranchised and will vote in far greater numbers. It is my hope that the Commission will not miss this opportunity to allow many New Yorkers of all political stripes to fully participate in our democratic process.

Carolyn Kresky

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Steven Licardi [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 02 Apr 2025 12:47:50 +0000

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Non-partisan, special elections are nothing new and are a proven way to choose the best candidate from a field representing several different viewpoints. These elections have been one by candidates across the ideal spectrum. It is time that we applied this proven method to all citywide elections.

Special elections have been taking place in New York City for as long as I can remember. They are an effective way to let voters express their preference from a range of candidates and save the City the cost of running multiple different elections.

Steven Licardi

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: David Holder [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 02 Apr 2025 12:48:33 +0000

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I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardless of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

David Holder

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Mimi Morris [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 02 Apr 2025 12:49:04 +0000

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Special elections have been taking place in New York City for as long as I can remember. They are an effective way to let voters express their preference from a range of candidates and save the City the cost of running multiple different elections.

Mimi Morris

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Howard Edelbaum [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 02 Apr 2025 12:49:50 +0000

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Since I first registered to vote in 1977, I've been told I have to vote for someone I didn't really like, as long as they were the lesser of two evils. And I have been forced throughout my life to enroll in a political party if I want my vote to matter. Neither of the two largest parties reflects my values and beliefs. I am excited to be supporting open primaries. This change will mean that I am no longer forced to make a choice that does not reflect my values.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that I could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect my values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot.

Howard Edelbaum

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Kim Svoboda [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2025 13:54:47 +0000

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I am a political independent. I have been an independent the entire 38 years I have lived in New York City. Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Kim Svoboda

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Elizabeth Gilmartin [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2025 13:54:27 +0000

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I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardless of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

Elizabeth Gilmartin

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Gwen Mandell [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2025 13:55:32 +0000

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I applaud the Charter Revision Commission for considering the current way our candidates are elected in New York City. Currently over one million voters are prevented from participating in the most critical round of voting – the first round – because we choose to be independent. I am one of those voters, and I am offended when I've received various solicitations maintaining that I should change my registration in order to vote in one of the primaries. I have chosen to be independent for a reason. So have millions of other independents (those who are registered as such and the many who grudgingly choose a party because it's the only way they'd get to vote (The numbers who identify as independent nationally are between 40-50% of the population according to the latest Gallup polls). We should not have to choose a party in order to participate in taxpayer funded elections. I am independent because I believe that not being beholden to a party is the best way to choose candidates that will prioritize our democracy and have the best interests of NYC residents rather than the interests of their party. We have a system that has quashed innovation and produced elected officials who don't work on behalf of our city's residents. Having elected officials who are rubber stamps for their party has led to bad public policy. Having an open system where the best candidates are considered on their merit, will create a better functioning and healthier city.

We have elections where millions of people don't vote – not only those of us registered independents who are unable to participate in the primaries, but also millions of others who don't believe their vote is going to have an impact in the current state of affairs and who are losing faith in our democracy. Increasingly, these are young voters and voters of color who make up a large block of New York City independents.

As a leader of independents (formerly Director of National Outreach of the organization, IndependentVoting, a national organization of independent voters and currently Director of Leadership Development of the organization Open Primaries and also a founder of a highly successful national Spokesperson Training for independents), I have talked to thousands of independents over the years. While they are independents for a variety of reasons – whether

it’s because they want to elect the candidate of their choice or they don’t believe the current system is working or any of a number other reasons – they are typically passionate about their independence. Despite what the media and pundits report, these are educated, informed voters who can make a difference in bettering our democracy.

We need Open Primaries now in New York so that we can have competitive healthy elections where all voters can participate. Let’s do it now!

Gwen Mandell

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Liam Riordan [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2025 13:56:11 +0000

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Non-partisan special elections have a long history in New York. They offer voters a wider spectrum of candidates to choose from, empowering more citizens to participate. We should have the same range of options in all our elections, which would encourage higher voter turnout, something which I hope is a priority for your Commission. Open primaries will give all New Yorkers a stronger voice in our government, while reducing the costs of running multiple partisan elections. Please give this issue the attention it is due. Thank you!

Liam Riordan

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Ann Green [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2025 13:55:48 +0000

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By opening this system, many New Yorkers will be newly enfranchised and will vote in far greater numbers. It is my hope that the Commission will not miss this opportunity to allow many New Yorkers of all political stripes to fully participate in our democratic process.

Ann Green

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1673856 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 03 Apr 2025 19:55:11 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 03:54:59 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: [redacted]

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Please see attached proposals for procurement reforms in human services contracts

1digit a project management and consulting practice

Charter Revision Considerations: Human Services Procurement
April 2, 2025

Introduction

I respectfully submit the following considerations for human services procurement charter revisions based on my experience leading procurement reforms from 2016 – 2022 at the Mayor's Office of Contract Services. Initially, I was appointed as Founding Executive Director of the Mayor's Nonprofit Resiliency Committee (NRC), a public-private partnership with the human services nonprofit sector. Over time, my role expanded into an executive position within MOCS where I was part of the team that transitioned citywide procurement from paper to technology through PASSPort.

Below are 5 considerations followed by proposals on how language could be modified in the Charter. I'm happy to answer any follow up questions.

Kindly,
Jennifer Geiling
President, 1digit LLC
[redacted]

Consideration 1: Require Earlier Planning for human services contracting actions AND accountability through publication of planning dates for continuation efforts.

The nonprofit payment system is based on reimbursement. Nonprofits first spend money and then submit invoices for payment. Payment can only happen if the underlying contract has been registered by the NYC Comptroller's Office. During the previous administration, procurement data indicated that 80% of human services contracts were registered after their start dates. This meant that nonprofit organizations were providing services - and expending funds - before contracts were registered and before they could submit invoices for reimbursement. As a result, nonprofits floated months of expenses, experienced cash flow challenges and incurred un-reimbursable interest expenses from drawing down on lines of credit. Timely contract registration was a priority.

Through the NRC, nonprofit and city agency executives collaboratively unpacked and re-engineered the procurement process. The most impactful change was starting the renewal and extension process six months earlier (in November). When put into action, the redesigned process flipped the historical statistic of 80% late contract registration to 90% ready for registration on time for nearly all human services contracting agencies in Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021 (ACS, DFTA, DHS, DOHMH, DOP, HPD and HRA). Review the new process timeline and the impact in 2019 Mayor's Office Press Release. Based on the foregoing, we know that if "continuation efforts" (i.e., extensions and renewals) kick off 6 months before start date they can be registered on time.

Having worked inside New York City procurement, I know that agencies plan what they are going to renew, extend and resolicit much earlier than they are currently required to report and be held accountable for. Currently, the charter only requires procurement plans for the upcoming year. However, if procurement plans are required with a three-year horizon, the CPPO can support the management of timely registration. With a three year horizon, the CPPO would be engaged in managing timelines from concept paper to RFP release and contract start date – strengthening the likelihood that procurements launch with enough time to register before proposed start dates. Publishing plans three years ahead of time will also help providers plan ahead and organize for upcoming opportunities and needs.

Additionally, the CPPO should be required to approve the procurement plan from a timing perspective. The CPPO can't approve the plan if there isn't enough lead time from solicitation to start date. If CPPO approves, it's the CPPO's team at MOCS that manages the procurement activity (which is their current job) happening within the contracting agency, OMB, Law Dept. Having a plan in place with an appropriate timetable will also help MOCS staff do their job; it creates a framework that almost anyone can jump into.

Chapter 13, Section 325. Planning and notification

a. Agencies that award client services contracts shall produce a draft and final plan and schedule detailing anticipated contracting actions for the upcoming three fiscal years, and shall hold at least one public hearing each year immediately following the release of the draft plan and schedule to receive testimony regarding the plan and schedule. The draft and final plan and schedule shall include, but not be limited to: the type of services to be provided, the authorized maximum amount of funding associated with the program, the authorized number of contracts to be let for a particular program, the month and year of the next planned competitive solicitation and start date and the month and year for kick off of the continuation action. Failure to include a contract in the plan and schedule issued pursuant to this section shall not be grounds for invalidating the contract. The procurement policy board shall promulgate rules governing the issuance of the draft and final plans and schedules, which shall ensure that the draft plan and schedule is issued promptly following the submission of the executive budget and that the final plan and schedule is issued no later than September thirtieth each year. CPPO must approve the plans, as to timeline and manage agencies in the procurement process to meet those timelines.

Agency	Vendor Name	Program Name or Description	Continuation plan -- RFP award (RFP) or renewal (REN) or neg. acq. ext (NAE) or amend. ext. (EXT) or State-Mandated (SM) or Sole Soure (SS) or none (NO)	Current FMS Contract No.	End date for expiring contract	Start date for new contract	E-PIN of FY26 Action (to be filled in as information becomes available)	Agency PIN

Chapter 2, § 2-04 Multi-Term Contracts (Client Services)

(a) *Definitions.* A multi-term contract is a contract for a period of longer than one year.

(b) *Policy.* Multi-term contracts may be used for client services contracts where:

(1) it is in the City's best interest to obtain continuity of service extending over more than one year,

(2) performance of such services involves high start-up costs, or

(3) changeover of contractors involves high phase-in/phase-out costs over a transition period.

(c) *Planning.*

(1) Annually, the ACCO of each agency awarding client services contracts shall review its entire portfolio of such contracts (including all existing contracts and anticipated new contracts that may occur over the course of the three year planning period,) and shall produce, in draft and final, a plan and schedule ("Plan") detailing the procurement actions anticipated with respect to each contract set to expire and/or planned for continuation during the upcoming three fiscal year.

(2) The form of the draft and final Plans shall be prescribed by the CCPO, in consultation with the. The draft and final Plans shall include, but not be limited to: the type of services to be provided, the authorized maximum amount of funding associated with the program, the authorized number of contracts to be let for a particular program, and the month and year of the next planned competitive solicitation and the start date. CPPO must certify that timing between solicitation and start date is feasible.

Title 9, Section 4-04 Renewals
Add provision requiring initiation of all renewals at least 6 months before the start date.

Consideration 2: Annual report on how many vendors started work before registration and duration of the lag, as well as dollar value of the lag (quantify the cash flow crisis). The "Delayed Registration Report." Information should be available through PASSPort, available online and allow for filtering.
This report can provide valuable information for advocates and the transparency it creates may motivate better procurement management.

Section 334. Information on city contracts.

a. Agency contract files. Each agency shall maintain files containing information pertaining to the solicitation, award and management of each contract of the agency in accordance with standard record maintenance requirements established pursuant to section three thousand four of this charter. The agency contract files shall contain copies of each determination, writing or filing required by this chapter pertaining to a contract and such information as is prescribed by rule of the procurement policy board, in such form as is prescribed by the procurement policy board. Agency contract files shall be open to the public inspection with adequate protection for information which is confidential.

b. Requests by elected officials for contract documentation. Whenever an elected official of the city requests documentation relating to the solicitation or award of any city contract, the mayor and city agencies shall promptly provide such documentation as is requested or shall promptly respond to the requesting official with reason why such documentation cannot be provided. If the mayor or agency is unable to provide the requested documentation within ten business days of the day the request is received, the mayor or agency shall within such time deliver to the requesting official a statement of the reasons the documentation cannot be promptly provided and shall include in such statement a timetable within which the documentation will be provided, not to exceed thirty days from the date of the original request.

c. Centralized contract and contractor information. The mayor shall ensure that copies of city contracts and other standard information regarding city contracts and contractors are reasonably available for public inspection in accordance with provisions of section one thousand sixty-four of this charter.

d. Issue annual report on December 1 for client service contracts that provides: how many contracts required work before registration, the duration of the lag and the dollar value of the lag.

(ii) Any agency that submits such a contract or extension to the Comptroller for registration after the start date of such contract shall be deemed to have submitted the contract in an untimely manner, unless the ACCO determines that the vendor's conduct constituted a material cause of such late submission. The ACCO shall not make such a determination against a vendor unless the agency met the timely notification set forth in subdivision (a)(ii) above, i.e., by notifying the vendor at least) six months prior to the expiration of the contract to be replaced.

Consideration 3: Require risk management report every year from CPPO using PASSPort data that has KPIs:

- timely registration by each client service agency
- provider risks (DOI investigations can be incorporated) by dollar value
- top 5 types of audit findings for client services audits.

Report should require recommendations on how the data can be used to improve procurement timeliness and vendor management.

Consideration 4: Section 3-16: HHS Accelerator no longer exists – update references all throughout charter

Consideration 5: Section 311. Invest some responsibility in the procurement policy board for effective procurement by explicitly requiring annual reviews and reporting.

c. The board may promulgate such additional rules, policies and procedures consistent with and as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter. The board shall annually review all of its rules, policies and procedures and make such revisions as the board deems necessary and desirable, including revisions to simplify and accelerate the procurement process. Nothing herein shall prevent the board from reviewing its rules, policies, and procedures, and making such revisions as the board deems necessary and desirable, more than once per year.

d. The board shall promulgate rules to facilitate the timely and efficient procurement of client services, and to ensure that such contracts are administered in the best interests of the city. Such rules shall include but not be limited to: (i) rules authorizing city agencies to meet annual financial audit requirements through the acceptance of consolidated audits across multiple contracts and multiple agencies; (ii) rules providing for expedited renewal or extension of existing client services contracts; (iii) rules mandating the promulgation of draft and final contract plans by all agencies procuring client services.

e. The board shall submit an annual report to the mayor, comptroller, and council setting forth the professional standards for agency contracting officers adopted by the mayor, including any applicable certification process. The report shall also include information on rule revisions to simplify and accelerate the procurement process. If no such revisions were made, the report will provide information explaining.

f. In the promulgation of any rules pertaining to the procurement of construction or construction related services, the board shall consult with any office designated by the mayor to provide overall coordination to the city's capital construction activities.

g. The board shall make such recommendations as it deems necessary and proper to the mayor and the council regarding the organization, personnel structure and management of the agency procurement function including, where appropriate, recommendations for revision of this charter or local laws affecting procurement by the city. Such reports may include recommendations regarding agency use of advisory groups to assist in preparation of bids or proposals and selection of contractors. The board shall also review the form and content of city contract documents and shall submit to the law department recommendations for standardization and simplification of contract language.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Richard Fox [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 04 Apr 2025 14:27:39 +0000

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My name is Richard Fox. I am a public school teacher in NYC and a registered independent. I chose to be a registered independent voter because I have seen how the two party factions do not represent the interests of the people and are tearing this country apart in treating representation like a partisan team sport.

Like many New Yorkers, I have spent much of my life being unable to vote in competitive elections. Too often, the winning candidate is a foregone conclusion by the time of the general election. New Yorkers like me find themselves locked out of the races where the winning candidate is chosen simply because we do not choose to or want to belong to a political party.

By opening this system, many New Yorkers will be newly enfranchised and will vote in far greater numbers. It is my hope that the Commission will not miss this opportunity to allow many New Yorkers of all political stripes to fully participate in our democratic process.

Richard Fox

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4631309 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 05 Apr 2025 01:48:25 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Friday, April 4, 2025, at 09:48:10 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Kesav Gupta

Email:

Phone:

Comments: Dear Members of the New York City Charter Revision Commission, Thank you for the opportunity to submit recommendations aimed at addressing New York City's housing crisis through strategic amendments to the City Charter. To promote a more efficient, transparent, and pro-housing development framework, I propose the following: 1. Streamlining the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) The current ULURP process is often criticized for being lengthy and unpredictable, which can deter housing development. To enhance its efficiency: • Consolidate Community Board and Borough President Reviews: Merge these advisory phases into a single, streamlined review process under the Borough President's office. This consolidation would reduce redundancy and expedite decision-making without compromising community input. • Introduce an Appeals Mechanism: Establish a ULURP Appeals Board, comprising members from the City Planning Commission and the City Council Speaker. This board would provide a structured avenue for applicants to appeal decisions, adding a layer of fairness and predictability to the process. 2. Empowering Citywide Planning Over Local Vetoes While local input is vital, the current system allows individual City Council members significant power to halt projects, which

can impede developments beneficial to the broader city. To address this: • Limit Council Member Veto Power: Amend the Charter to restrict the ability of individual Council members to unilaterally veto housing projects that align with citywide housing goals. This change would ensure that decisions are made in the interest of all New Yorkers, balancing local concerns with the pressing need for housing. 3. Expediting Affordable Housing on City-Owned Land Utilizing city-owned land for affordable housing is a critical strategy. To facilitate this: • Simplify Approval Processes: Amend the Charter to allow affordable housing projects on city-owned land to proceed without undergoing the full ULURP, provided they meet predefined affordability criteria. This would significantly reduce project timelines and costs. 4. Implementing Comprehensive Citywide Planning A holistic approach to land use is essential for sustainable development. To achieve this: • Mandate a Citywide Comprehensive Plan: Require the Department of City Planning to develop and maintain a comprehensive land use framework that identifies areas for growth and aligns infrastructure investments accordingly. This plan should be subject to regular updates and public input to remain responsive to the city's evolving needs. 5. Reforming the Landmarks Preservation Process While preserving the city's historical character is important, it's essential to balance this with current housing needs. To ensure this balance: • Integrate Housing Considerations into Landmark Decisions: Amend the Charter to require the Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider the city's housing needs when making decisions, ensuring that preservation efforts do not unduly restrict potential housing development. 6. Legalizing and Encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) To increase the housing supply and provide more affordable options: • Amend Zoning Regulations: Modify the Charter to legalize the construction and occupancy of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) across all residential zones. This would allow homeowners to create additional housing units on their properties, contributing to the overall housing stock. 7. Eliminating Parking Minimums in Transit-Rich Areas To promote sustainable urban development and reduce construction costs: • Remove Mandatory Parking Requirements: Amend the Charter to eliminate parking minimums for new residential developments in areas well-served by public transit. This change would encourage the use of public transportation and make housing projects more financially viable. 8. Facilitating Office-to-Residential Conversions To adapt to changing real estate demands and increase housing availability: • Simplify Conversion Processes: Amend the Charter to streamline the approval process for converting underutilized office spaces into residential units. This would help repurpose existing structures to meet current housing needs efficiently. By implementing these reforms, New York City can create a more predictable, efficient, and pro-housing development environment, addressing the urgent need for affordable housing while ensuring sustainable growth. Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Dear Members of the New York City Charter Revision Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit recommendations aimed at addressing New York City's housing crisis through strategic amendments to the City Charter. To promote a more efficient, transparent, and pro-housing development framework, I propose the following:

1. Streamlining the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

The current ULURP process is often criticized for being lengthy and unpredictable, which can deter housing development. To enhance its efficiency:

- **Consolidate Community Board and Borough President Reviews**: Merge these advisory phases into a single, streamlined review process under the Borough President's office. This consolidation would reduce redundancy and expedite decision-making without compromising community input.

- **Introduce an Appeals Mechanism**: Establish a ULURP Appeals Board, comprising members from the City Planning Commission and the City Council Speaker. This board would provide a structured avenue for applicants to appeal decisions, adding a layer of fairness and predictability to the process.

2. Empowering Citywide Planning Over Local Vetoes

While local input is vital, the current system allows individual City Council members significant power to halt projects, which can impede developments beneficial to the broader city. To address this:

- **Limit Council Member Veto Power**: Amend the Charter to restrict the ability of individual Council members to unilaterally veto housing projects that align with citywide housing goals. This change would ensure that decisions are made in the interest of all New Yorkers, balancing local concerns with the pressing need for housing.

3. Expediting Affordable Housing on City-Owned Land

Utilizing city-owned land for affordable housing is a critical strategy. To facilitate this:

- **Simplify Approval Processes**: Amend the Charter to allow affordable housing projects on city-owned land to proceed without undergoing the full ULURP, provided they meet predefined affordability criteria. This would significantly reduce project timelines and costs.

4. Implementing Comprehensive Citywide Planning

A holistic approach to land use is essential for sustainable development. To achieve this:

- **Mandate a Citywide Comprehensive Plan**: Require the Department of City Planning to develop and maintain a comprehensive land use framework that identifies areas for

growth and aligns infrastructure investments accordingly. This plan should be subject to regular updates and public input to remain responsive to the city's evolving needs.

5. Reforming the Landmarks Preservation Process

While preserving the city's historical character is important, it's essential to balance this with current housing needs. To ensure this balance:

- **Integrate Housing Considerations into Landmark Decisions**: Amend the Charter to require the Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider the city's housing needs when making decisions, ensuring that preservation efforts do not unduly restrict potential housing development.

6. Legalizing and Encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

To increase the housing supply and provide more affordable options:

- **Amend Zoning Regulations**: Modify the Charter to legalize the construction and occupancy of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) across all residential zones. This would allow homeowners to create additional housing units on their properties, contributing to the overall housing stock.

7. Eliminating Parking Minimums in Transit-Rich Areas

To promote sustainable urban development and reduce construction costs:

- **Remove Mandatory Parking Requirements**: Amend the Charter to eliminate parking minimums for new residential developments in areas well-served by public transit. This change would encourage the use of public transportation and make housing projects more financially viable.

8. Facilitating Office-to-Residential Conversions

To adapt to changing real estate demands and increase housing availability:

- **Simplify Conversion Processes**: Amend the Charter to streamline the approval process for converting underutilized office spaces into residential units. This would help repurpose existing structures to meet current housing needs efficiently.

By implementing these reforms, New York City can create a more predictable, efficient, and pro-housing development environment, addressing the urgent need for affordable housing while ensuring sustainable growth.

Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Jessica Gojcaj [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Sun, 06 Apr 2025 17:46:47 +0000

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Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Jessica Gojcaj

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Valentina Gojcaj [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Sun, 06 Apr 2025 17:47:00 +0000

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I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardless of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

Valentina Gojcaj

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] HSU Charter Revision Testimony

From: Victoria Leahy [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 08 Apr 2025 13:20:05 +0000

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Good morning,

Please see attached for Homeless Services United's testimony to the Charter Revision Commission.

Kindly,
Victoria

___

Victoria Leahy (she/her)
Director of Policy and Planning
Homeless Services United
[redacted]

Solutions for Today and Tomorrow
HSU

[redacted]

New York City Charter Revision Commission 2025
April 8, 2025
Testimony by Homeless Services United

On behalf of Homeless Services (HSU), I would like to thank the Commission for this opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Kristin Miller, and I am the Executive Director of Homeless Services United. Homeless Services United (HSU) is a coalition representing over 50 mission-driven, non-profit homeless service providers in New York City. HSU advocates for the expansion of affordable housing and prevention services and for immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and transitional housing, outreach and drop-in services for homeless New Yorkers. Homeless Services United promotes effective solutions to end the crisis of homelessness in New York City. On behalf of our members, their dedicated employers and the tens of thousands of New York residents we serve, we are pleased to submit testimony today to discuss issues around payment to homeless shelters and homeless service providers and to promote deeply affordable housing development across New York City.

Addressing Chronic and Pervasive Late Payment Issues Troubling Nonprofits

To provide a full understanding of the issues our members face, HSU worked with a sample of twelve DHS-contracted providers to assess the magnitude of outstanding budget actions. Out of this sample group, **these 12 providers have over $170,000,000 in outstanding budget actions from FY19 to FY25**. Some providers have stopped bidding on new DHS contracts because the risk of doing further business with the City is simply too high. **Other providers are now on a timeline for insolvency, for some, as soon as 2 months.**

Providers routinely experience delayed contract registration, delayed approvals for budget modifications and invoices for review, and repeated requests for supporting documentation, only for there to be continued delays once submitting requested documentation.

The lack of dependability and consistency when it comes to payments, puts our members, and many more organizations, at risk. It makes it difficult to pay staff, vendors, and run programs for clients. Organizations are often forced to take out lines of credit just to address cash flow issues, only to then have to pay interest, which is currently not reimbursed by the city. Providers, who often contract with MWBEs for services, struggle to pay these vendors, which ends up forcing the MWBE vendors to take out loans themselves.

Finally, the funding policies of the new federal administration has created much uncertainty for non-profit providers here in NYC. Between proposed federal funding freezes and federal staff firings, many providers are concerned over the reliability of funds from the federal government. Most recently, the administration has proposed cutting the staff at Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by 50%. We know that reducing staff and administrative resources at HUD will have dire results, including the closure of programs that serve people experiencing homelessness, and the potential reduction of permanent affordable and supportive housing.

New York City's procurement options are defined in the first instance by state law. Within the state framework, the Charter establishes the basic structure of the City's procurement process, including the methods that agencies can use to make procurements. We believe that the Charter Revision Process is a crucial opportunity to tackle these pervasive late payment issues threatening the solvency of nonprofit homeless shelters and homeless service providers.

Recommendations 1–3: Contract Registration

Recommendation 1: Limiting work without a registered contract.
The Charter should mandate a PPB rulemaking prohibiting contracting agencies from asking any vendor to perform any services without a registered contract. Late contracts and late payments increase costs for nonprofits because they must spend time and money chasing the dollars they are owed and shifting resources to fill temporary gaps. A registered contract is a necessary assurance that they will be compensated as agreed upon.

Recommendation 2: Automatic contract registration for existing vendors.
The Charter should mandate the PPB to make a rule that would automatically require agencies to process extension contracts for their existing vendors. This rule could be triggered whenever agencies are unable to begin processing new RFP awards at least six months prior to the end of the existing contract.

Recommendation 3: Establishing time limits for emergency contracts.
The Charter should limit the extended use of emergency contracting, which is often expensive, by requiring the mayor and the comptroller to renew their joint determination that emergency procurement remains appropriate, after such a contract has been in place for two years.

Recommendations 4–6: Timely Payments

Recommendation 4: Interest on Late Payments.
As mentioned above, many of our members take out lines of credit to alleviate cash flow issues. However, the interest payments on loans are not reimbursable, except in rare cases, so nonprofits must make these payments from reserves already stretched to the breaking point. This also assumes that an organization can find a willing lender or has not already maxed out their borrowing options.

We recommend amending the Charter so that nonprofits can collect interest when the City pays late. Ideally, no contracts should ever start before payments are made, but nonprofits should not bear the cost of any late payments. Current policies around interest payments do not work — providers are almost never granted interest for late payments. As a result, the City is starting to lose the network of providers it is relying on because of its inability to get payments out on time. Therefore, we recommend that Section 332 include a requirement that the City is responsible for interest on late payments, including late payments due to late contract registration. This could be implemented by requiring appropriations for interest on late payments to be included in agency contract budgeting. If the agencies do not spend the allocated reserves, the money could be spent to support other agency initiatives such as PEGs, which would incentivize agencies to pay invoices on time.

Recommendation 5: Addressing the timeliness of invoice payments.
Mandate the Procurement Policy Board (PPB) to establish rules that require City agencies to pay (very soon after receipt) a minimum percentage for each invoice from a human services contractor in good standing (which should be clearly defined in the rules by the PPB). Agencies could then resolve the disputed portions of invoices within a longer mandated timeframe without putting the fiscal stability of their nonprofit partners at risk.

Recommendation 6: Mandating prompt procurement timeframes.

The City Charter creates a timeframe for the comptroller to register a contract within 30 days and we believe that Chapter 13, Section 311 should be amended to require the Procurement Policy Board (PPB) to set contracting timelines for each step of the procurement process and regularly report on the compliance of the contracting agencies. There are many steps from the announcement of the award to registration, and with the data acquired through PASSPort, there must be mandated timeframes to hold the contracting agencies accountable for the delayed procurement processes resulting in human services providers waiting months and sometimes years to be paid for the services provided.

Recommendations 7–9: Other Changes

Recommendation 7: Elevating the oversight and accountability role of MOCS.
The Charter should establish a mandate describing the specific responsibilities of the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS), similar to those already in place for other critical Mayoral functions, such as the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Operations. It is crucial for MOCS to have charter authority to ensure city agencies meet contracting deadlines and be able to improve procurement processes across programmatic agencies. Many of the payment issues our members face, are a result of inconsistent payment policies across agencies. MOCS should have charter authority not just over procurement, but invoicing and payment, to ensure consistent policies. This could be accomplished by establishing an office in the Executive Office of the Mayor that has the authority to take actions needed to ensure that agencies comply with contract laws and regulations, invoicing, and payment. The Office should also have the power to survey each agency, furnish data and information, and answer inquiries pertinent to the exercise of any of the director's duties regarding procurement related matters

Recommendation 8: Standardizing the contracting, invoicing, and auditing process.
MOCS should be mandated to ensure consistent policies across agencies to make the contracting, invoicing, and auditing process is standardized, with reasonable deviations, across each agency. Agencies should have some discretion in the documentation needs but a uniform process that only slightly deviates from agency to agency would allow nonprofits to better navigate the system.

Recommendation 9: Data transparency on contract registration and payment processing.
Performance data on contract registration and payment processing should be collected and reviewed by the Mayor's Office of Contracts. This data should be made publicly available via the Mayor's Management Report. In addition, the Charter should provide for the PPB and City Council to review this information and seek remedies.

Funding the Human Services Sector

The nonprofit sector has struggled for decades with how competitive procurements impact the systemic underfunding of programs to the detriment of the financial health of nonprofits. While the Charter is not a document structured to set rates, there are ways that the Charter could manage procurements to better ensure equitable rates. Nonprofits provide a myriad of services on behalf of the government – many of them mandated – and the sector leverages private and philanthropic dollars and funding from the City, State, and federal government to create dynamic programs at a discount to the City.

Additionally, we must pay special attention to the workforce who makes this all possible. We must ensure that nonprofit service providers are funded at levels that support fair and equitable wages for the dedicated human service workers who carry out this vital work. The well-trained, talented, and committed nonprofit workforce should not be forced into poverty due to chronic underfunding of City contracts.

Recommendation 10: Amending the PPB principles.
The underfunding of human services contracts is the most pressing issue impacting the sector. The PPB should be the body to address this issue. Charter section 311, sets out principles for the PPB and should be amended to include language requiring that procurements reimburse providers for reasonable costs by adding language to Section 311.d "(iv) rules requiring all agencies to reimburse nonprofit client services providers for at least the reasonable cost of providing the contracted services."

Recommendation 11: Addressing underfunded contracts with sample budgets.
Human services providers compete for contracts that contain scopes of work proposed by government that are typically developed without a market survey of costs or input from providers. This results in contracts that do not cover the actual cost of services and provide inadequate compensation for a highly educated workforce essential to implementing a high-quality program. Chapter 13 of the Charter instructs the City on the procurement process, the City should include a rationalization, through a sample budget, for the rates set forth in the RFP. Chapter 13 of the Charter should include language that "Prior to issuing an invitation for bids, requests for proposals, or other solicitations that set forth proposed rates, the agency shall undertake an analysis of the costs associated with performing the service, including employee costs, and include the analysis as a sample budget in the bid or request for proposal documents."

Recommendation 12: Surveying contract vendors to develop RFPs.
New York City outsources the bulk of human services programs to nonprofit vendors, and many of these providers compete for contracts for programs in which they have previously held contracts at the City level, as well as from other levels of government and private funders. When the City develops a request for proposal for a set of contracts that are expiring or developing a new RFP that is substantially similar to existing contracts, the City should survey current vendors to receive information on rates, deliverables, and outcome measurements. Current contractors hold vital information on the real costs of running programs, what works and what does not in the current program design, and what deliverables are being met and move towards the outcomes the City seeks when designing a program. Providers can also make recommendations on updated program models that better reflect current needs of client population.The City charter should include in Section 312 language requiring City agencies to survey current vendors, or vendors who hold substantially similar contracts, when creating a bid or request for proposal.

In the event the RFP does not reflect market research, the agency should have to defend why crucial services and equitable wages were not fully funded. The rate setting methodology should be transparent to the public especially for per-client or per-service rates and should document the components and calculation of the rate.

[redacted]

Recommendation 13: Require Human Service contracts to be funded at the True Cost of Living

In Section 16 of the Charter, the mayor must report on social indicators and equity including "budgetary resources allocated to reduce poverty." The city's current under-resourcing of human services contracts is poverty-inducing; not poverty reducing. We respectfully submit that the Charter should require human services contracts to be funded at a true cost of living, and such funding be reported annually. To further this goal, we suggest amending Charter Section 2-04 to require multi-term client services contracts include annual wage escalators that maintain contract wages at a true cost of living.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at [redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Enterprise Community Partners testimony

From: "Boyle, Patrick" [redacted]

To: "chartertestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <chartertestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 08 Apr 2025 19:08:07 +0000

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Please see submitted written testimony from Enterprise Community Partners. Thank you.

Patrick Boyle
Senior Director
New York

[redacted]

Testimony for the New York City Charter Revision Commission

Submitted by Enterprise Community Partners

April 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the following testimony for the consideration of the Charter Revision Commission. This document will highlight a number of priorities that we urge the Commission to focus on as it absorbs public input and moves toward possible recommendations.

There is no more important public policy concern at this point in the city's history than solving our affordable housing and homelessness crises. We applaud this Commission's specific charge to study housing, land use and related issues in an effort to find solutions in possible amendments to the Charter.

Enterprise is a national nonprofit that exists to make a good home possible for the millions of families without one. We support community development organizations on the ground, aggregate and invest capital for impact, advance housing policy at every level of government, and build and manage communities ourselves. Since our New York office opened in 1987, we have committed more than $4.6 billion in equity, loans and grants to create or preserve over 67,500 affordable homes across New York City.

Priority: Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing by Expediting Development on City Land

Summary:
New York is in desperate need of more affordable housing. Despite the great need, processes like the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) add delay, cost, and most problematically, uncertainty. While community input is important, its merits must be balanced against the fact that we are in a housing crisis, with record homelessness and housing instability. Currently, the balance built into the city's development process is not adequately representative of the scale of our crisis.

We recognize the importance of a process that allows communities and elected representatives a chance to weigh in on large scale development projects. Recommendations to scrap ULURP altogether or to allow all affordable housing to bypass the process may represent an overreach that would have unintended consequences.

However, as the city seeks new opportunities to utilize city-owned land to meet housing goals, it should have the ability to fast-track those projects and deliver affordable units to New Yorkers in need more quickly.

Recommendation:

- To respond to the housing emergency, the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) should be exempted for developments which include affordable housing on city-owned land.

Priority: Advance Fair Housing Goals Through a Fast Track

Summary:
A history of racist zoning and planning practices, discrimination, and NIMBYism – which continues to this day – have contributed to high levels of segregation and inequality in New York City. While progress has been made in tackling fair housing issues through various legislative measures, it remains the case that many community districts throughout the city are de facto closed off to residential development and affordable housing. This is due to the zoning patterns in those areas and the City Council's adherence to "member deference" on land use issues.

Projects need not advance to a City Council vote in order for the member deference tradition to be revealed; instead, developers are unlikely to even plan developments in certain districts based on a Councilmember's perceived openness to housing.

Local elected officials, community boards and other important stakeholders should continue to have a role in shaping their communities. However, this must not be allowed to take the form of blanketly closing off development or refusing to grow. The Fair Housing Framework enacted by the City Council in 2023 presents a perfect opportunity to pair metrics-based fair housing goals with more allowance to projects that meet those goals.

Recommendation:

- For Community Districts that have not met housing targets based on the Fair Housing Framework, a "Builder's Remedy" shall be permitted allowing projects that advance certain established fair housing goals, such as the delivery of affordable and supportive housing units. These projects would be permitted to advance following approval from the City Planning Commission rather than requiring City Council approval and thus de facto City Council veto power.

Priority: Break Down Barriers to Accessing Affordable Housing for Families in Need

Summary:
There is overwhelming need for affordable housing in the city of New York. Homelessness has hit record highs in recent years, doubling from 2022 to 2024 according to HUD and the New York State Comptroller. It is not uncommon for affordable housing properties in the lottery process that may contain around 100 units of rent restricted housing to see upwards of 60,000 applications.

Despite this, timeframes for actually connecting people in need of housing with that housing have extended. In the most recent year of data from the Mayor's Management Report, the median timeframe to fill a lottery and homeless set-aside unit were 202 and 196 days respectively. This timeframe is totally unacceptable, keeping families in homeless shelters or inadequate living conditions far longer than needed.

These delays in getting people approved and placed in housing also impacts mission-driven affordable housing operators, who are feeling the effects of missing rent revenue and sacrificing developer fee due to tax credit rules about lease-up.

Recommendations:

- Throughout the lease-up process for HPD-supported projects, there are many steps of the process requiring agency staff approval. This is from the development of a marketing plan long before lease-up of tenants actually begins, through the lottery and selection process. Instead, the city should broadly move toward an audit approach, where development teams are subject to rules and regulations, but are permitted to fill affordable housing units with qualifying tenants without the burden of wait times while paperwork is approved. Audits and related penalties or consequences will ensure compliance and individuals will be moved into housing faster.
- Local Law 64 of 2018 required that affordable housing projects put re-rentals of units through a so-called "mini-lottery" system that is beset with delays and inefficiencies. This process set into motion by LL64 should be scrapped. Instead, owners should be permitted to re-rent vacant units to income qualified tenants, with units posted on a website so New Yorkers are aware of vacancies.

Priority: Supporting the Viability of New York's Nonprofit Sector

Summary:
Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of factors have created a perfect storm that have been immensely challenging to nonprofits in the housing and homeless services space. Rising insurance rates, spikes in utilities, reduced rental income, and disruptions in labor markets are all creating stressors not only to individual projects, but to the very viability of many nonprofits and community organizations.

Given these dynamics, the ongoing issues with nonprofits in the human and homeless services spaces being paid on a reasonable timetable for services rendered simply must be corrected. Despite focus on the problem from interagency work groups, leading to high-profile reports, technology upgrades, and repeated commitments to improve, the problem is far from resolved.

The lack of on-time payments and contract registration leads to financial strain for organizations, who are required to take out loans and pay interest longer than necessary just to bridge gaps between payments. More accountability needs to be applied via the Charter to resolve this challenge.

Recommendation:

- Amend the City Charter to require that the Procurement Policy Board set contracting timelines for each step of the procurement process and report on agency performance against those timeframes.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Janet Wootten [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 09 Apr 2025 12:30:51 +0000

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Dear Committee:

I strongly support charter revision to make NYC primary elections open to ALL registered voters.

I live on the upper west side and am a New Yorker since 1977. Since earning my graduate degree from Columbia Univ. in 1982, I worked for 20 years as a community organizer, and for the next 20 years as a public relations professional.

With the Committee for Fair Elections, I was active in collecting signatures to include open primaries on the Charter Revision process -- and have worked on numerous political reform campaigns.

With 1M independent (non-affiliated) voters in NYC, structural reform of a primary process that requires party affiliation is long overdue. It's a new day.

I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardliess of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

Janet Wootten

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Madelyn Chapman [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 09 Apr 2025 12:31:11 +0000

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Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Madelyn Chapman

[redacted]

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4916300 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 09 Apr 2025 17:10:24 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 01:09:35 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Rachael Fauss

[redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Testimony to NYC Charter Commission on Government Reform

Re: Restoring Public Trust After Massive Scandals Requires New, Strong NYC Ethics Commission

February 24, 2025

Good evening, members and staff of the Charter Commission. My name is Rachael Fauss, the Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany. We advocate for transparent and accountable government in New York.

We urge you – the members of this commission – to set your sights high. Show New Yorkers you are truly independent and ready to propose the major ethics reforms needed to restore public trust after the massive damage caused by the scandals that have rocked city government to the core. Citizens Union reports that two times as many senior city officials have resigned due to the corruption of the Adam's administration as did under the four previous mayors. Corruption at City Hall is the issue of the day, and this commission has to rise to this moment or risk losing a generation of New Yorkers to cynicism about government and apathy about their right to vote.

Unfortunately, it's obvious that the federal sheriff has ridden out of town and New York is on our own. We have to strengthen the City's front line ethics and anti-corruption agencies.

We urge this commission to do the following three things:

1. Create a New York City independent ethics commission
2. Make ethics guidance far more transparent
3. Study and propose a removal mechanism for the mayor

Create a New York City Independent Ethics Commission

Our main recommendation today is that you propose a ballot initiative creating a New York City independent ethics commission that puts the functions of the Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB) and Lobbying Bureau under one roof, and is funded via independent budgeting and governed by an independently-appointed board. New York's watchdog groups and independent ethics scholars strongly support the basic responsibilities of the state's Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government (COELIG), which includes ethics and lobbying regulation together under a single commission.

Ethics laws are meant to prevent corruption, hold public officials accountable for misconduct, and protect against the appearance of misconduct. When the people believe their government is corrupt they lose confidence in the ability of the government to solve their everyday problems, become cynical about democracy and apathetic about voting.

In working with our watchdog colleagues and legal experts, we have helped to advance improvements to New York State's ethics commission, the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government (COELIG), and recently submitted an amicus brief seeking to uphold its constitutionality before the NYS Court of Appeals. That body has a number of features that should be replicated at the NYC level to improve independence:

1. **Lobbying and ethics regulated under one roof –** Lobbying and ethics are regulated together by the state commission. There is not only logic to this arrangement given the intersecting moonlighting, post-employment, and gift laws, but it also ensures that regulators have access to information necessary to conduct enforcement actions.
2. **Independent budgeting –** Any NYC ethics commission must have a protected budget so that it can perform its mission with adequate resources and no fear of retaliation from the executive. The current Conflicts of Interest Board is down 5 staff from 10 years ago, and its budget has essentially remained flat despite huge increases in inflation and an expanded mission – including regulation of legal defense funds. We strongly support providing COIB and any future ethics commissions an independent budget. See our analysis at the end of this testimony regarding the staffing and budget of COIB.
    a. **COIB has proposed past charter revisions that would peg its budget to the total net expense budget of the city** – with a higher amount if it is given the authority to conduct investigations. Under the City Charter, the Independent Budget Office's appropriations must not be less than ten percent of the appropriations available to pay for the expenses of the Office of Management and Budget.
3. **Independent, balanced appointments –** The NYS Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government has three main ways in which its appointment process increases independence:
    a. **Screening panel for nominations** – The state's law school deans approve nominations sent by the appointing authorities to ensure that candidates are qualified and will serve with independence and integrity.
    b. **Balanced appointments** – The Governor does not have a majority of appointments, but rather appoints 3 of the 11 members; the remainder are appointed by the legislative leaders, Comptroller, and Attorney General. The current Conflicts of Interest Board has a majority of mayoral appointments, with the mayor appointing 3 board members, with one each from the Comptroller and Public Advocate.
    c. **Selection of chair by commission, not appointing authority –** The chair is selected by the commission itself, and is not appointed separately by the governor. This is a crucial mechanism to ensure that the body operates by consensus, and with independence.
4. **Independent investigators** – COELIG is not reliant on the NYS Inspector General – who like the Department of Investigations is appointed by the executive – for investigations, but rather has its own independent investigative staff. We also note that the standards for ethics investigations are different than for criminal investigations; the appearance of misconduct can constitute a violation, not just the intent to commit misconduct.

Make Ethics Guidance Far More Transparent
We also strongly support ensuring that there is greater transparency of written guidance provided to senior officials by any ethics commission, including the current COIB – particularly when this guidance is acknowledged publicly by the official. A continual issue at the city and state level is senior officials stating that guidance was provided to them that allows certain actions, yet the press and public are unable to verify the contents of that guidance and whether the official is acting within the limits set by COIB. There are a number of ways to ensure that there is no "black box" around these decisions – particularly for high-ranking officials:

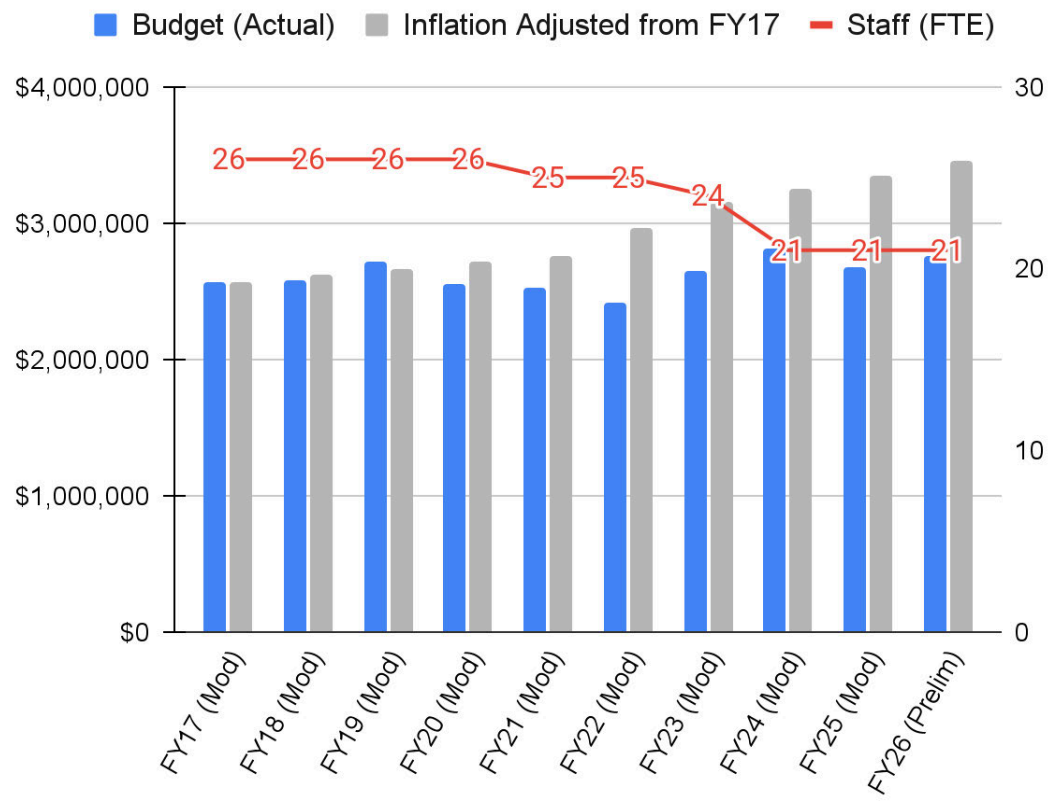
1. **Waiving confidentiality when an official provides misleading, inaccurate, or incomplete public disclosure regarding contents of guidance** – NYS's Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government recently adopted an advisory opinion that allows the commission to waive confidentiality and release information related to the guidance they provided, if not the opinion in its entirety.
2. **Requiring disclosure of written opinions when they are publicly cited by officials** – The Charter could be amended to require public disclosure of guidance provided by COIB when its existence is acknowledged in public.

Study and Propose a Removal Mechanism for the Mayor
We urge the commission to study and propose a removal mechanism for the mayor. Any proposal should be made in consultation with legal scholars and experts; the commission could invite such individuals to testify about this issue at your April 9th hearing on government reform, or have its staff meet with experts. We also encourage you to review Citizens Union's report on Charter Reforms, which includes a discussion of this issue and some considerations for developing a locally-controlled process for removal.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters. I am available for any questions. We are also available to meet with commission staff to discuss these in further detail.

Reinvent Albany Analysis of NYC Conflicts of Interest Board Budget and Staff (FTE), FY 2017- FY 2026				
Fiscal Year	**Appropriation**	**Inflation Adjusted from FY17**	**Staff (FTE)**	**Source**
FY26 (Prelim)	$2,760,750	*$3,450,867*	21	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf
FY25 (Mod)	$2,681,491	*$3,350,341*	21	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf
FY24 (Mod)	$2,811,286	*$3,252,743*	21	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/adopt24/erc6-24.pdf
FY23 (Mod)	$2,642,753	*$3,155,219*	24	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-23.pdf
FY22 (Mod)	$2,417,773	*$2,965,149*	25	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-22.pdf
FY21 (Mod)	$2,528,196	*$2,758,794*	25	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-21.pdf
FY20 (Mod)	$2,558,291	*$2,720,711*	26	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-20.pdf
FY19 (Mod)	$2,716,011	*$2,654,700*	26	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-19.pdf
FY18 (Mod)	$2,580,410	*$2,614,148*	26	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-18.pdf
FY17 (Mod)	$2,561,120	*$2,561,120*	26	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-17.pdf

Reinvent Albany Analysis of NYC Conflicts of Interest Board Budget and Staff (FTE), FY 2017- FY 2026



Testimony to NYC Charter Commission on Government Reform

A Truly Independent Mayor's Charter Commission Will Strengthen Ethics Enforcement, Create Public Removal Process

April 9, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments for today's Charter Commission hearing. Reinvent Albany advocates for more transparent and accountable New York government.

We urge the members of this commission to set your sights high. Show New Yorkers you are truly independent by proposing the major ethics reforms needed to restore the public trust in New York City government. We New Yorkers are on our own. The federal sheriff has ridden out of town and it is up to you and all of us to strengthen the City's front line ethics and anti-corruption agencies.

In February we asked you to do three things:

1. Propose an NYC independent ethics commission, with independent budgeting;
2. Make ethics advice and opinions to city officials far more transparent; and
3. Study a removal mechanism for the mayor.

Since then, Citizens Union has developed a two-step removal process for the mayor that we believe is constitutional and consistent with basic democratic principles of fairness and due process. Reinvent Albany urges you to put this two-step proposal on the ballot, though we would lower the Council vote percentages needed to trigger the process to 2/3 of Councilmembers, and to put before the public to 3/4 of Councilmembers.

For the record, we also strongly support and urge the Commission to place on the ballot:

1. Independent budgeting for the Department of Investigation (DOI)
2. A charter amendment to allow New York City elections to be held in even years, pending passage of state authorization
3. Closing loopholes in Independent Expenditure (IE) reporting

Removal Process for the Mayor

We support Citizens Union's framework of a two-step process to remove the mayor: the City Council initiates a hearing process before voting to bring a "Special Removal Election" before the voters. We believe that this process will address concerns raised by the Commission at your February hearing about well-funded interests gaming the recall process, and concerns that voters would not have a say in a removal conducted solely by the City Council and/or other city officials.

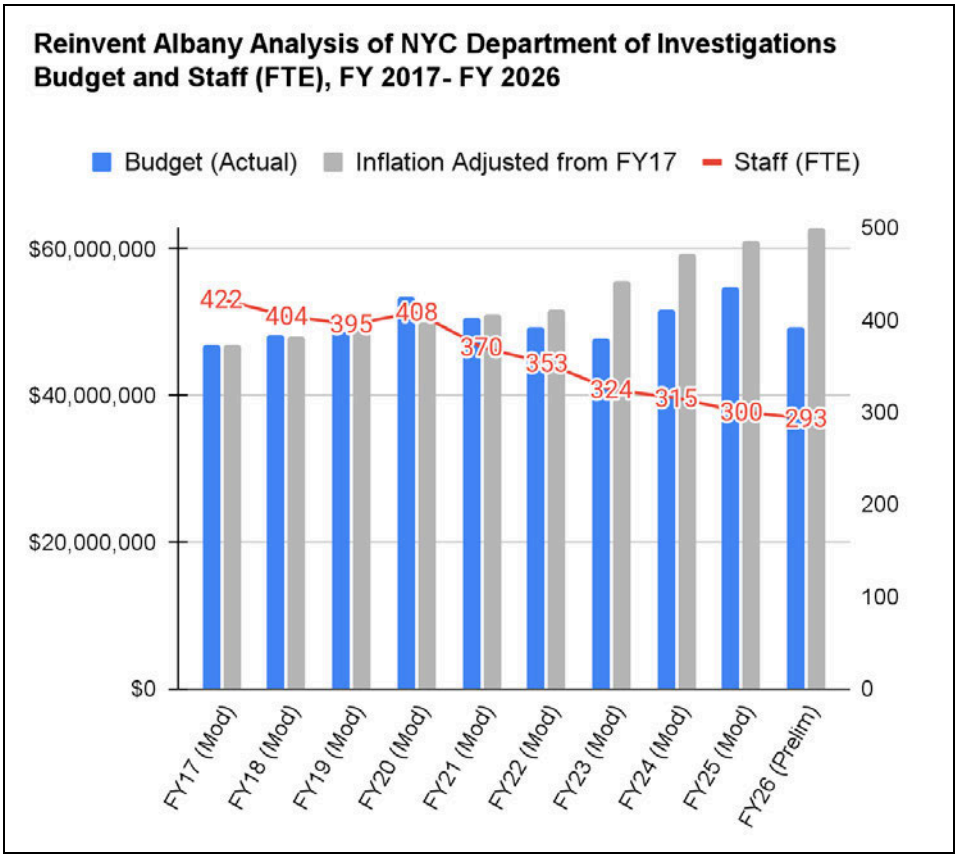
Citizens Union's proposal would require a 70% vote of the Council to initiate the hearing process, and an 80% threshold to recommend removal to the voters, triggering the Special Removal Election. Reinvent Albany supports a lower threshold with a 2/3 vote for the initial hearing, and a 3/4 vote of the Council to recommend removal to the voters. Following voter approval during a "Special Removal Elections," the mayor would be removed, triggering a special election to select a new mayor.

Independent Budgeting for the Department of Investigation

The *New York Times* reports that because of successive budget cuts, the Department of Investigations is operating with a skeleton crew.

Reinvent Albany found that DOI will have lost 30% of its staff from Fiscal Year 2017 to Fiscal Year 2026 if the current budget is approved.

The FY 2026 budget proposed by the Adams administration funds DOI at $49 million, with a full-time staff of 293. In FY 2017, DOI received $47 million and had a full-time staff of 422 (see chart below).



We ask that the Charter Revision Commission ensures that the Department of Investigation's budget is protected through independent budgeting which sets DOI's funding as a percentage of the net budget per what was previously proposed for the Conflicts of Interest Board. A table of DOI's funding history is at the end of this testimony.

Amend the Charter to Allow Even-Year Elections for New York City

One known and well-studied problem the Commission should review is the timing of New York City elections. The Charter Revision Commission cannot unilaterally change the timing of the City's elections due to the New York State Constitution's requirements, but it could spend time studying this problem and prepare the City for authorization from the state.

According to the NYC Campaign Finance Board's 2023 Voter Analysis Report, while voter registration remained high in 2023 (81.8%) , voter turnout was lackluster, at 7.2% in the primary election and 12.8% in the general election. This is abysmal, and has been a problem for New York City elections for decades.

Given the consideration of even-year elections by the New York State Legislature this session, the Charter Revision Commission, we ask the Charter Commission to support even-year elections and propose authorizing changes to the Charter so that the change can go into effect quickly after it is authorized by the state.

Improve Disclosure of Independent Expenditure (IE) Committees
Unfortunately, loopholes in New York State and City IE laws severely undermine New York's efforts to amplify small donors and increase transparency so as to reduce the influence of big money on elections.

These laws allow Independent Spenders to keep the existence of IEs and their contributors hidden until long after they start spending to produce communications, pay for airtime, or pay for social media placement. This means that an Independent Spender could unleash a surprise, last-minute barrage of media and keep hidden the identities of people or entities contributing less than $25,000.

To close major loopholes in IE law, new laws should require:

1. **Earlier disclosure triggers for IEs** that are based on when an Independent Spender encumbers or spends on a communication, rather than when the public sees a communication.
2. **Disclosure of contributors of $1,000 or more to entities giving to the Major Contributors** of Independent Spenders (addressing the dark money nesting doll problem).
3. **Disclosure of contributors to Independent Expenditures and entities contributing to them further back than twelve months before an election.** Contributors to political committees for candidates for office are disclosed when the contribution is made.
4. **Allowing imposition of penalties on an Independent Spender of up to three times the amount of a contribution or expense that was misrepresented** in a Verification Report. Currently, the maximum penalty is $10,000 (14-02(e)), which is absurdly low given known contributions to IEs of half a million to a million dollars. This level of penalty would create parity with some of the current penalties for campaign finance violations, such as going over expenditure limits.

A summary of the current loopholes is below. Note that the corresponding sections of the CFB's rules are provided below, given that they are the most comprehensive regarding the current requirements for IEs. Independent expenditure disclosure is covered under Chapter 46, §1052(a)(15) of the City Charter.

- **No expenditure disclosure until IE communication is distributed, broadcast, or published.** Independent Expenditures do not have to report

their support for a candidate or expenditures and contributions until after the first communication they pay for is seen by the public. *Therefore, an IE's contributions are not subject to the disclosure requirement until covered communications totaling $5,000 or more are seen by the public.* (§14-02(C))

- **"Major Contributor" Loophole.** An IE does not have to disclose contributions to an entity it is receiving contributions of $50,000 or more from unless those contributions are for $25,000 or more a year for a covered election (§14-02(d)ii.b contributions).
- **Expenditure Disclosures.** Each covered communication must be disclosed in the reporting period in which it is first published, aired, or otherwise distributed (§14-02(B)). Each expenditure must be disclosed in the reporting period in which the expenditure is incurred, except that *no expenditure is required to be disclosed prior to the reporting of its associated communication (*§14-02(c)).
- **Contribution Disclosures.** An IE triggers contribution disclosure if it makes "covered expenditures" (totaling) $5,000 or more for a single candidate in the twelve months prior to an election (§14-02(D). However, *the expense for a covered communication does not have to be disclosed until the communication is seen by the public (*§14-02(c)).

Reinvent Albany Analysis of NYC Department of Investigation Budget and Staff (FTE), FY 2017- FY 2026				
Fiscal Year	**Budget (Actual)**	**Inflation Adjusted from FY17**	**Staff (FTE)**	**Source**
FY26 (Prelim)	$49,333,971	$3,450,867	293	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf
FY25 (Mod)	$54,782,469	$3,350,341	300	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf
FY24 (Mod)	$51,648,973	$3,252,743	315	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/adopt24/erc6-24.pdf
FY23 (Mod)	$47,868,111	$3,155,219	324	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-23.pdf
FY22 (Mod)	$49,229,823	$2,965,149	353	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-22.pdf
FY21 (Mod)	$50,666,175	$2,758,794	370	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-21.pdf
FY20 (Mod)	$53,540,540	$2,720,711	408	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-20.pdf
FY19 (Mod)	$48,620,224	$2,654,700	395	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-19.pdf
FY18 (Mod)	$48,227,028	$2,614,148	404	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-18.pdf
FY17 (Mod)	$46,917,256	$2,561,120	422	https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/erc6-17.pdf

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2561194 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

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Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 02:03:25 PM

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Shannon Dulaney

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Please see attached comments from It's Electric, Inc.

April 9, 2025

New York City Charter Revision Commission
Re: Public Input Session on Government Reform

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you Commissioner Buery, Commissioner Greenberger, and members of the New York City Charter Revision Commission, for holding this Public Input Session on Government Reform. My name is Tiya Gordon, and I'm the co-founder and COO of It's Electric, a curbside EV charging startup. We are headquartered at the Newlab offices in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, in District 33.

Recommendations for the City Charter: Flexible Franchise Framework and a Streamlined Revocable Consent Process

My co-founder and I have unique professional backgrounds that inform our work deploying curbside EV charging infrastructure, or EVSE. As Managing Director and Lead Producer for Local Projects, I was the project leader for all public-facing technology (hardware and software) for both the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, which to date has hosted over 43 million visitors. That experience cemented my belief that public EVSE must be designed with a minimal number of failpoints in order to survive the public's use (and misuse) as well as withstand the elements.

My co-founder, Nathan King, is a licensed architect who has spent decades expediting permits for construction projects of various scales, typologies, and locations. Prior to starting It's Electric, he led SOM's design team for the NYC Public Health Lab, currently under construction in Harlem. The 230,000 square foot facility is a complex, multi-function intervention on a severely constrained site. The project's design was given an award for excellence by the NYC Public Design Commission and is on track to being one of the most advanced and sustainable laboratories ever built.

Together, this experience has shaped It's Electric's fundamental approach: getting permits approved is business-as-usual for architects, and we are well-acquainted with the revocable consent (RC) process in New York City. As such, we believe there are ways to improve the RC process to make it more efficient, and to ensure that companies seeking to deploy infrastructure like EV charging – which help the city to meet its climate change and sustainability goals – are able to navigate the process more easily.

<u>Recommendation #1: Establish a "Flexible Franchise Framework" to create an easier pathway for deploying public-private infrastructure for infrastructure in the Right of Way.</u>

A franchise allows a private company to utilize a City-owned asset to provide a public service. The rules for creating and granting franchises is governed by Section 363, and covers all types of possible franchise arrangements.

For the deployment of infrastructure that addresses climate and social justice in the Right of Way (ROW), a separate and more streamlined franchise agreement could be built to increase the speed to deployment, reduce the cost of permitting and operation, and ensure a healthy

competitive environment that encourages innovation and a drive towards lower cost. This new structure acknowledges that City ROW are now, and have always been, a critical location to deploy infrastructure that benefits all City residents. These City-wide franchises have included:

- Public telephones (later LinkNYC)
- Newstands
- Bus shelters

More recently, the City has used Concessions and Revocable Consent to allow for the deployment of mobility companies in the ROW, including:

- Citi Bike (City-wide exclusive bike share concession)
- East Bronx Scooter Share (limited concession)
- Charge Safe, Ride Safe bike battery charging (modified Revocable Consent)
- Department of Transportation/ConEd Curbside EV Charging Program (limited concession, pilot program)

In order for private entities to engage in City-wide infrastructure partnerships, there needs to be a clear path to a long term franchise agreement that ensures the private entity can access project financing and investment. Concession agreements have limited terms, and do not allow the private partner enough control of their assets. While franchise agreements provide more certainty, the current charter rules granting a franchise take too long to enact, and require agency resources that prevent franchise authorizations from maturing. These limitations stifle interest and competition for infrastructure in the ROW, excluding newer and more innovative business models.

A Flexible Franchise Framework would allow City agencies to create limited authorizations that could be quickly deployed, minimizing agency resources, and allowing the City a pathway to achieve its climate and social justice goals. These new franchises can be defined as a subsection to Section 363. A Flexible Franchise would include the following features:

- Limited initial deployment geography, but with a minimum 10-year term for deployments.
    - (ex., Citi Bike concession)
- Awarding of multiple franchise awardees under each authorization, to operate competitively within the same geography, or separately.
    - (ex., East Bronx Scooter Share pilot)
- Pathways for expansion and extension of pilot into a mature City-wide franchise
    - Flexible Franchise would include key performance metrics set by the administering agency
- Agency allowed to award flexible franchises without City Council, Community Board, and Franchise & Concession Review Committee reviews.
    - Alternatively, City Charter could impose timelines for such reviews.
- Uniform Land Use Review Procedure not required.
- Assets deployed in this Framework would not become City property at the termination of the agreement.
- As the initial deployment matures, and as the agency validates established performance metrics from the awardees, the program graduates into a mature franchise arrangement similar to what is established in Section 363.

Flexible Franchises could be limited to:

- Infrastructure Projects permitted in the ROW that address the City's goals for climate change and social justice, including clean transportation, mobility, and civic Internet of Things (IoT) deployments.
- Such agreements can be limited to "no bid" contracts - where the private entity is responsible for the cost of deployment against expected revenue from non-city sources.
- Permit fees waived, or minimized to cover only city administrative costs.
- Revocable Consent not required.
- The framework is intended to keep pace with technology. Today, we are contemplating EV charging stations, and over the next ten years, the City will need to respond to new technologies that have not yet been brought to market.

Recommendation #2: Waive or reduce RC fees for infrastructure investments that will help the City reach its strategic goals.

The City Charter directs the Mayor to develop a "strategic policy statement" every four years that summarizes "the most significant long-term issues faced by the city" and outlines both "policy goals…and proposed strategies for meeting such goals" (Section 17). The most recent such statement, "PlaNYC: Getting Sustainability Done," (April 2023) sets an ambitious target of cutting transportation emissions in half by 2030, a goal the Mayor hopes to meet through four primary strategies, including "[helping] New Yorkers who must drive to drive electric." Because one million New York drivers park on the street, the Adams administration has rightfully recognized the crucial role that curbside EV charging will play in helping New Yorkers make the transition to EVs, setting a goal of installing 1,000 curbside chargers by 2025 and 10,000 chargers by 2030.

As I am sure you are aware, staff at the NYC DOT have worked tirelessly to put this goal into action, including securing $15 million in Charging and Fueling Infrastructure grant funding in August 2024. However, the Trump Administration has demonstrated that we cannot rely on our federal partners to ensure that we as a city meet our sustainability goals. We encourage you to make it easier for private sector partners to make investments – with or without grant support – that will help us collectively reach our goals.

One way to do this is by waiving or reducing RC fees for projects that help the City meet its climate change goals. While we trust the Commission can craft language to this effect, we suggest adding a new Section 364(e) in the charter that states: "All revocable consents granted for uses that are for the express purpose of providing New Yorkers with the ability to utilize electrified transportation options, including but not limited to electric vehicle service equipment, shall not be required to pay annual fees to the City."

About It's Electric

It's Electric is electric vehicle (EV) charging purpose-built for cities, with a mission to unlock access to clean vehicles for all urban drivers. Launched in 2021, It's Electric is solving an urgent challenge: municipalities like New York City are leading the way in setting policy targets to mandate a transition to EVs, but no scalable charging solutions existed for the millions of drivers who don't have access to a private driveway or garage. In New York City alone, one million drivers park on the street, many of them drivers of for-hire vehicles (FHVs). If we want all New Yorkers to have access to electric mobility, we must provide them with convenient and affordable public charging options where they already park: the curb.

It's Electric is addressing this challenge by harnessing spare electrical capacity from nearby buildings to deploy low-footprint curbside Level-2 EV chargers. We create a behind-the-meter connection to property owners' electrical panels to tap this excess capacity, thereby avoiding the barrier of grid limitations and the costly and time-consuming process of creating a new utility interconnection. Because of these significant savings, we can take on the capital and installation costs ourselves, without requiring contributions from our municipal partners or our host properties. Furthermore, we can afford to deploy in areas that don't yet have high rates of EV ownership yet – where we know utilization will initially be low – thus breaking the chicken-or-the-egg cycle that is currently stifling EV adoption in urban areas.

In return for hosting an It's Electric charger, host properties receive a portion of the charger's topline revenue, creating a new passive income stream for them while making it easier for everyone in their community to charge an EV.[1] And unlike other "public" chargers – which are often located in parking lots or garages that charge a fee to access – we are a truly public, no-fee charging option. With revenue sharing for host properties, plentiful access for (current and future) EV owners, and virtually no impact on municipal budgets – It's Electric is a win for everyone.

[1] Host properties earn approximately $800/year in passive income per charger (assuming a 25% utilization rate). The amount of revenue that host properties can expect to earn depends on a number of factors, including the cost of electricity, the charger utilization rate, and the price drivers pay for charging. It's Electric will set pricing in collaboration with the City.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2868459 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 09 Apr 2025 20:44:58 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 04:44:33 PM

This form resides at
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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Frank Morano

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Staten Island Public Input Session on Government Reform Charter Revision Commission Testimony From Frank Morano (candidate for New York City Council) Wednesday, April 9, 2025, 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM Staten Island University Hospital North (enter via the Dr. Regina McGinn Education Center) 475 Seaview Avenue Staten Island, NY 10305 Good evening Commissioners, Thank you for the opportunity to address you tonight. As someone who has testified at every Charter Revision Commission since 2002, I've seen firsthand how vital it is to carefully consider the changes we make to our City's governance. Over the years, the public has witnessed an ever-evolving conversation about how to improve the City Charter. We've made progress in many areas, but there is still much work to be done. As you continue deliberating on reforms, I'd like to emphasize the importance of transparency in your process. Many proposals we hear about don't always seem to make it onto the ballot, and sometimes we don't know until it's too late whether the issues we care about will be included. For example, if the Commission proposes the abolition of the Office of Public Advocate, it doesn't make sense for the public to spend much time discussing proposals on how that office should be reformed or how its holder

should be elected. Similarly, if you're considering allowing Community Board members to be elected, there's no point in discussing who should appoint them. In light of this, I would propose that as you continue deliberating, you set aside time—perhaps even a series of evenings—to hear expert testimony specifically on ballot access and electoral reform. One specific proposal I would like you to seriously consider is the introduction of Proportional Representation for electing the City Council. Many of you may be aware that Proportional Representation (PR) is used widely in democracies around the world, in countries like Germany, Italy, Israel, and Japan. You might not know, however, that New York City had Proportional Representation from 1936 to 1947. This period was, in many ways, a golden age of legislative diversity in New York City. We saw the election of the first African American members of the City Council, independent Democrats who were not beholden to Tammany Hall, and even members of minor parties for the first time. This system, which allowed a broader representation of diverse political views, was ultimately dismantled due to red-baiting, as the election of two Communists led to fears during the Cold War that PR might serve as a foothold for Communism in the U.S. I strongly urge you to reconsider this system. There are important lessons to be learned from this era, and I believe we can avoid the pitfalls of the past and develop a model that works for our current city. I also suggest that you devote a hearing—or a series of hearings—to studying Proportional Representation, perhaps bringing in experts like Dr. Daniel Prosterman, author of Defining Democracy: Electoral Reform and the Struggle for Power in New York City, and Mr. Francis Barry, author of The Scandal of Reform, as well as Rob Richie, CEO of Fairvote, to discuss modern models of PR. In the absence of adopting Proportional Representation, I strongly urge the Commission to consider the implementation of non-partisan elections for city offices, similar to the system currently used in our special elections. This change would have several key benefits for New York City's electoral process and could address some of the systemic issues we face with our current system. At present, the partisan nature of our elections often leads to unnecessary polarization and entrenched party loyalty. Partisan primary elections tend to attract more ideologically extreme voters, who often favor candidates that align with their political party, rather than those who may be more representative of the broader, diverse constituency of New York City. Non-partisan elections would allow candidates to be elected based on their ideas, qualifications, and ability to serve the public, rather than their party affiliation. This would encourage candidates to appeal to a broader range of voters and reduce the influence of party machines and special interests, which often dominate partisan politics. Currently, in special elections, candidates run without party labels, allowing voters to focus on the merits of individual candidates instead of party loyalty. This model has worked well in special elections, and I believe it could be just as effective in regular citywide and district elections. If we were to apply this model of non-partisan elections to general elections, we would see a significant reduction in political polarization, as candidates would need to appeal to a broader spectrum of voters. I am strongly opposed to a top-two primary system because it disproportionately disadvantages minor parties and restricts voter choice. Under a top-two system, voters are essentially forced into choosing between two candidates who are often aligned with the same major political parties, leaving little room for third-party candidates or independent voices to make an impact. This is an undemocratic approach that stifles political diversity and minimizes the importance of smaller, independent

parties that are essential for a healthy democracy. It is discriminatory to minor parties and reduces voter choice, effectively rendering them invisible in the political process. Instead, we should focus on maintaining and expanding the existing model used in special elections. By applying the same non-partisan election model to general elections, we allow voters to select the candidate they believe is most qualified, without the limitations of party affiliation. This system would encourage more moderate, pragmatic candidates who are focused on serving the needs of the public, rather than adhering to the party-line politics that often dominate our current system. Proposal for Non-Partisan Elections: • Eliminate Party Labels: Remove party affiliation from all ballots for municipal elections, allowing voters to focus on the individual candidates' qualifications, policies, and character, rather than their party. • Maintain the Current Special Election Model: Apply the same model currently used in special elections to general elections, where all candidates, regardless of party, compete on a level playing field and are elected based on their individual merits. This change would help reduce the influence of partisanship, foster more cooperative leadership, and encourage candidates to put the city’s needs above party interests. The non-partisan election model would create a more inclusive, democratic process that puts voters first, allowing for the election of leaders who represent the broad interests of the city's diverse population. Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal, and for your continued dedication to improving our city's governance. I want to continue advocating for the expansion of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in New York City, and I urge this commission to consider extending its use from special elections to general elections. This reform has already shown its worth in special elections, and now, it's time to bring its benefits to our general election process. In fact, if the commission is considering reforms that could truly change the dynamics of New York City elections, I believe this would be one of the most impactful changes since term limits were passed in 1993. We should place this question on the ballot and allow voters the opportunity to decide whether to implement RCV in the general elections. A. Eliminating the "Spoiler" Effect For those of us who have worked with or for third-party candidates, we know the “spoiler” effect all too well. The conventional wisdom often tells voters to vote for the "lesser of two evils," rather than for the candidate who truly represents their values, simply because they fear their vote will result in electing a candidate they dislike. We've seen this played out with figures like Jill Stein, Gary Johnson, Ralph Nader, and Ross Perot, whose supporters were often accused of “wasting their vote.” By extending Ranked Choice Voting to general elections, we eliminate that dynamic. Voters can rank their true preferences without fear of wasting their vote or inadvertently helping a candidate they oppose. This is a crucial step toward making elections more reflective of the will of the people. A system where voters are incentivized to vote strategically leads to a representation that doesn’t always reflect their true choices or needs. With RCV, voters can make their choices without that kind of strategic voting. This would fundamentally change the nature of campaigning, as candidates would need to appeal to a broader base of voters, beyond just their core partisan supporters. B. Saving the Costs of Runoff Elections Under our current system, we spend significant taxpayer money on runoff elections when no candidate receives a majority. For instance, New York City spent $13 million in 2013 on a public advocate runoff election that only featured two candidates and no other races. This is a ridiculous waste of resources. By adopting Ranked Choice Voting for general elections, we

eliminate the need for costly runoffs. This “instant runoff” system not only saves the city millions of dollars but also streamlines the election process, making it more efficient and less burdensome for voters and the government alike. C. Providing a True Mandate Under our current system, candidates often win with a plurality, meaning they can be elected with support from only a minority of the electorate. This can lead to situations where a candidate is elected but doesn't truly represent the views of the majority of voters. In the recent special election for Public Advocate, the winner was opposed by nearly 70% of voters. This outcome undermines the legitimacy of elected officials and creates discontent among voters who feel that their voices weren’t truly heard. By extending Ranked Choice Voting to general elections, we would ensure that the winning candidate has a true majority mandate, rather than a narrow plurality. This is a fundamental reform that would restore faith in the election process and give our elected officials a stronger, more legitimate mandate to govern. D. Incentivizing Candidates to Reach Out to a Broader Range of Voters New York City's elections are often dominated by one party, particularly in districts with large majorities of one party. This makes primary elections the de facto contest, with general elections rarely being competitive. As a result, candidates tend to cater to the extremes of their party in order to win primaries, which may not reflect the views of the general electorate. Ranked Choice Voting encourages candidates to reach out to all voters, rather than just focusing on the most vocal or extreme elements of their parties. This incentivizes moderation and fosters more representative and inclusive campaigns, as candidates will need to secure second- or third-choice votes from across party lines. In this way, RCV strengthens democracy by ensuring that the winner is someone who can appeal to a broad coalition of voters. Conclusion: A Reform Whose Time Has Come By extending Ranked Choice Voting to general elections, we have the opportunity to create a more inclusive, fair, and democratic electoral process. I urge the commission to place this on the ballot and give New Yorkers the chance to reform our city’s elections in a way that better reflects the will of the people. In addition, I want to briefly address Initiative and Referendum. As you consider how to allow New Yorkers to pass laws themselves, I have four key points I’d like to make: 1. The current signature threshold of 50,000 signatures (or 45,000 for the two-step method) is far too high. I urge you to lower it. 2. The Mayor should not be able to pre-empt a ballot question by appointing a Charter Revision Commission, as Mayor Bloomberg did when he used this power to block a ballot proposition from the UFT on smaller class sizes. 3. New Yorkers should have the ability to petition for legislative questions, not just Charter changes. Why shouldn’t New Yorkers be able to petition for issues like free lunch for 7th graders or mandating that police officers live in the city? This type of initiative process has worked well in other states like Arizona and California. 4. Finally, we could allow voters to collect signatures to force the City Council to vote on specific legislation, which could bypass the insider-dominated committee process that often buries important bills. Too many good bills never make it to the full Council for a vote, and if they did, they’d likely pass. This would be an important step toward ensuring accountability in our legislative process. Next, I would like to address the issue of Community Board Districts. Right now, there are 51 Council districts and 59 Community Board districts. This mismatch leads to inefficiencies, with multiple Council members representing portions of the same Community Board, which means that each Council member needs to send a staffer to every Community Board meeting. I would propose making Community

Board districts coterminous with Council districts, either by reducing the number of Community Board districts to 51 or by increasing the number of Council districts to 59. This would eliminate duplicative efforts, improve efficiency, and allow Council members and their staff to focus on the needs of their specific communities. The benefits of this change go beyond just Community Boards. It could potentially lead to the alignment of other districts, such as fire districts, police precincts, or civil court districts. This was a topic studied by a State Charter Revision Commission in 1972, and they found that New Yorkers often find themselves navigating a confusing maze of jurisdictions. This situation has only worsened, and simplifying the system would help ordinary citizens get things done more effectively. On the subject of Community Boards, I would also like to address the issue of community board member appointments, particularly the current recommendation process. While borough presidents currently have a say in appointing members to community boards, I believe that the process should be reformed to make the recommendations of elected city councilmembers binding. This would allow for greater accountability and more direct representation of local communities in shaping decisions that affect their neighborhoods. As someone currently running for City Council, I know firsthand how important it is for local communities to have a voice in the decisions that directly impact them. My opponent, the borough president's son, holds a significant position in the local government, and I expect that, should I be elected, the borough president will not be accepting my recommendations for community board members. This is a clear conflict of interest, as it puts the decision-making process in the hands of those who may not always have the best interests of the community at heart. The current process is ripe for politicization and can easily lead to the exclusion of diverse voices, particularly in neighborhoods where the borough president or other political figures may hold influence. Allowing city councilmembers to make binding recommendations ensures that those who are closest to their communities—and who are directly accountable to their constituents—have a meaningful role in the selection of community board members. By making these recommendations binding, we would promote transparency, inclusivity, and fairness in the community board appointment process, and ensure that these bodies truly reflect the needs and interests of the neighborhoods they serve. It is crucial that we trust local representatives to choose individuals who are best suited to serve their communities, not those who are politically connected or beholden to other interests. Thank you for your consideration of this important reform, and for your commitment to making our city's governance more democratic and representative of all New Yorkers. Now, I'd like to touch on a few additional reforms I believe would benefit New Yorkers: 1. Allow Borough Presidents to make appointments to the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). Currently, all nine members of the TLC are appointed by the Mayor, but no Borough President has direct input. Given that many residents of the outer boroughs are underserved by transportation options like buses, subways, and taxis, I believe allowing Borough Presidents to have at least one appointee to the TLC would give these communities a voice, especially as debates about ride-hail services like Uber and Lyft continue to evolve. 2. The Form of Ballot Questions. I strongly urge the Commission to avoid placing unrelated or diverse policy changes into a single ballot question. In 1967, voters rejected a broad slate of constitutional amendments, including important reforms, because they were packaged together with a controversial proposal about the Blaine Amendment. Putting unrelated issues

together could undermine voter confidence and result in rejecting valuable proposals. 3. Voter Representation on Future Charter Revision Commissions. I propose that future Charter Revision Commissions include at least one borough-wide member elected by voters, and one member representing the city as a whole. This would allow New Yorkers to have a direct say in the proposals that are being considered. While the Mayor and City Council would still maintain a controlling majority, this change would help make the process more representative and transparent. Lastly, I would like to make a plea to the Commission that the issue of sanctuary cities be placed on the ballot. This matter has become a key issue for New Yorkers, and the public deserves to weigh in on the status of our sanctuary city policies. As you know, these policies impact the safety, economy, and welfare of our city. Many residents feel that the current sanctuary city policies undermine public safety and place undue strain on our resources. Allowing the public to vote on this issue will provide an important democratic outlet for those who feel strongly about it. I strongly urge you to place this issue on the ballot for the people of New York City to decide. Finally, I would like to encourage the Commission to hold expert hearings on the following topics, which could lead to future improvements in our city's governance: • Campaign finance reform, including the implementation of a system similar to Seattle’s “Democracy Vouchers.” • The establishment of a recall mechanism for NYC elected officials. • Reforming the selection process for city judges. • Examining the role of the Public Advocate and mayoral succession. • Revisiting how the City Comptroller’s office manages city pension funds. • Separating Animal Care and Control from the NYC Department of Health. I hope these suggestions help guide the future of the City Charter and contribute to the growth of a more effective and responsive government. Thank you for your time and consideration. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Frank Morano www[.]moranoforcouncil[.]com

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Citizens Union written testimony April 9 hearing

From: Ben Weinberg [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 09 Apr 2025 20:47:19 +0000

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Dear Charter Revision Commission,

Please see attached Citizens Union's written testimony for today's Staten Island Public Input Session on Government Reform.

I will providing oral remarks at tonight's testimony that would summarize this written submission.

Thank you,

Ben Weinberg

Ben Weinberg
Director of Public Policy
Citizens Union/Citizens Union Foundation
[redacted]

CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Testimony before the 2025 City Charter Revision Commission
Staten Island Public Input Session on Government Reform
April 9, 2025

Dear Members of the 2025 Charter Revision Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Ben Weinberg, and I serve as the Director of Public Policy for Citizens Union. I apologize for not being able to attend in person.

This evening, I will address two key areas of government reform, both expanding on our February testimony: (1) moving city elections to even-numbered years, and (2) establishing a mechanism for the removal of the Mayor for misconduct.

Moving City Elections to Even-Numbered Years

At your previous hearing, I spoke about the benefits of moving city elections to even-numbered years: increased voter participation, reduced turnout disparities, and lower administrative costs. As you consider potential ballot proposals, we'd like to emphasize the public support for this reform.

Consolidating elections reduces voter fatigue by limiting the number of times people are asked to vote, as well as the barrage of ads, mailers, and the need to lean about candidates and races twice a year. Surveys and referenda nationwide confirm that voters support this change.

In June 2023, after the State Legislature passed a bill moving county and town elections to even-numbered years, a Siena College poll found this was the most popular policy passed at the end of that legislative session.[1] According to the statewide survey, New Yorkers found this measure was "good for New York" by a 2-to-1 margin, including a majority of Democrats and a plurality of Republicans and independents. Support was strongest in New York City, with 60% in favor and only 16% opposed.

In 2024, a survey focused solely on New York City voters found nearly 3-to-1 support regardless of age, race and ethnicity, education, or party affiliation. The highest net support was among young voters, with

[1] NYers Oppose Using SUNY Dorms to Temporarily House New Migrants to New York, 54-33%. *Siena College Research Institute*, 28 June 2023, https://scri.siena.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/SNY-June-2023-Poll-Release-FINAL.pdf

70% in favor and only 14% opposed. There was no substantial difference in support between Democrats, Republicans, and independents. [2]

These findings mirror national trends. A nationally representative poll about election timing found that nearly 70 percent of Americans favored holding local elections at the same time as national elections. [3]

Unsurprisingly, when this issue appears on ballots, it passes overwhelmingly. A UC San Diego review[4] found that 36 of 37 municipal ballot measures to consolidate elections in the last decade were approved—many by large margins: Los Angeles (2015) with 72% approval, Phoenix (2018) with 72% approval, and Austin (2012 & 2021) with 76% and 66% approval, respectively.[5] Indeed, this reform have been adopted by legislatures across blue, red, and purple states.

Creating a Mechanism for Mayoral Removal Over Misconduct

The main topic we would like to raise today is our proposal for establishing Mechanism for Removing the New York City Mayor for Misconduct. In the February hearing, we noted the lack of such process presents a critical gap in the City Charter, and makes New York City an outlier among large cities in the U.S.

Citizens Union believes that an honest government requires strong, effective mechanisms to hold elected officials accountable for misconduct, corruption, and abuse of power. History shows that cities and states plagued by corruption reform their laws to prevent future abuse—we believe it's time for New York City to do the same.

We promised to come back to the Commission with a more detailed proposal for a process that would ensure public integrity, avoid partisanship, and prevent prolonged leadership crises.

Today, we released a proposal for a hybrid, locally controlled removal process, which we urge the Commission to consider. The full report on this topic is attached after this testimony, and can be found on the Citizens Union website.

We recommend a locally-controlled, hybrid mechanism for removal that begins with the City Council and ends with voters. First, a supermajority of the City Council would need to vote to recommend charges for removal on grounds related to misconduct. The Council would then hold a 30-day hearing, where the Mayor would have the right to counsel and would be able to present evidence and witnesses. Next, the charges would need to be approved by another supermajority of the Council, and the question would then be sent to voters for final approval in a Special Removal Election. If voters approve the removal, regular succession and special election procedures outlined in the charter would take effect.

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[2] Polling NYC Survey Analysis of 2025 Likely Mayoral Voters on Politics, Crime, Migrants, and Electoral Reform. *Manhattan* Institute, Jesse Arm, 18 April 2024, https://manhattan.institute/article/polling-nyc-survey-analysis-of-2025-likely-mayoral-voters

[3] Sarah Anzia. 2014. Timing and Turnout: How Off-Cycle Elections Favor Organized Groups. University of Chicago Press (Page 88)

[4] Big Cities – Tiny Votes? America's Urban Voter Turnout, Zoltan Hajnal and Avi Green (UC San Diego) 2024 https://yankelovichcenter.ucsd.edu/_files/reports/Big-Cities-Tiny-Votes.pdf

[5] Citizens Union. December 2022. Policy Report: Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years. https://citizensunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Moving-Municipal-Elections-to-Even-Numbered-Years Citizens-Union-report_FINAL.pdf

Key elements of the proposed process include:

- **Grounds for removal**: The removal of the Mayor must be based solely on misconduct, not political differences. Therefore, the legal grounds should be well-tailored to preclude abuse; the Mayor could only be removed for either malfeasance, neglect of duty, violation of the oath of office, or a conviction of a felony regarding conduct in office.
- **Voting thresholds**: A mayoral removal process should be deliberately difficult to achieve and be used extremely rarely. And in New York City, with its overwhelmingly Democratic lean, multiple majority thresholds should be required for removal. Under the proposed process, removal would require 70% of the City Council to issue charges, 80% of the Council to recommend removal, and a simple majority of New York City voters to confirm the removal.
- **Due process, transparency, and timeline**: Proceedings would be made public, and the mayor would have robust legal rights, including a right to counsel and the ability to present evidence and call witnesses. The overall removal process would be conducted within a reasonable timeframe to avoid disruption to government, with the entire process, from charges of removal to Special Removal Election, taking no more than 67 days.

This proposal is based on analysis of removal systems across dozens of cities and states, examining their compatibility with New York City's political system. We've laid out why we think other common methods for removing an elected executive—like impeachment and recall—are not suitable for New York City. This hybrid model is intentionally structured to avoid the pitfalls of other removal systems, like petition-driven elections, often exploited by high-spending special interests.

We acknowledge the proposal we are putting forward today is a starting point in a conversation, and we encourage the Charter Revision Commission to consider this issue as you move forward in this process.

Reforming Governor's authority to remove a mayor: Although this is not under the Commission's jurisdiction, we also believe state law should be amended to limit the governor's broad removal powers over mayors. Currently, the governor holds absolute power to remove a mayor for any reason, provided the mayor receives "a copy of the charges and an opportunity to be heard in his defense," This unilateral authority is so ill-defined that it has never been exercised, and even the mere threat of its use raises concerns about undermining the will of voters. We believe reforms to this process should require clear charges related to misconduct, a public hearing, and a chance for the mayor to defend themselves, and time limits. Our report includes more details on this topic.

<u>Support for Open Primaries</u>

Finally, we also want to reiterate our support for opening up the City's closed primary system. The volume of public testimony submitted to the Commission in favor of this reform has been significant - and we thank the commission for its transparency with incoming public input. We believe every New Yorker should have a say in local elections, regardless of party registration.

We thank the Commission of your work and dedication to improving our city charter, and would be happy to answer any questions.

CITIZENS UNION POLICY REPORT

How to Remove the New York City Mayor Over Misconduct

April 2025

A PROPOSAL FOR CLEAR AND BALANCED RULES THAT ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND MAINTAIN DEMOCRATIC SAFEGUARDS

Executive Summary

- An honest government requires strong mechanisms to hold elected officials accountable for misconduct. However, New York City lacks a practical system to remove a mayor in exceptional circumstances related to misconduct, making it an outlier among major cities. Currently, the governor holds unchecked power to remove a mayor for any reason, while the City's only removal option applies to cases of inability or disability.
- A fair mayoral removal process should require a large supermajority of the City Council to recommend removal, followed by a Special Removal Election where voters have the final say. Grounds for removal must be based on misconduct, not political differences, and the process should include a public hearing ensuring due process for the mayor. If voters confirm the Council's removal recommendation, succession rules take effect, and an interim mayor calls for a Special Election.
- Other common methods to remove an elected executive, including recall, impeachment, and court intervention are unsuitable for New York City's political system.
- Additionally, the governor's broad removal powers should be reformed to require clear charges, a public hearing, and a chance for the mayor to defend themselves, ensuring accountability while protecting democratic safeguards.

Introduction

The public debate over removing Mayor Eric Adams following his indictment on federal corruption charges and alleged quid pro quo deal to evade justice has exposed a major flaw in the laws on mayoral misconduct. New York City lacks a practical, balanced, and clearly defined mechanism to remove a mayor under exceptional circumstances related to misconduct. It is one of the only large cities without such a system of accountability.

Currently, the governor holds absolute power to remove a mayor for any reason, provided the mayor receives "a copy of the charges and an opportunity to be heard in his defense," as stated in the New York Public Officers Law. This unilateral authority is so ill-defined that it has never been exercised, and even the mere threat of its use raises concerns about undermining the will of voters.

Another potential removal process exists under section 10 of the New York City Charter, which allows for the removal of a mayor due to an "inability" to discharge the powers and duties of the office. Modeled after the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, this process is intended for cases of physical, mental, or medical incapacity rather than misconduct. It requires near-unanimous agreement from a Committee on Mayoral Inability—composed of mayoral appointees—and includes multiple opportunities for the mayor to contest removal.

As a result, New York City remains one of the only major U.S. cities without a formal mechanism for removing a mayor due to misconduct. This glaring gap in oversight deprives New Yorkers of a crucial tool to hold the nation's most powerful mayor accountable for abuses of power.

Why is this issue urgent? Cities plagued by corruption scandals have historically reformed their laws to strengthen accountability. Detroit revised its process for removing elected officials in 2011 after a court blocked the city council's attempt to oust an indicted mayor—who was later sentenced to prison. Illinois amended its constitution to allow for gubernatorial recall after several governors were convicted of felonies. In Baltimore, after multiple corruption scandals, voters approved a charter amendment to make the Inspector General independent. Similarly, much of New York City's current ethics framework was established in response to corruption cases during the Koch administration in the 1980s.

Citizens Union believes that an honest government requires strong, effective mechanisms to hold elected officials accountable for misconduct, corruption, and abuse of power.

This report outlines how the New York City Charter and New York State law should be amended to establish a process for removing a mayor under certain circumstances—while preserving democratic safeguards. It also provides an overview and analysis of alternative removal processes and a comparison of other jurisdictions.

Removal by New York City Voters

A Special Mayoral Removal Election Called by the City Council, After It Finds Misconduct

To ensure a fair and effective path to accountability, removing a mayor for misconduct must be a well-defined, two-step process that prevents political misuse while providing meaningful due process.

The two most common methods for removing an elected executive—impeachment and recall—are not suitable for New York City. Impeachment, which would grant a single-chamber legislative branch, the City Council, sole authority to remove a duly-elected mayor, will not provide sufficient scrutiny for such a consequential decision, especially regarding the city's highest elected office. A recall system, in which voters could initiate removal through a petition-driven election, risks being exploited by high-spending special interests, as seen in other jurisdictions. Additionally, New York City lacks a strong tradition of citizen-led ballot initiatives, and implementing a recall process would require explicit state authorization. A deeper discussion of these and other removal methods is included later in this report.

Citizens Union believes the removal process for mayoral misconduct should involve a determination by a large supermajority of the City Council, triggering a referendum to confirm the decision.

This approach ensures: a) that a mayor can only be removed through broad consensus among council members, and b) that voters get the final say as to whether the mayor may continue to serve. If voters approve the removal, the succession process outlined in section 10 of the New York City Charter would take effect, and a special election would be held to fill the vacancy.

Key Elements in a Mayoral Removal Process

- **Grounds for removal**: The removal of a mayor must be based on misconduct, not political differences. The legal grounds for initiating the process should be neither vague and open to broad interpretation, nor so narrowly defined that they limit its application. The mayor should be subject to removal for any of four reasons: malfeasance, neglect of duty, violation of the oath of office, and a conviction of a felony regarding conduct in office.[1] Local jurisdictions across the country use a variety of terms as grounds for removal, including misfeasance, malfeasance, misconduct, inability, neglect in the performance of duties, willful violation of duty, offense involving moral turpitude, convictions, neglect of duty, corrupt conduct in office, refusal to cooperate with ethics investigations, indictments for felony by a grand jury, among others.

[1] NYC Charter Sec. 1139 already disqualifies people from holding city elected offices if they were convicted of certain offenses, but they include a narrow range of state and federal felonies.

- **Voting thresholds** – A mayoral removal process should be deliberately difficult to achieve and should remain an extremely rare occurrence. Supermajorities of two-thirds or higher are nearly always required to remove elected officials at the city, state, and federal levels, as well as in jurisdictions around the world. Some processes even incorporate different voting thresholds at various stages. In New York City, with its overwhelming Democratic majority, we believe the supermajority margin should be quite substantial. Under this proposed process, removal would require increasingly higher majorities at multiple steps: 70% of the City Council to issue charges, 80% to recommend removal, and finally, a majority of New York City voters to confirm the removal.

- **Due process, transparency, and timeline –** Given the gravity of removal proceedings, all proceedings and underlying materials must be made public. The mayor must have the right to present their case, including evidence and witnesses, and be represented by counsel. However, the overall removal process must be conducted within a reasonable timeframe to prevent prolonged disruption and instability in city government. Under this proposal, no more than 67 days would pass from when the Council brings charges until voters vote on removal (7 days to start the hearing, 30 days to complete hearing and vote to recommend removal, 30 more days until a Special Removal Election is held).

- **Local control –** The removal of the Mayor of New York City should be a local matter. This hybrid proposal begins with the City's legislative branch—representing all communities and neighborhoods—and ends with the City's voters, without involvement from any state entity (except for potential litigation in state courts). The state constitution and state law grant local governments Home Rule over the "mode of selection and removal" of local officials.[2] However, the Governor would still retain the legal authority to remove a mayor; a later section of this report proposes reforms to that process.

- **Reform approval –** Establishing a new method in the New York City Charter for removing a mayor must be approved by voters. The current Charter Revision Commission, which is developing proposals for the November 2025 ballot, can propose the removal mechanism described here. Once voters approve the proposal, the City Council should promptly establish rules governing the process.

CITIZENS UNION'S PROPOSED PROCESS FOR MAYORAL REMOVAL

1. The procedure is triggered when the mayor has engaged in one of the following:
    a. Malfeasance,
    b. Neglect of duty,
    c. Violation of the oath of office, or
    d. Conviction of a felony regarding conduct related to the holding of the office of mayor.

[2] New York State Constitution, Art. IX Sec. 2.; Municipal Home Rule Law Sec. 10

2. The City Council may issue charges regarding such misconduct in the form of a resolution, by a vote of at least 70% of its members. A notice of the charges and the factual basis for each charge must be filed with the City Clerk, which will make them public, and served upon the mayor.

3. The mayor is given the opportunity to be heard before the Council, under rules to be prescribed by the Council, which must adhere to the following requirements:
    a. A public hearing begins within seven days.
    b. The right of the mayor to representation by counsel.
    c. The right of the mayor to present evidence, call witnesses, subpoena witnesses and evidence, and be heard on his/her own behalf.

4. The Council must complete its hearing and vote on the question of removal within 30 days.

5. At the conclusion of such hearing, the City Council votes whether the mayor has engaged in the misconduct he/she was charged with and should therefore be removed from office. If the vote is approved by at least an 80% majority, the Speaker of the Council shall file the findings with the City Clerk and call a Special Removal Election, which will be held in 30 days.[3] If the date of Special Removal Election falls within 30 days of a primary or general election day, it will be consolidated with that election to increase voter participation.

6. The Council's findings should not be subject to judicial review on its merits, but violations of the removal process as set by the City Charter may be challenged in court.

7. The Special Removal Election shall include one ballot question asking whether the mayor should be removed. The language of the question will be predetermined by the Charter. No other question or contest will appear on that ballot, unless the election is consolidated with a primary or general election.

8. Campaign finance disclosure rules governing municipal ballot proposals or referenda will apply in the Special Removal Election. Contributions to political committees and Independent Expenditures campaigning for and against removal must be disclosed in the same manner.

9. If voters confirm the City Council's findings, the succession provisions of the Charter apply, and whoever succeeds to the mayoralty shall follow the provisions of section 10 of the Charter in calling for a special election to fill the vacancy. The removed mayor may not run in this special election.

10. Whoever is elected in the special election immediately takes office.

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[3] Some cities bar removal of a mayor at the beginning or near the end of the mayor's term. We have not included that recommendation because the seriousness of the charges may merit removal at any time during the term of office.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY: NYC MAYOR REMOVAL PROCESS

City Council Issues Charges by a 70% Supermajority	• Grounds: malfeasance, neglect of duty, violation of the oath of office, or felony conviction related to conduct in office • Misconduct charges must be in the form of a Council resolution
30-Day Hearing and Vote by the City Council	• Hearing begins within 7 days of charges, and can take up to 30 days, including vote • Mayor can present evidence, call witnesses, and be represented by counsel • Hearing is public, rules set by the Council
City Council Votes to Remove Mayor by an 80% Supermajority	• If approved, Council Speaker calls for a Special Removal Election • Findings are filed and made public
Special Removal Election	• Ballot question to confirm mayoral removal • Held in 30 days of Council vote • Same campaign finance rules as referenda
Regular Succession and Special Election to Fill Vacancy	• If voters remove, succession rules take effect • Interim mayor calls for Special Election • Removed mayor cannot run in this election

Alternative Mayoral Removal Methods

Impeachment and Removal by Lawmakers

It is uncommon for unicameral jurisdictions to grant lawmakers impeachment power, making this process unsuitable for New York City's political structure

The removal of executive officers for misconduct is typically handled through an impeachment process overseen by legislative bodies. In the U.S. Congress and 48 states, including New York, one legislative chamber presents charges against the official, and if approved, the other chamber conducts a trial that may result in removal from office.

Yet at the municipal level, impeachment, often just called "removal" in city charters, exists in a small number of jurisdictions. Local elected officials do face impeachment in towns and smaller cities, and some state legislatures have the authority to impeach municipal officials.[4] However, no city operates under a bicameral system like state and federal governments, and the impeachment of a mayor in a major city by a City Council has not occurred in decades.[5]

Among the nation's largest cities, Houston, Detroit, Seattle, El Paso, Louisville, and Milwaukee have mayoral removal mechanisms controlled by Council Members. In nearly all of these cases, a supermajority of the City Council is required to confirm the removal—two-thirds in Houston, Detroit, Seattle, and Louisville; three-quarters in Milwaukee; and a simple majority in Memphis. Additionally, the mayor is granted due process, including the right to present evidence, compel witnesses, and be represented by counsel.

Most local laws governing removal procedures date back to the mid-20th century or earlier, but some have been codified more recently. In 2011, Detroit voters approved a new City Charter that reformed the "forfeiture" process for elected officials after the Detroit City Council's previous attempt to remove a mayor was blocked by the courts. [6] Similarly, after three Cincinnati City Council members were indicted for corruption in 2020, voters amended the City Charter to grant the Council authority to suspend its own members. [7]

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[4] See for example, Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs, The New York Times, Oct. 4, 2019. How Does It Feel to Be Impeached? These Mayors Can Tell You All About It. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/04/us/impeached-mayors.html For impeachment of local officials by state legislatures see, for example, Indiana Code Titles 5 Article 8: Officers' Impeachment, Removal, Resignation, And Disqualification https://iga.in.gov/laws/2024/ic/titles/5#5-8-1-2

[5] Unlike the rarity of mayoral impeachments, it is quite common for city councils to have the power to remove one of their own for misconduct. The New York City Council can expel a member following charges and a hearing, with a two-thirds vote (Charter Sec. 45). This authority was exercised for the first time in 2020.

[6] Judge blocks effort to oust Detroit mayor, Aug. 18, 2008, The Associated Press https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna26273498

[7] WVXU, Becca Costello, April 15, 2021. Explaining Issues 1 And 2, The Anti-Corruption Amendments on Cincinnati's May Ballot. https://www.wvxu.org/local-news/2021-04-15/explaining-issues-1-and-2-the-anti-corruption-amendments-on-cincinnatis-may-ballot

The traditional impeachment method as established in the federal government, states, and several cities, will not work in New York City. New York City has a unicameral legislature, the City Council, and it often finds itself at odds with the mayor. Impeachment typically requires a supermajority vote to convict and remove from office, a high threshold meant to reserve such unusual action to serious abuses of power, but a two-thirds vote to override a mayoral veto is not uncommon in the New York City Council. Even a higher threshold for removal could be influenced by partisanship, considering that Democrats have always held more than 85% of Council seats, including during Republican mayors. For these reasons, we do not support impeachment as a method for removing the mayor.

Removal Involving the Courts

Courts play a central role in impeachments outside the U.S., but involving New York courts in removing the mayor would add a layer of complexity

Outside the United States, the most common method of impeaching an elected executive official involves the judicial branch—either by granting courts the power to try an official impeached by the legislature or to review a removal decision made by lawmakers.

For example, in Colombia, Germany, the Czech Republic, and many other countries, once the legislative body votes to impeach a president by a supermajority, a constitutional court hears the case and determines whether the official should be removed. In other cases, such as South Korea, a president can be suspended by lawmakers, but the Constitutional Court reviews the decision and has the authority to reverse the impeachment. The composition and function of these high courts vary across jurisdictions.[8]

In the U.S., courts play a limited role in removal proceedings. In Nebraska, the only unicameral U.S. state, if the state legislature impeaches a governor, the Nebraska Supreme Court conducts the trial. In Virginia, voters can gather signatures to petition a local trial court (Circuit Court) to conduct a trial against a city elected official over misconduct, and the court has the authority to remove the official.[9] Under the Pittsburgh Charter, Pennsylvania's trial court (Court of Common Pleas) can appoint a citizen committee to investigate misconduct of an elected official, and the final decision may then be referred to the City Council.[10]

Granting the judicial branch the final authority over the removal of New York City's mayor is unlikely to be effective. Justices of the State Supreme Court in New York City are elected and not insulated from party politics. Additionally, such an approach would shift the decision-making power away from New York City's jurisdiction and into the hands of a body governed by state law, reducing local control over the process. Finally, the courts may well be called

[8] See for example, Aziz Z. Huq, Tom Ginsburg & David E. Landau, "The Comparative Constitutional Law of Presidential Impeachment," 88 University of Chicago Law Review 81 (2021); Brown, Lucas (2024) "A Taxonomy of Impeachment Methods Used Worldwide," Indiana Journal of Constitutional Design: Vol. 10, Article 3.
[9] Sec. 24.2-233 of the Code of Virginia
[10] Pittsburgh Home Rule Charter Sections 806 and 807

upon to resolve issues relating to this process, so having them also make the removal decision can be seen as in conflict with their judicial role.

Removal by an Ad-Hoc Body Created for This Purpose

Granting removal power to other City elected officials could introduce conflicts of interest, particularly among those with aspirations for higher office

New York City has elected officials beyond the City Council who could potentially play a role in a two-step impeachment process in the absence of an upper legislative chamber or judicial involvement. For example, after the City Council approves charges against the mayor, the impeachment trial could be conducted by an ad-hoc removal body composed of the Public Advocate, the City Comptroller, the five borough presidents, and the City Council Speaker.

For comparison, the current Committee on Mayoral Inability consists of the City Comptroller, the Speaker of the City Council, the longest-serving borough president, the Corporation Counsel, and one deputy mayor chosen by the mayor. This committee has the authority to refer decisions regarding the mayor's inability to serve to the full Council for a vote.

However, the political dynamics within New York City may introduce unwanted conflicts of interest to the decisions of such ad-hoc body. Citywide and boroughwide elected officials often have ambitions for higher office, including the mayor's office, and one of them would become the acting mayor if the mayor were removed. Any removal mechanism should be designed to minimize personal political motivations and ensure impartial decision-making.

Removal Through a Recall Election

The most widely used method for removing mayors would likely face challenges in New York with petitions driven by well-funded special interests

Recall elections are the most common method for removing mayors due to misconduct. Thirty-nine states allow local elected officials to be recalled, typically through constitutional or statutory provisions that govern localities statewide. Some states permit cities to establish their own recall rules through their charters. Of the 30 largest U.S. cities, 22 mayors can be recalled. Recall elections are particularly prevalent in municipalities in the Western U.S. and the Midwest, though they are not exclusive to those regions.

An appendix for this report includes a comparison of major cities with recall and other removal methods.

A recall is initiated by citizen petitions and results in a ballot question asking voters whether an elected official—in this case, the mayor—should remain in office. Procedures vary widely, including: The number of signatures required to trigger a recall election; the timeframe for signature collection; whether specific grounds for recall must be cited; the ballot structure, like whether a successor is chosen on the same ballot; vacancy rules once the official is recalled; and whether a recalled mayor can run again.

One of the biggest weaknesses of the recall system lies in the petition process. If the signature threshold is too low, the collection period too long, and rules too lax, recalls can become tools for well-funded political opponents and special interests that drive signature petitions rather than a safeguard against misconduct. Excessive recall attempts over policy disagreements rather than misconduct can create instability. Conversely, if the threshold is too high, recall petitions will rarely, if ever, succeed.

For instance, Los Angeles's signature threshold is 15% of registered voters in the city, while in Michigan, petitioners need to collect signatures from at least 25% of voters who participated in the last election for the targeted office. Some have inserted unique provisions to ensure a recall is representative of the public. Washington, D.C. requires signatures from 10% of registered voters, but they must be spread across at least five of the city's eight wards to ensure broad support. In Idaho, a recall is approved only if the number of votes in favor exceeds the votes received by the targeted official in their most recent election win.[11]

In New York City, petition-driven ballot initiatives already face significant hurdles. The City Charter requires at least 50,000 signatures from registered voters to place a City Charter amendment referendum on the ballot. This constitutes about 0.009% of the number of registered voters in New York City, or 0.04% of the number of votes cast in the last mayoral election. Those signatures must be collected within 120 days.[12] In the last four decades, five efforts have succeeded in collecting the required number of signatures for a petition-initiative referendum, although all of them but one were struck down from the ballot by the court.

Implementing a recall system in New York City would pose major challenges.

State law does not provide for recall of officials and does not grant that power to localities under the Home Rule article of the constitution or the Municipal Home Rule Law, so a recall petition would likely require state action.[13] Citizen petitions are uncommon in New York's political culture, and it would be extremely difficult for a campaign to gather enough of them. A relatively low threshold like Los Angeles's 15% of registered voters would reflect over 800,000 New Yorkers—more than any mayoral candidate has received in recent decades.

Given these legal and logistical hurdles, a recall system in New York City would be extremely difficult to implement and execute effectively.

[11] See also: Joshua Spivak (2021) *Recall Elections: From Alexander Hamilton to Gavin Newsom*
[12] In addition, the Municipal Home Rule Law Sec. 36 requires at least 45,000 signatures to place a question on the ballot on establishing a Charter Revision Commission.
[13] NYS Comptroller Opinion 89-31 (1989): http://www.osc.ny.gov/legal-opinions/opinion-89-31

Removal by the New York Governor

Fair and Open Process with Clear Grounds and Guardrails

The governor's unilateral and vaguely defined removal powers are not commensurate with the potential democratic harm of ousting a duly elected official who represents over 8 million people.

New York Public Officers Law Section 33 grants the governor broad authority to remove mayors and police commissioners across the state. The law simply states: "The chief executive officer of every city […] may be removed by the governor after giving to such officer a copy of the charges against him and an opportunity to be heard in his defense."

Such broad authority is also unusual. The few states that allow governors to remove local officials have established guardrails to ensure the process is used strictly for misconduct. In Michigan, the governor may remove a city officer only if there is "sufficient evidence […] that the officer has been guilty of official misconduct, willful neglect of duty, extortion, or habitual drunkenness, or has been convicted of being drunk, or […] of a felony." [14] Similarly, in Florida, the governor may suspend a municipal officer for malfeasance, misfeasance, neglect of duty, habitual drunkenness, incompetence, permanent inability to perform official duties, or if they are charged with a crime.[15]

New York's law also fails to provide meaningful due process for a mayor facing removal. The only time this process was tested in New York—when Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt considered removing Mayor Jimmy Walker—trial-like public hearings were held before the governor, with Judge Samuel Seabury acting as a quasi-prosecutor. However, Walker resigned before a decision was reached. Without any legal requirements or precedent governing the process, a governor could theoretically provide a mayor with nothing more than a written notice and an opportunity to submit a written response.

The lack of legal standards and procedural guidelines, combined with the political risks of removing the mayor of New York City, makes it unlikely that governors will act—even in extreme cases of mayoral misconduct that warrant removal. Conversely, the broad and

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[14] Michigan Election Law Sec. 168.327: Removal of city officers by governor; grounds; action on charges; service of charges; hearing; eligibility for election or appointment following removal or conviction. https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-168-327

[15] Florida Statutes Sec. 112.51: Municipal officers; suspension; removal from office. https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2024/0112.51 Although in recent years, Governor DeSantis has been misusing this power even with grounds for suspension defined in law, his decisions have been subject to court review.
For example: Politico, 01/20/2023, Judge rules DeSantis' ouster of prosecutor was unconstitutional but upholds suspension
https://www.politico.com/news/2023/01/20/judge-said-desantis-violated-constitution-in-suspending-warren-00078789

unchecked power could be used as a political weapon to pressure or threaten a sitting mayor.

Therefore, Public Officers Law Section 33 should be amended.

CITIZENS UNION'S PROPOAL FOR MAYORAL REMOVAL BY GOVERNOR

1. The governor may issue charges against a chief executive of a city for
    a. Malfeasance,
    b. Neglect of duty,
    c. Violation of the oath of office, or
    d. Conviction of a felony regarding conduct related to the holding of the office of mayor.

2. The governor must provide the official with written notice of the charges and the factual basis for each charge, and make them public.

3. A public hearing before the governor will begin within seven days.

4. The official will have the right to representation by counsel.

5. The official will have the right to present evidence, call witnesses, subpoena witnesses and evidence, and be heard on his/her own behalf.

6. The hearing process prescribed above is limited to 30 days.

7. At the conclusion of such hearing, the governor submits her/his decision in writing to the official.

8. If the mayor is removed from office, the succession provisions of the New York City Charter apply, and whoever succeeds to the mayoralty shall follow the provisions of section 10 of the Charter in calling for an election to fill the vacancy.

Appendix

Removal Methods of Mayors in the Largest Cities in the U.S.

Pop. size	City	ST	Recall Set by State Law	Recall Set by City Charter	Removal Powers Set by State Law	Removal by City Council, Set by City Charter
1	New York	NY			By Governor	
2	Los Angeles	CA	Yes	Yes		
3	Chicago	IL				
4	Houston	TX		Yes		Yes
5	Phoenix	AZ	Yes	Yes		
6	Philadelphia	PA				
7	San Antonio	TX		Yes		
8	San Diego	CA	Yes	Yes		
9	Dallas	TX		Yes		
10	Jacksonville	FL	Yes	Yes	By Governor	
11	Austin	TX		Yes		
12	Fort Worth	TX		Yes		
13	San Jose	CA	Yes	Yes		
14	Columbus	OH	Yes	Yes		
15	Charlotte	NC				
16	Indianapolis	IN			By Legislature	
17	San Francisco	CA	Yes	Yes		
18	Seattle	WA	Yes			Yes
19	Denver	CO	Yes	Yes		
20	Oklahoma City	OK		Yes		
21	Nashville	TN	Yes	Yes		
22	Washington	DC				
23	El Paso	TX		Yes		Yes
24	Las Vegas	NV	Yes			Yes (suspension)
25	Boston	MA				
26	Detroit	MI	Yes	Yes	By Governor	Yes
27	Portland	OR	Yes	Yes		
28	Louisville	KY			By City Council	
29	Memphis	TN	Yes			Yes
30	Baltimore	MD				
31	Milwaukee	WI			By City Council	Yes
68	Pittsburgh	PA				Yes (involves the courts)

Mayoral Removal by Lawmakers – Examples of Provisions

- **Houston City Charter** Art VI, Sec. 5. - Removal of the Mayor
  https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CH_ARTVITHMA_S5REMA

- **Detroit City Charter** Sec. 2-107 - Dismissal Proceedings
  https://library.municode.com/mi/detroit/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTI2012DECH1963MICOMIHORUAC_SPA2012DECH_ART2GEPR_S2-107DIPR

- **Seattle City Charter** Article V Sec. 10. – Removal of Mayor
  https://library.municode.com/wa/seattle/codes/municipal_code?nodeId=THCHSE_ARTVEXDE_S10REMA

- **El Paso City Charter** Sec. 3.4 Determination of Elections and Qualifications
  https://www.elpasotexas.gov/assets/Documents/CoEP/CityClerk/Others/City-Charter-amended.pdf

- **Milwaukee City Charter** Sections 3-29 Commissions and Fees Prohibited, 3-30 Prohibited Practices, 3-31 Sales to Public Utilities Prohibited, 4-28 Malfeasance
  https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/ccClerk/Ordinances/City-Charter/Master-Charter.pdf
  Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 17.12 - Removal and suspension of city officers
  https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/statutes/statutes/17/12

- **Louisville - Kentucky Revised Statutes** Sec. 67C.143. Removal of elected officers of consolidated local government; hearing; vote of council; appeal; restrictions on eligibility for office or appointment following removal
  https://codes.findlaw.com/ky/title-ix-counties-cities-and-other-local-units/ky-rev-st-sect-67c-143.html

Acknowledgments

This report was written by Ben Weinberg, Director of Public Policy, with research assistance from Amaury Dujardin, Policy Manager, and CU interns Alice Gaalswyk, Myles Moore, Max Weber, and Suzanna Weber. The proposal was developed by the Citizens Union Policy Committee and approved by the Citizens Union Board of Directors.

Subject:

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Richard Fox

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Hi, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Richard Fox. I am a UniteNY volunteer and Brooklyn resident testifying to suggest that NYC adopt non-partisan primary elections to the city charter through a ballot proposal vote in November. Currently voters not registered with a party have no say in the choice of candidates that go to the general election. They are entirely blocked out of the primary election. A nonpartisan primary system allows all voters, regardless of party affiliation, to participate in selecting the candidates who will best represent their interests. This change would increase voter turnout and ensure a more representative and inclusive process. Why Non-Partisan primaries are necessary: Majority Support for Winning Candidates: Nonpartisan primaries allow candidates to reflect the preferences of the broader electorate, rather than appealing solely to party members, ultimately leading to more diverse and well-rounded candidates. It also combats the issue of a "spoiler" candidate and ensures that no vote is wasted. Encouraging Positive Campaigning: Candidates will be incentivized to appeal to a broader range of voters, fostering a more civil and constructive electoral environment. Increased Voter Participation: Nonpartisan primaries would allow all voters

(including voters not registered with a party) to have a say in the selection of candidates, leading to greater voter engagement and a broader electorate. Reduction of Polarization: Holding nonpartisan primaries would force candidates to appeal to a wider range of voters. This can help reduce partisan divisions and foster more collaboration, civility, and bipartisan cooperation. By adopting nonpartisan primaries, New York City can build on the success of ranked choice voting and ensure that our primaries are more representative of the will of the people. In addition, by adopting nonpartisan primaries, we can foster a political environment where voters' voices are heard and the election process becomes more reflective of our collective values. This legislation represents a crucial step toward enhancing democracy, fostering voter engagement, and promoting fairer, more representative elections.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Michael Niamehr [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Thu, 10 Apr 2025 02:43:25 +0000

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Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Michael Niamehr

[redacted]

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Justin Wood

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Please find our written statement attached.

NYLPI

JUSTICE THROUGH COMMUNITY POWER

New York Lawyers
for the Public Interest, Inc.

[redacted]

Testimony of Justin Wood, Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest to the New York City Charter Review Commission, April 9, 2025

Good evening, Chair Buery and Commissioners, my name is Justin Wood, and I am the Director of Policy at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). Founded in 1976, we are a civil rights community legal organization with programs in Disability Justice, Environmental Justice, and Health Justice, and a Pro Bono Clearinghouse that taps the resources of the private bar to provide grassroots community nonprofit organizations with free legal resources and representation.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify as you begin to review the City's Charter.

First, a major area of concern for nonprofit legal and human services providers throughout New York City is the need for increased transparency, timeliness, and funding in City contracting.

NYLPI is privileged to receive support from New York City for direct legal representation we provide to New Yorkers with serious health conditions especially those who face major barriers to accessing health insurance and care.

Nonprofit contractors play a major role in delivering essential and in many cases life-saving services and goods to New Yorkers, especially disadvantaged New Yorkers facing the steepest health, mental health, and environmental burdens. Despite comprising a major part of our social safety net, human services providers face arbitrary delays in contract registration, payment, and lack of transparency from City agencies. We support the calls from our sector to review the Charter for opportunities to speed up contract registration, incentivize agencies to make prompt payments to contractors, and to improve parity between public and nonprofit pay scales.

Second, we encourage the Commission to evaluate whether the City's "Fair Share" Requirements from the 1990 Charter Revision are being adhered to and whether updates to these important reforms are needed. The goal of these City Planning requirements was to ensure a fairer distribution burdens across New York City.

In the decades since, reports by the City Council in 2017, the City Comptroller in 2019 and the City Comptroller in 2023 show large disparities between communities in access to environmental "goods" and services like parks, and in exposure to environmental and public safety hazards like waste transfer stations, highways, and extreme heat risks.

Comptroller Lander's recent report cites hundreds of instances in which agencies did not include required Fair Share analyses as part of planning and permitting processes. Moreover, even when agencies do file required Fair Share analyses for proposals, they are difficult if not impossible for community members to access. These documents do not appear in the City Planning Departments Annual Citywide Statement of Needs, and proposed projects fail to include any explanation of anticipated positive or negative environmental or social impacts.

NYLPI and our community partners continually experience frustration with the slow pace of agency implementation of local laws intended to address these disparities.

We encourage the commission to explore means of holding agencies and the mayor accountable for failures to implement these 35-year-old charter provisions. We work on several long-term environmental justice, accessibility, and mental health campaigns where failure to implement legislation intended to address the equitable distribution of resources and burdens is a major, ongoing barrier to progress. For example:

A) Waste Equity

We have not seen the comprehensive, inter-agency and inter-governmental planning necessary to build local sustainable waste infrastructure (such as composting facilities; fully utilize marine transfer facilities to reduce truck traffic in communities bearing disproportionate shares of waste and diesel truck infrastructure.

Notably, the Commercial Waste Zones Law passed in 2019 was meant to transform the notoriously dangerous, polluting, and nontransparent private waste system into a far more accountable and equitable system. Five and half years since Local Law 199 went into effect, the Dept. of Sanitation has implemented only one of the twenty designated commercial zones. No data has been reported on the impact of this single zone on vehicle miles traveled, impact on

the communities that host large private waste transfer stations and truck yards, or reductions in disposed waste exported to landfills and incinerators.

We similarly see failures to follow through on the current, 20-year-old Solid Waste Management Plan. The City has never moved forward with a major capital plan to build a transfer station in Lower Manhattan to efficiently transfer recyclable waste via barge to Brooklyn and New Jersey and has yet to put forth a plan to utilize municipal marine and rail facilities to process commercial waste more efficiently and equitably.

B) Equitable Access to Transportation.

Transportation is the lifeblood of New York's economy and civic life, and ensuring equitable, accessible, efficient, affordable, and sustainable transit is critical to accessing jobs, education, health care, green space, and all other parts of civic life.

The transportation sector is also a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, toxic air pollution, and noise pollution. Currently, there is no inter-agency, citywide approach that tracks community exposures to air pollution and safety hazards from City-owned and city-contracted transportation and fleet facilities, including school bus depots, transit bus depots, sanitation garages, and both public and private waste transfer stations.

Not all agency- and privately- owned transportation infrastructure (such as NYC Transit subway stations) are currently subject to the Fair Share requirements of the Charter. However, in passing a five-year "Streets Master Plan" in 2019 the Council attempted to create benchmarks for equity and fairness in New York's transit infrastructure. Yet implementation of these goals has been sporadic and lagging far behind established goals.

The Commission should also consider ways that the Charter can ensure that agencies including the Departments of Transportation, Citywide Administrative Services, and Education to work together to ensure that the benefits and burdens of the many parts of the transportation system owned and controlled by the City are more equitably distributed.

Outcomes of such a process must include:

a. Equitable access to fully accessible Bus Rapid Transit and bus lane infrastructure in streets and busways owned or controlled by the City. Despite the passage of Local Law 195 in 2019, the City's existing bus lanes remain highly concentrated in Manhattan, missing opportunities to make transit more efficient and accessible in outer borough communities.

b. Rapid increase in wheelchair accessibility *and* sustainability for fleets owned by, as well as those permitted by, City agencies, such as for-hire-vehicles and taxis.

c. Equitable distribution of public-private transportation infrastructure such as bike share stations. Many outer borough neighborhoods, including the entire borough of Staten Island, do not have bike shares. Similarly, people with disabilities who cannot use current Citibike models should have equitable access to accessible bikes and scooters

or similar sustainable vehicles – throughout the city.

d. Regulation of last-mile warehouses which have spread rapidly since the rise of online shopping, and cause additional truck traffic, pedestrian safety concerns, and air pollution across the five boroughs, particularly in environmental justice communities.

C) Equitable access to non-police mental health crisis response services

The City recently established a non-police mental health crisis response program known as B-HEARD. While B-HEARD requires many fixes, it is a step in the right direction to ensure that individuals experiencing a health crisis receive a health response and can avoid the countless injuries, forced hospitalizations, arrests, and deaths that have been the result of the City's current police response to mental health crises. B-HEARD only exists in 31 of 78 regions in the city, with none in Staten Island, and must be established across the city, in keeping with the Charter's Fair Share provisions.

Finally, NYLPI is concerned about the implications of changes to the City Charter made in 2024. After a rushed charter review and hearing process, the measures voted into law include requirements that make it more difficult for the City Council to pass laws regulating the Police, Corrections, or Fire Departments.

This restriction creates additional barriers within an already arduous legislative process and gives additional power to the Mayor who could use this delay period to organize opposition to such bills. This notice is not required for regulations applying to other agencies, and it imposes an arbitrary, more cumbersome standard for any bill seeking to regulate these massive public agencies, which have far too often been unaccountable to the public, especially to low-income communities and communities of color.

Yours,

Justin Wood
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted]

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For almost 50 years, NYLPI has fought to protect civil rights and achieve lived equality for communities in need. Led by community priorities, we pursue health, immigrant, disability, and environmental justice. NYLPI combines the power of law, organizing, and the private bar to make lasting change where it's needed most.

For more information visit: www.nylpi.org

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Max Vilgalys

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: There are a number of revisions the charter commission should undertake - election reform, zoning reform, accountability of elected officials and police, to name a few of my personal priorities - but I propose that the single greatest potential for the charter commission is to enable direct democracy by allowing citizen-led referendums to be placed on the ballot. New Yorkers feel betrayed by their local government, and feel powerless to change things. Enabling citizen-led referendums would put the power into the people's hands to directly suggest and vote on measures that they believe would impact the city. Currently, the charter revision process is the only way for people to directly vote on changes to city government, and let's face it - it's confusing, opaque, and not representative. The greatest gift the charter commission can give is the ability to propose our own ballot initiatives so that direct citizen democracy on the rules of the city is the norm, not the exception.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8499664 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 10 Apr 2025 22:34:00 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 06:33:19 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Jeremy Gruber

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Chairwoman and Members of the Commission- My name is Jeremy Gruber and I am the Senior Vice President of Open Primaries. Open Primaries is a national non-profit organization dedicated to more open and inclusive election systems. I'm also a NYer, having lived here for more than thirty years, own my home, raised my kids here, and dutifully pay my city taxes. First and foremost though I'm a registered independent voter and in our city that means I can't vote in the primaries. As New Yorkers we see it every election season-candidates politicking ahead of the primaries and then seemingly on vacation after. Because the primary is the only election that really matters in our city. Our primaries are taxpayer funded and government administered. And yet 1 million independent voters like me are shut out. The scale of that impact can not be overestimated. Ten states-20% of all states-have less than a million TOTAL registered voters. Imagine if every registered voter in Vermont or Hawaii or Delaware or Rhode Island was denied a meaningful vote. That's the scale of impact of NY's closed primaries. We're so far behind this issue. 36 states (New Mexico passed statewide open primaries just this week) and 85% of cities like Los Angeles and Chicago already have open elections. It's the standard way cities run their

elections in this country. Closed municipal primaries are such an aberration that no one even studies them. As an election law expert, I travel around the country working with cities and states that are debating how to establish equal rights for independents and passing reforms. They're doing so because our country is facing two hard truths- First- that independents are the fastest growing group of voters in our city, state and country-now the largest group of voters nationwide and Second-for most races the general election is so uncompetitive, oftentimes to the point of being uncontested-that the primary election is the only election that matters. Yet in our city and state, where calls for equality and democracy are part of everyday conversation, the silence from the political class on these issues is deafening. We bemoan why voter participation in NYC is one of the lowest in the country and why millions of dollars in general election get-out-the-vote efforts consistently underperform. It's because no one wants to vote in an election that doesn't matter. All the research shows that voter participation goes up in open primaries. The Bipartisan Policy Center among others issues reports that consistently find that to be the case. If you let more people vote, participation goes up-that's simple math. What's less appreciated is how broadly voter participation goes up. Because it's not just the primaries. Studies show that voter participation goes up in the general election as well. That's because once you establish a culture of voting-every election is impacted. It's no coincidence that the two fastest growing groups of voters in our city-Asian Americans and Latinos-are also the two fastest growing groups of independent voters. Over half our city's millennial and Gen Z voters are independent as well. When you shut out NYC independents you aren't just shutting out people who look like me-you're shutting out the full diversity that makes our city so great. Opening the primaries will create real political opportunities for our city. As my friend David Holt, Mayor of Oklahoma City and Leader of the US Conference of Mayors has said- "Open primary systems foster collaboration and bridge building in the service of finding solutions. Closed systems foster zero-sum game competition and partisan rivalry." One final reflection-as you tackle this issue I urge you not to get mired in the many forms of open primaries. At its very simplest, open primaries are about letting all voters vote. Start there and let us vote. Thank you.

OPENPRIMARIES

New York City Charter Revision Commission
Testimony in Support of Open Primaries
Jeremy Gruber, SVP Open Primaries
April 9, 2025

Chairwoman and Members of the Commission-

My name is Jeremy Gruber and I am the Senior Vice President of Open Primaries. Open Primaries is a national non-profit organization dedicated to more open and inclusive election systems. I'm also a NYer, having lived here for more than thirty years, own my home, raised my kids here, and dutifully pay my city taxes. First and foremost though I'm a registered independent voter and in our city that means I can't vote in the primaries.

As New Yorkers we see it every election season-candidates politicking ahead of the primaries and then seemingly on vacation after. Because the primary is the only election that really matters in our city. Our primaries are taxpayer funded and government administered. And yet 1 million independent voters like me are shut out. The scale of that impact can not be overestimated. Ten states-20% of all states-have less than a million TOTAL registered voters. Imagine if every registered voter in Vermont or Hawaii or Delaware or Rhode Island was denied a meaningful vote. That's the scale of impact of NY's closed primaries.

We're so far behind this issue. 36 states (New Mexico passed statewide open primaries just this week) and 85% of cities like Los Angeles and Chicago already have open elections. It's the standard way cities run their elections in this country. Closed municipal primaries are such an aberration that no one even studies them.

As an election law expert, I travel around the country working with cities and states that are debating how to establish equal rights for independents and passing reforms. They're doing so because our country is facing two hard truths-

First- that independents are the fastest growing group of voters in our city, state and country-now the largest group of voters nationwide and

Second-for most races the general election is so uncompetitive, oftentimes to the point of being uncontested-that the primary election is the only election that matters.

Yet in our city and state, where calls for equality and democracy are part of everyday conversation, the silence from the political class on these issues is deafening.

OPENPRIMARIES

We bemoan why voter participation in NYC is one of the lowest in the country and why millions of dollars in general election get-out-the-vote efforts consistently underperform. It's because no one wants to vote in an election that doesn't matter.

All the research shows that voter participation goes up in open primaries. The Bipartisan Policy Center among others issues reports that consistently find that to be the case. If you let more people vote, participation goes up-that's simple math. What's less appreciated is how broadly voter participation goes up. Because it's not just the primaries. Studies show that voter participation goes up in the general election as well. That's because once you establish a culture of voting-every election is impacted.

It's no coincidence that the two fastest growing groups of voters in our city-Asian Americans and Latinos-are also the two fastest growing groups of independent voters. Over half our city's millennial and Gen Z voters are independent as well. When you shut out NYC independents you aren't just shutting out people who look like me-you're shutting out the full diversity that makes our city so great.

Opening the primaries will create real political opportunities for our city. As my friend David Holt, Mayor of Oklahoma City and Leader of the US Conference of Mayors has said- "Open primary systems foster collaboration and bridge building in the service of finding solutions. Closed systems foster zero-sum game competition and partisan rivalry."

One final reflection-as you tackle this issue I urge you not to get mired in the many forms of open primaries. At its very simplest, open primaries are about letting all voters vote. Start there and let us vote.

Thank you.

Subject:

Fw: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8346684 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

To: [redacted]

Date: Fri, 11 Apr 2025 19:37:07 +0000

From: agencymail [redacted]

Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 3:11:52 PM

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Subject: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8346684 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Friday, April 11, 2025, at 03:11:33 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Bella Wang

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: To the Commission: Since we were not able to attend the April 9, 2025, hearing, we are submitting our written testimony on ranked-choice voting and the timing of even-year elections. Best, Bella Wang Voting Reform Chair League of Women Voters of the City of New York

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

[redacted]

Best Practices for New York City Elections

April 9, 2025

As a multi-issue, nonpartisan political organization of over 100 years, the League of Women Voters of the City of New York encourages informed and active citizen participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through advocacy and education.

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of the City of New York's community of members, volunteers and partner organizations, I appreciate the opportunity granted by Commissioner Buery and the other members of the Charter Revision Commission to submit testimony on two topics:

- First, given the successful initial implementation of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in New York City elections, I encourage the Commission not to bring any new adjustments to our electoral system to the ballot this fall.
- Second, while the timing of New York City elections is governed by the New York State Constitution rather than the City Charter, we broadly encourage our City leaders to consider the benefits for voter participation in moving our local elections to even-numbered years.

Ranked-Choice Voting

Since 2021, RCV has largely succeeded in achieving the systemic benefits proposed by our past testimony before the 2019 Charter Revision Commission. At the time, we argued that RCV would:

1. Allow voters to more fully express their preferences on the ballot;
2. Prevent expensive, low-turnout primary runoff elections when races for citywide offices such as Mayor failed to produce a winner with more than 40% of the vote; and
3. Increase confidence in the electoral system.

Over the past two local election cycles, we have seen promising evidence in each of these areas.

First, voters have embraced the opportunity to have more choices and express information about their preferences more accurately. In 2021, the Mayoral primary race reached a turnout of 26.5%, representing a recent high water mark for local, odd-year elections in the city. In this election, 89.3% of Democrats and 56.6% of Republicans ranked more than one choice for at least one office, indicating a widespread understanding of the system. To the

extent that not all Republican voters ranked multiple offices, it was primarily because the Mayoral primary only had two Republican candidates. In 2023, similarly, 56.9% of voters ranked more than one candidate, in part because there was no Mayoral race.

It is not necessarily a problem if a subset of voters only choose to rank one candidate in a race because they believe that only one candidate is the right choice. Overall, we know that voters typically understood and appreciated the value of the system because they mostly used the system successfully.

Nevertheless, we know there are still challenges in ensuring that all New York City voters are up to speed on how to use RCV. For example, in 2023, a small minority of voters (4.3%) did misunderstand the ballot and marked the same candidate for multiple rankings. We have also anecdotally observed through our Voter Services activities that some confusion does still exist. This spring, the New York City League is working diligently to support all outreach to voters by the Board of Elections and Campaign Finance Board. Informing voters across diverse communities is our mission, and we feel confident in our ability to build on past success as we educate citizens on the mechanics of RCV.

Second, New York City taxpayers have already benefited from avoiding the need for expensive, low-turnout citywide runoff elections. In 2021, no candidate reached the crucial 40% benchmark that would have avoided runoffs in the old system, during the first round of the Democratic Mayoral primary. Mayor Eric Adams received 31% of the vote, with Maya Wiley as runner-up with 21%. However, because the large majority of Democratic voters ranked multiple choices on their ballot, we were able to use RCV's instant runoff system to quickly determine a runoff winner.

By contrast, the 2013 Public Advocate primary runoff election cost the city $13 million dollars with an abysmally low turnout of 7% of registered Democratic voters. Whereas 85% of 2021 Democratic Mayoral voters ranked at least one of the final two candidates, Mayor Adams and Kathryn Garcia, on their ballot, only 38% as many Democratic Public Advocate voters even showed up to the polls in the 2013 runoff.

Third, RCV-based results increase voter confidence in our electoral system. In addition to the 2021 Mayoral primary reaching the highest municipal turnout since 1989, RCV has proved its utility in providing a stronger mandate for winning candidates. Research by the CUNY Center for Urban Research indicated that candidates prepared for the expectation of increased legitimacy by understanding that RCV required them to talk to more voters, in case they could become a voter's second or third choice in a crowded field.

We additionally expect that RCV demonstrates its value by producing a result that is approximately in line with first-round, or plurality, voter preferences most of the time, except when the diversity of candidates creates a situation when voters might need to express complex

preferences about public policy. In 2021, RCV produced a different result from the plurality winner in 3 of 55 races with more than two candidates, or about 5.5% of races. In 2023, only 14 races had more than two candidates, so it is unsurprising that there were no come-from-behind winners. The rate of come-from-behind winners across the country has been about 6%, so New York City's results have been in line with expectations.

As a matter of good governance, we strongly oppose creating voter confusion by reversing reforms to our electoral system after only a few years. The 2019 Commission brought RCV to the ballot after a thoughtful, thoroughly researched and consultative process. The League was able to testify several times over a full year as we researched the issue more deeply, and we believe that our members' voices were heard by the Commission.

Even-year local elections

We have strongly supported Resolution 189A-2024, which advocates for aligning New York City's municipal elections with even-year federal election cycles. This alignment would address critical voter turnout, equity, and cost-effectiveness challenges, ultimately strengthening democratic engagement in our City.

First, studies on election timing conclusively show that moving elections to even years is one of the most effective ways to increase turnout. New York City's current odd-year elections result in voter participation rates that are alarmingly low and consistently decreasing. For instance, the November 2021 municipal election saw a mere 23% of registered voters cast ballots—a stark contrast to turnout rates in even-year elections, which are nearly three times higher.

New York City would be joining a countrywide movement for increasing voter participation. Cities like Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Phoenix experienced 20-60% increases after shifting their election dates. In fact, more people vote in local elections at the bottom of a national election's ballot, than vote in local elections at the top of the local ballot.

Second, holding local elections in even years will promote a more inclusive and representative electorate, benefiting communities of color and young voters. Research in California on school board election timing found that the Latino share of voters increases by over 6% during even years, while the Asian share of voters increases by 1-2%. The share of younger Americans also almost doubles in Presidential years, while the share of renters goes up modestly compared to homeowners. The impact increases in regions with a very diverse population.

New York City's experience reflects the research. Districts with over 90% minority populations have experienced turnout increases of an average of 232% in even-year elections compared to odd-year elections. In recent presidential election cycles, turnout among younger voters has

also reached almost 60%, fostering long-term civic participation and amplifying their voices in local governance. Increasing the age diversity of the electorate also impacts policy outcomes.

Third, moving election timing would ensure compliance with federal laws on ballot access. The Help America Vote Act guarantees certain ballot access protections to voters in federal elections, which extends to concurrent elections held at the state and local level. At present, these protections are not guaranteed in non-federal elections. Moving New York City elections to even-numbered years would ensure consistent and broad protections for access under HAVA in all elections, with clear avenues for enforcement.

Fourth, by aligning municipal elections with federal election cycles, voters are less likely to experience election fatigue that diminishes engagement. The League takes voter education seriously as part of its mission, and this includes dialogues with voters that typically only turn out every two to four years. Consolidated elections provide a reprieve, allowing voters to focus on comprehensive ballots every two years.

Consolidating elections will also help elevate local issues within a challenging media environment that has deprioritized local news, even within New York City. Voters will have greater access to information on municipal matters during high-profile election years, resulting in a more informed electorate that is better positioned to engage in local governance meaningfully.

Fifth, consolidating elections is projected to reduce the City's election costs substantially. The New York City Board of Elections spent approximately $60 million in 2021 and $64 million in 2023 for the regularly scheduled municipal primary and general elections. Consolidating elections would likely save millions by reducing the need for redundant staffing, polling locations, and materials.

While ultimately, we do not believe that the City Charter is the appropriate place to address this potential change in local elections timing, we appreciate the opportunity to discuss our support for this issue and provide food for thought.

Thank you to the Charter Commission for your leadership for New York City.

Bella Wang
Voting Reform Chair
League of Women Voters of the City of New York

Subject:

Fw: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7695086 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

To: [redacted]

Date: Fri, 11 Apr 2025 19:37:15 +0000

From: agencymail [redacted]

Sent: Friday, April 11, 2025 3:18:35 PM

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Subject: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7695086 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Friday, April 11, 2025, at 03:18:06 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Brandon Savoy

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: Brandon Savoy on behalf of Council Member Nantasha Williams, as her Legislative Fellow

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DISTRICT OFFICE
[redacted]

CITY HALL OFFICE
[redacted]

THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

NANTASHA WILLIAMS

COUNCIL MEMBER • 27TH DISTRICT • QUEENS

CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

COMMITTEES
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES, AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS
FINANCE
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
TASKFORCE TO COMBAT HATE

Dear Chair Buery,

I am writing to urge the Commission to consider a charter revision that would establish a Percent for Engagement initiative for all capital improvement projects in New York City exceeding $100 million.

Modeled after the successful Percent for Art program, this initiative would ensure that communities impacted by major infrastructure and development projects are given structured, impactful, and equitable opportunities to participate in those projects' design, development, and long-term outcomes.

For the purposes of this proposal, "community engagement" refers to the structured, intentional, and inclusive process of gathering, incorporating, and responding to input from affected communities throughout the planning, implementation, and review phases of a project. Engagement efforts may include—but are not limited to—community mapping, multilingual outreach, experiential surveying, in-person and digital outreach, participatory planning workshops, and compensation for time and expertise

To remain responsive and adaptable, the Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) would be tasked with developing and updating standards for meaningful engagement through a transparent process that incorporates input from stakeholders, community leaders, and practitioners. The goal is to promote high-quality, measurable, and innovative practices citywide, while leaving room for agencies and partners to shape contextually appropriate approaches.

The Percent for Engagement initiative would operate through three primary mechanisms:

1. Create a Dedicated Budget Line for Engagement: Automatically dedicate a small percentage of the overall capital budget to engagement efforts, with clear thresholds for

triggering the requirement. These funds would cover eligible expenses such as staffing, research tools, translation, outreach, communications, participant compensation, venue rentals, and post-project evaluation. Establishing this budget line is essential to incentivizing agencies and project partners to take engagement seriously, and to attract the talent, creativity, and innovation needed to conduct it effectively.

2. Empower the Civic Engagement Commission to Set and Maintain Citywide Standards: The CEC, under the Mayor's Office of Engagement, would administer the funds, provide training and technical support, and set clear citywide benchmarks through a Civic Engagement Protocol (CEP). These standards would be informed by a one-time five-year retrospective review of past engagement practices, and regularly updated to reflect new technologies, practices, and resident needs. Each engagement plan would be tailored to the specific demographics and needs of the community in question and would include outcome metrics, such as outreach reach, participant satisfaction, and public impact.

3. Equip Community Boards to Serve as Local Engagement Hubs: Community Boards would be formally designated as the primary facilitators of engagement activities, working closely with local organizations, civic leaders, and project partners. Boards would receive additional resources, tools, and training to manage this responsibility and collaborate directly with the CEC to ensure local practices align with citywide standards while reflecting local priorities.

Far too often, large-scale capital projects proceed with minimal public input, leaving communities—especially historically underserved ones—disempowered and disconnected. Engagement efforts, when they do occur, can be inaccessible, inconsistently executed, or performative.

Residents frequently face barriers such as inconvenient meeting times, digital exclusion, lack of language access, or the absence of compensation for their time. Simultaneously, city staff and design/build professionals lack the incentives, resources, and mandates to meaningfully engage the public. This results in missed opportunities for smarter design, reduced conflict, and better long-term outcomes.

The Percent for Engagement initiative would correct for these longstanding challenges by embedding engagement into the very structure of capital project development—ensuring that the voices of residents are not an afterthought but a guiding force.

This initiative would transform how the City engages with its residents, fostering transparency, inclusivity, and trust in the most visible public investments we make. Ensuring that all communities have a real voice in shaping their neighborhoods is not only good policy—it is foundational to equitable governance. The City must lead the way in setting a clear, consistent, and innovative standard for civic engagement.

I urge the Commission to support this revision and help institutionalize a more robust and effective civic engagement framework for the future of New York City. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [redacted] or [redacted] to discuss this further.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Best Regards,
Nantasha Williams
27th Council District

Subject:

Re: [EXTERNAL] Testimony at 4/9/25

From: [redacted]

To: Michael Schnall [redacted], Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Fri, 11 Apr 2025 20:23:19 +0000

Hi Mike,

Thank you very much for sharing this and for making the time to join us on Wednesday evening. I hope that you have a great weekend.

Best,
Devin Stuzin
Graduate Intern — 2025 Charter Revision Commission
[redacted]

From: Michael Schnall [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, April 10, 2025 11:59 AM
To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>
Cc: Stuzin, Devin [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony at 4/9/25

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Charter Commission,

See attached my full testimony that I presented in abridged form last night during my 3-minutes of time.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Mike Schnall

Michael P Schnall

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
2025 CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
STATEN ISLAND PUBLIC INPUT SESSION ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
BY
MICHAEL SCHNALL

APRIL 9, 2025

Good evening Chair Buery and commissioners of the Charter Revision Commission. Welcome to Staten Island! My name is Michael Schnall and I am a resident of the West Brighton neighborhood on the north shore of Staten Island. Thank you for holding this input session to hear from Staten Islanders about the important work of this Commission and our thoughts on government reform.

BACKGROUND

By way of background, I am testifying tonight with a background in government and politics. I'm a non-practicing lawyer and political science major (and self-proclaimed political junkie) whose first jobs in government were in the New York City Council, first as a legislative financial analyst, then a legislative director for a NYC Council Member. I then went to work in the Bloomberg administration, leading government relations for NYC Parks and then serving as Chief of Staff in Staten Island for NYC Parks. I've also worked in the non-profit sector for over 10 years leading government affairs, lobbying and community engagement for a handful of large non-profits. I've worked on several campaigns over the years, and in 2021 ran for the NYC Council in the 49th district on the north shore of Staten Island. Lastly, in 2021 I was appointed by Speaker Adams as the lone Staten Islander to the 2021 NYC Redistricting Commission as a commissioner representing Staten Island.

I share all this because I have a good amount of experience in politics, government, and the non-profit sector, and some strong opinions on the topic of electoral reform, specifically the idea of shifting municipal elections to even years, as well as non-partisan elections.

EVEN vs ODD YEAR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

> "The vote is the primary tool for citizens to control their government. Through the vote citizens communicate information about their interests, preferences, and needs and make important decisions about who to elect to office. Nevertheless, most Americans do not vote when given the opportunity. At best roughly half of eligible voters vote in national contests. At worst, fewer than 10% of adults vote in local elections." — Authors Hajnal and Trounstine, *Where Turnout Matters: The Consequences of Uneven Turnout in City Politics*

I applaud this commission for thinking long and hard about this issue. If voting is the most basic responsibility of each citizen participating in our democracy, our City must work to find the lowest barriers to entry. And at a time where our democracy is under assault, it's even more important for New York City to shine the light of democracy and lead the way.

When thinking about even versus odd year voting, I've broken down the issue into pros and cons:

Pros of a shift to even-year voting:

- Removes the revolving door between Albany and NYC: due to the logistical nature of even-year State and Federal elections and odd-year City elections, this allows elected officials to swap seats creating a revolving door. It prevents new candidates from running with a virtual incumbent protection program.
- Higher voter turnout: since even-year elections, in particular presidential election years experience higher voter turnout, in theory more people will vote and vote down ballot for City candidates.
- Save money by consolidating even and odd-year elections: moving all elections to even-years means that the NYC Board of Elections will have no elections to oversee during odd-years (except for Special Elections) meaning that the agency will see significant operational savings for the City.

Cons of a shift from odd-year voting:

- Further muddling the political landscape: voters are already bombarded by print, digital and television advertising during even-year elections, causing confusion, frustration and anger. Having hundreds more candidates running for Council, citywide and boroughwide seats, further adds to the piles of literature, more TV advertising, and the assault on voter's sense.
- Skyrocketing advertising, printing and digital costs: with another large group of candidates running for office, the costs of advertising will rise even higher, making the share of campaign expenses for advertising become a larger part of every campaign. Candidates with less money will have less opportunities to get their voice out using the normal channels, whereas when City elections are during odd-years, they have greater access to all modes of communication.
- Political terms get confusing: when do you implement the change? At some point local elected officials will have to either get more time in office, or their term will be cut short, to coincide with even-year elections. Timing is everything and it's inevitable that sitting elected officials, in order to approve this, will want more time in office, not less.
- Board of Elections off-years: while it remains possible that the City could keep judicial and district attorney races in odd-years, if all municipal elections shift to even-years, what would the Board do during off-years? It can't furlough or let go of its staff, and as such will still incur expenses when nothing is happening. It's not quite the cost savings impact we'd want to see since the agency still requires staff to operate in off-years.
- Consultant class will be impacted: consultants who are accustomed to steady election work year-over-year, remaining focused on electoral politics, will be forced to shift to advocacy and lobbying activities in off-years. While not necessarily a catastrophic change, it does further blur the line for the normal voter when trying to discern between politics and advocacy/lobbying.
- Decision not in the City's hands: at the end of this whole discussion, this is an issue for our State elected officials. No one in Albany is going to vote to stop the revolving door to City

political seats and vice versa, City elected officials won't want to cut off their opportunities to run for State seats while retaining their City seats too.

If the end goal is to increase voter turnout, I don't believe this is the most effective way to do it. Too much will be lost for voters in the confusion of State and Federal election years and there is no guarantee that voters will vote down ballot. In fact, with less communication options for campaigns with less money, it's less likely that voters will know anything about down ballot races, making turnout for City elections even smaller in even-years.

Shifting to an even-year election cycle is an issue that must be decided by the State. New York City's Charter Revision Commission should focus its energies on things it can effectuate change on, rather than an item that requires Albany's approval, which will be highly unlikely to ever happen because of the revolving door that benefits State and City elected officials.

In conclusion, let's consider a change this Commission can make on its own (with guidance from the State and Federal government) that will increase voter turnout in a more substantive and meaningful way: non-partisan elections.

NON-PARTISAN ELECTIONS

"I do not think partisanship should ever obscure the truth." — Theodore Roosevelt

As mentioned above, I don't think that the issues of even versus odd-year voting solves the issues of low voter turnout by changing the mechanism of voting. I think giving voters better choices with better and more candidates, will increase voter participation.

In my many years of working in and observing politics, I believe voters don't turn out for a few reasons:

- Lack of accessibility to poll sites: voting on one day a year doesn't provide enough access; tools like early voting and mail-in ballots have made voting easier for everyone.
- Party dominance in the selection process: the two major parties decide who should run and shut out other voices and other viable candidates; voters want choices that are not currently available to them in party Primaries and General Elections.
- Lack of interest in available candidates: due to the dominance of the two major parties, the lesser of two evils debate continues; sometimes not voting is the preferable choice when both candidates are undesirable.

When considering non-partisan elections, let's look at the pros and cons:

Pros of non-partisan elections:

- Remove political parties as the deciders on who runs for office: why should an insular group of party members decide for voters who they should vote for? Let the voters decide in a

Primary without party affiliations and let the top 5 candidates run in the November non-partisan General Election.

- Reduces barriers to voting by allowing everyone to vote in primaries: when parties have primaries, you exclude a whole section of voters who are unaffiliated with any political parties. Let all the voters decide which candidates should advance from the Primary to the General Election.
- Increases participation in City's Campaign Finance Board program: the more candidates, the more that qualify for matching funds, the more competitive candidates can be, the more economic activity provided by campaigns, and the more choices available for voters.
- Increases importance of Ranked Choice Voting: when voters have multiples choices in a Primary, RCV becomes more important. And RCV tends to force candidates to run more civil campaigns as they jockey for endorsement by other candidates' number 2 ranking.
- Makes the General Election more meaningful: no longer a choice between the lesser of two evils, voters will be more motivated to turn out to vote for their favorites.

Cons of non-partisan elections:

- Anyone can run for office, but not everyone should run: not every candidate is qualified to run, and not every candidate runs for the right reasons. But, the voters will hopefully be able to discern between candidates who have the right qualifications to serve effectively, and those that are not viable candidates.
- Exponentially increased cost to the City's Campaign Finance Board system: the campaign finance matching system could become overwhelmed by a glut of candidates running and could also become more vulnerable to opportunistic candidates only running to take advantage of taxpayer subsidized campaigns.
- Longer ballot for Primaries: with multiple candidates, the ballot becomes longer and potentially more complicated for the voter. The Board of Elections will be challenged to design a ballot that ensures voters will be able to see all the candidates equally.
- Larger field of candidates causing more confusion for voters: voters could become overwhelmed by the sheer number of candidates in a Primary, making the top 5 candidates winning only a small fraction of votes.

In conclusion, I believe we should entrust voters with the power to decide. By providing a non-partisan primary and general election, you're empowering more candidates to run without political party interference, and empowering voters to make decisions. I believe this Commission is well-positioned to offer voters a new choice: a non-partisan Primary election which would lead to competitive non-partisan General Election, incorporating Ranked Choice Voting, enhancing turnout with more choices of candidates, and minimizing the major political parties' influence in elections.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I'd be happy to answer any questions you might have.

MICHAEL SCHNALL | Staten Island, NY | [redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Jennifer Radtke [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2025 01:06:49 +0000

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New York City has always been at the forefront of democracy, and it is time that we continue to evolve. Having recently adopted Ranked Choice Voting, it is time that we take the next step and move to a system of open primaries. As a New Yorker, I am proud to be from a place known for innovation, and the time has come for us to take the next step.

This evolution will strengthen our democracy and bring more New Yorkers into the process. By continuing to evolve and adapt, we show the world we are leading the way. New York has been, and should continue to be, the world's most creative and innovative city. There’s no reason that shouldn’t be true for our elections.

Jennifer Radtke

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Ron Spinelli [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2025 01:06:56 +0000

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Like many New Yorkers, I have spent much of my life being unable to vote in competitive elections. Too often, the winning candidate is a foregone conclusion by the time of the general election. New Yorkers like me find themselves locked out of the races where the winning candidate is chosen simply because we do not choose to or want to belong to a political party.

By opening this system, many New Yorkers will be newly enfranchised and will vote in far greater numbers. It is my hope that the Commission will not miss this opportunity to allow many New Yorkers of all political stripes to fully participate in our democratic process.

Thank you for this opportunity to allow my voice to be heard!
Ron Spinelli

Ron Spinelli
[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Habib Qadri [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2025 01:07:04 +0000

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It is too hard to vote in New York City, and voter turnout does not reflect the city as a whole. Open primaries address this by fixing one of the major impediments to voting and empowering a million New Yorkers to participate in the most competitive and consequential elections. Reducing the number of non-competitive elections will incentivize more people to participate in the democratic process.

Addressing our abysmal voter turnout rates should be a key priority of the Charter Revision Commission. I hope that the city does not miss this opportunity to ensure that we have competitive elections in which all registered voters can participate. This will mean that New York City has a healthier and more robust democracy than ever before.

Habib Qadri

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Ljubica Sefer-Stefancic [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2025 01:07:09 +0000

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With more and more independent voters, open primaries would be beneficial and would correspond more to the will of the voters. Rank voting should be embraced too.
Non-partisan, special elections are nothing new and are a proven way to choose the best candidate from a field representing several different viewpoints. These elections have been one by candidates across the ideal spectrum. It is time that we applied this proven method to all citywide elections.

Special elections have been taking place in New York City for as long as I can remember. They are an effective way to let voters express their preference from a range of candidates and save the City the cost of running multiple different elections.

Ljubica Sefer-Stefancic
[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Bernice Brief [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2025 01:07:29 +0000

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I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardless of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

Bernice Brief

[redacted]

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8144168 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2025 16:15:08 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by (mlenihan@publicsentiment.org) on Monday, April 14, 2025, at 12:14:57 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Michael Lenihan

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: Please see attached letter.

Public Sentiment

Richard R. Buery, Jr., Chair
NYC Charter Review Commission
New York, NY 10007

April 14, 2025

Dear Chair Buery,

I am writing in support of Council Member Dr. Williams's request to the Commission for a charter revision establishing a Percent for Engagement initiative for capital improvement projects in New York City, inspired by the City's successful Percent for Art legislation.

I base my support on this initiative through my experiences as founder and CEO of the Brooklyn-based nonprofit, Public Sentiment. Public Sentiment helps governments and businesses run inclusive engagement campaigns leveraging grassroots organizing, social science, and conflict resolution techniques to create more equitable solutions to local challenges. Every day, I see how residents, City planners, designers, and others in the field lament, and are harmed by, the lack of meaningful and constructive outreach done as part of our urban planning.

Overcommitted and under-resourced City staff do not have adequate financial and technical support to conduct effective outreach. Similarly, this work is beyond the scope of what design, engineering, and construction firms can provide, yet it is they who are oftentimes required to create, fund, and manage such processes.

Underlying many aspects of these challenges is constrained funding. Community engagement is an unaccounted-for public good that can improve service design, create more equitable outcomes, and build stronger senses of community, wellbeing, and belonging. However, within capital projects, there are no dedicated or minimum requirements for engagement funding. This needs to change.

A first-in-the-nation "Percent for Engagement" initiative as proposed by Council Member Dr. Williams would remove this constraint, and fundamentally alter the ways communities are involved in their local planning process. This legislation could set automatic, dynamic funding allocations for community engagement participation and facilitation. It could also define and refine what "community engagement" means, and what residents and urbanists should expect when participating in a City-initiated engagement process. Last, it could bestow budgetary and oversight powers upon a City entity, helping set standards and provide resources for effective engagement.

Public Sentiment

Funds allocated for community engagement would benefit the City in a few ways. First, it would serve as a source of critical compensation for residents who participate in engagement activities. This would ameliorate challenges posed by work schedules and lack of childcare that oftentimes prevent people from participating in engagement activities - especially within lower-income areas and communities of color - and lead to greater representation in the insights actioned by planners and designers.

Additionally, dedicated funding would help professionalize the engagement industry, enabling more innovative technologies, strategies, and specializations to be deployed in community outreach and research.

Together, these shifts would help designers and urbanists produce more accessible, inviting, and flexible public spaces that community members, regardless of who they are or what they need, can use and make their own.

Post pandemic, and in the face of long-looming crises like housing, mental health, and gentrification, we are recalibrating the ways we live, work, and socialize. Fundamental questions about how our buildings, streets, and neighborhoods should respond to these shifting dynamics can only be answered by those living in the community.

To hear them, the City needs a new approach to community engagement, and need look no further than its own past successful funding mechanisms for how best to do it.

For these reasons, I strongly encourage the Commission to consider and grant the proposed revision for the Percent for Engagement initiative.

Respectfully,

Michael Lenihan
Founder and CEO
Public Sentiment

Subject:

FW: [EXTERNAL] MAS Comments on Proposed ULURP Reforms for NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission Consideration

From: "Schierenbeck, Alec" [redacted]

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Mon, 14 Apr 2025 19:10:24 +0000

From: Keri Butler [redacted]
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 2:40 PM
To: Buery, Richard [redacted]
Cc: Schierenbeck, Alec [redacted]; Schmid, Kathleen [redacted]; Thomas Devaney [redacted]; Rebecca Macklis [redacted]; Alex Israel [redacted]; Aislinn Klein [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MAS Comments on Proposed ULURP Reforms for NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission Consideration

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Dear Chair Buery,

Please find MAS' comments on proposed ULURP reforms for the NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission's consideration. We look forward to continuing the collaborative dialogue with your team.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our comments. Please let us know if it would be helpful to set up a time to discuss any of these ideas further.

My best,
Keri

Keri Butler (she/her)

Interim President

The Municipal Art Society of New York

The Municipal Art Society of New York
MASNYC

April 14, 2025

Attn: Mr. Richard R. Buery, Jr.
Chair, New York City Charter Revision Commission (NYC CRC)

CC: Alec Schierenbeck, executive director, NYC CRC
Kathleen Schmid, MOCEJ and NYC CRC staff

Delivered: via email

Re: The Municipal Art Society of New York's Comments on Proposed ULURP Reforms for NYC Charter Revision Commission Consideration

Dear Mr. Buery, Jr. & Members of the NYC CRC:

In addition to our support of comprehensive planning, for which The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) has submitted draft text for CRC's review via the Thriving Communities Coalition (TCC), MAS appreciates the opportunity to share reform ideas for the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) pending the CRC's publication of draft recommendations. In general, MAS agrees that the ULURP process must be amended to reduce cost, time, and risk for both applicants and the City. At the same time, the CRC should identify ways in which ULURP reform can better improve community engagement. MAS looks forward to continuing our collaboration with CRC staff to explore ways in which the procedure can be right sized across both time and procedure.

After reviewing insights and recommendations shared during the public input period, MAS has identified several proposals we strongly support, as well as ideas we believe would do little to improve the ULURP process and could have negative or unintended consequences. Our specific comments and concerns are outlined below.

MAS strongly supports CRC efforts to address the following:

1. **Shortening the ULURP Timeline and Increasing Efficiency:** MAS endorses reforms that significantly enhance procedural efficiency, reduce delays, and improve transparency. Potential reforms worth further exploration include:
   - Conducting concurrent reviews by Community Boards (CB) and Borough Presidents (BP).
   - Reducing the amount of time granted to each reviewing body to evaluate an application, but to no less than 30 days, and with capacity building and support to CBs to meet a reduced timeframe, if required.

- Establishing a formal pre-certification phase and/or opportunity for engagement between the City Planning Commission (CPC), CB, and BP, which could both streamline later review phases and minimize unexpected negative feedback later in the process.

2. **Discouraging Member Deference as a Barrier to Essential Development:** While member deference has value in promoting local advocacy, it has also been legitimately criticized for enabling resistance to necessary development, compelling local CC members to yield to vocal, anti-development minorities. This issue disproportionately impacts underdeveloped districts where increased housing is both viable and urgently needed. Potential reforms to mitigate unrepresentative, late-stage vetoes include:
   - Exploring an alternative order of reviews, such as by shifting CC review prior to BP review or having them happen concurrently with collaborative dialogue.
   - Establishing an appeals panel comprised of representatives from CPC, the relevant CB, BP, and the CC Speaker.

3. **Reevaluating the Scope of Actions Requiring Full ULURP:** Section 197-c(a) of the Charter currently lists twelve categories requiring ULURP review, some of which albeit regularly bypass review pursuant to CPC rulemaking authority. Examples of reforms worth exploring further to modernize and streamline ULURP include:
   - Establishing a transparent process for regular CPC reevaluation of the actions subject to ULURP review, to remove those which are outdated and incorporate new, relevant categories as they emerge.
   - Allowing CPC final decision-making authority on a selection of smaller-scale or CPC-determined low-impact projects.
   - Encouraging CPC to classify more projects as minor modifications (i.e., modifications of Special Permits subject to CPC approval) thereby reducing unnecessary administrative burdens and mitigating the volume of projects going through ULURP review.

MAS strongly advises against the following ideas that we believe will negatively impact New Yorkers and/or are better addressed through policy frameworks outside Charter reform:

1. **Expediting Disposition of City-Owned Property:** MAS has significant concerns about proposals advocating incentivized disposition of City-owned property merely to expedite short-term development. Disposing of land prematurely compromises the City's long-term flexibility and control, weakening its ability to leverage these assets effectively to achieve broader housing and climate goals in the future. MAS urges the City to prioritize

retention and strategic use of publicly owned land rather than continuing a pattern of disposition that ultimately diminishes public power and long-term potential.

2. **Fast-Tracking Reviews for Housing:** While MAS recognizes the urgent need for affordable housing, circumventing the ULURP process to fast-track projects of a certain use, program, or scope, risks inadequate community input, incomplete impact assessments, and diminished project quality. MAS emphasizes a balanced approach, advocating instead for ULURP reforms to enhance efficiency and responsiveness for all project types rather than increasing exemptions that bypass thorough public review. To note: MAS also urges against introducing abbreviated time limits on the application and pre-certification process (e.g. a 90-day clock), as other cities that have introduced this have had processes that result in both lower quality projects and ultimately more quick-decision rejections.

3. **Centralizing Decision-Making Authority:** MAS strongly opposes consolidating ULURP decision-making exclusively within the mayor or CC. Such centralization would severely weaken ULURP's foundational checks and balances, reduce transparency, and dilute ULURP's intent as a public land use process.

Thank you for your consideration of the recommendations and concerns outlined above. We look forward to continued engagement as the Charter Revision Commission review process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Keri Butler
Interim President
The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS)

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2195515 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 15 Apr 2025 21:57:23 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 05:57:05 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Marina Pino

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Good afternoon – I'm writing to share the Brennan Center's public comment on the effect of moving municipal elections to even-numbered years. We would be happy to discuss this policy further at your convenience, if helpful. My best, Marina Pino

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE

Chair Richard R. Buery, Jr.
Vice Chair Sharon Greenberger
New York City Charter Revision Commission

April 15, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Re: Comment on the Effect of Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years

Dear Chair Buery, Jr., Vice Chair Greenberger, and members of the New York City Charter Revision Commission:

The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the well-tested reform of moving local elections to even-numbered years.[1] For thirty years, the Brennan Center's nonpartisan expertise has informed policies that protect and expand democracy, including proposals that move low-turnout municipal elections to even years and measures that give underrepresented New Yorkers a more meaningful voice in their elections and government.

The average voter turnout in New York City mayoral elections over the past twenty years is just 29.5 percent – a far lower rate than the turnout for gubernatorial and federal elections in that same period.[2] Even fewer New York City voters turn out for non-mayoral elections in odd years despite competitive races across the boroughs and statewide ballot measures on the ballot.[3] Such dismal turnout frustrates the full potential of an inclusive democracy in New York City.

Aligning low-turnout city elections to even-numbered years can help address this problem. Given the experience of other jurisdictions that have aligned their elections, we know this policy

[1] The Brennan Center is a nonpartisan public policy and law institute that focuses on the fundamental issues of democracy and justice. This comment does not reflect views, if any, of the NYU School of Law.
[2] New York City Campaign Finance Board, *2023 Voter Analysis Report*, April 29, 2024, 74, https://www.nyccfb.info/pdf/2023_VoterAnalysisReport.pdf.
[3] For example, only 12.8 percent of eligible New York City voters cast a ballot in the 2023 general election. *See* New York City Campaign Finance Board, *2023 Voter Analysis Report*, 2; *see also* Citizens Union, "2023 Local Races Turnout: Why New York Needs Even-Year Elections," November 15, 2023, https://citizensunion.org/portfolio-item/citizens-union-analysis-of-the-november-2023-election-finds-significant-voter-turnout-drop-in-off-year-local-elections/.

can increase voter turnout, promote a more representative electorate, and reduce election administration costs.

With these democratic benefits in mind, the New York City Council has introduced a resolution calling on the state Legislature to initiate the constitutional amendment process to extend this reform to New York City elections.[4] Lawmakers in Albany have already proposed legislation to do so,[5] making clear they are committed to building on the state's progress of moving town and county elections to even-numbered years.[6] And critically, public opinion reflects overwhelming support for this policy. Recent polling shows a large majority of likely New York City voters across the five boroughs and demographics including race, age, and gender support this policy. [7]

Nearly all academic studies on this reform have found that elections in odd-numbered years drastically hinder voter turnout.[8] New York City's last mayoral general election hit a historic low of 23.3 percent in 2021.[9] But in last year's presidential election, more than twice as many voters

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[4] New York City Council, *Res. 0189-A-2024*, 2024–25 Sess. (N.Y.C. 2024); *see also* Marina Pino, "Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation," Brennan Center for Justice, December 5, 2024, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/testimony-new-york-city-council-committee-governmental-operations-state.

[5] S. 5851, 2025–27 Sess. (N.Y. 2025), https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2025/S5851; A. 7369, 2025–27 Sess. (N.Y. 2025), https://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?default_fld=%0D%0A&leg_video=&bn=A07369&term=2025&Text=Y.

[6] *See* New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, "Governor Hochul Signs Voting Rights Legislation to Expand Access to the Ballot Box and Improve Voter Participation," December 22, 2023, https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-signs-voting-rights-legislation-expand-access-ballot-box-and-improve-voter. Recent litigation is frustrating this law's timely implementation, which was set to go into full effect on January 1, 2025. See Joshua Solomon, "N.Y. Law Moving Local Elections to Even Years Challenged," *Times Union*, April 2, 2024, https://www.timesunion.com/state/article/n-y-law-moving-local-elections-even-years-19379629.php; and Luke Parsnow, "Judge Rules New York's New Even-Year Election Law Violates State Constitution," *Spectrum News 1*, October 8, 2024, https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nys/central-ny/politics/2024/10/08/judge-rules-new-york-s-new-even-year-election-law-is-unconstitutional. Defendant Onondaga Conty Board of Elections Commissioner filed appeal on November 7, 2024.

[7] Jesse Am, "Polling NYC: Survey Analysis of 2025 Likely Mayoral Voters on Politics, Crimes, Migrants, and Electoral Reform," Manhattan Institute, April 18, 2024, https://manhattan.institute/article/polling-nyc-survey-analysis-of-2025-likely-mayoral-voters.

[8] Zoltan Hajnal and Avi Green, "Big Cities – Tiny Votes? America's Urban Voter Turnout," Yankelovich Center for Social Science Research, December 2024, https://yankelovichcenter.ucsd.edu/_files/reports/Big-Cities-Tiny-Votes.pdf; Zoltan Hajnal, Vladimir Kogan, and G. Agustin Markarian, "Who Votes: City Election Timing and Voter Composition," *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 1 (February 2022): 374–83, https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/abs/who-votes-city-election-timing-and-voter-composition/39CE6B9F0E906228F695248C874C0C36; Justin de Benedictis-Kessner and Christopher Warshaw, "The Electoral and Policy Effects of Election Timing in City and County Government," Harvard Kennedy School, December 23, 2023, https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/electoral-and-policy-effects-election-timing-city-and-county-government; Melissa Marschall and John Lappie, "Turnout in Local Elections: Is Timing Really Everything?," *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* 17, no. 3 (September 2018): 221–33, https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/elj.2017.0462; and Zoltan L. Hajnal, "America's Uneven Democracy: Race, Turnout, and Representation in City Politics," *Cambridge University Press*, 2012, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/americas-uneven-democracy/F7F07D16DF4AE060B09589BDF72892E4.

[9] New York City Campaign Finance Board, *2021-2022 Voter Analysis Report*, February 3, 2022, 2, https://www.nyccfb.info/pdf/2021-2022_VoterAnalysisReport.pdf.

cast a ballot, making up 54 percent of the city's registered voters per early returns.[10] The 2021 and 2024 comparison is not an anomaly: over the last five New York City mayoral contests, the average voter turnout is just 27 percent, while the average rate across the last five presidential elections is 60 percent.[11]

Elections in odd-numbered years also exacerbate disparities in participation for voters who have historically faced barriers to the franchise, including voters of color and young voters.[12] In 2023, for example, only 6.1 percent of young voters and an even lower rate for voters of color in certain New York City neighborhoods participated in the general election for all City Council members.[13] That election had an overall turnout rate of just 12.8 percent of eligible city voters.[14]

As the New York City Council's proposed Resolution makes plain, moving municipal elections to even-numbered years can make the city's democracy more inclusive, with more eligible voters electing their representatives.[15] We know this based on the experience of other cities that have aligned their local elections with even-numbered year elections. Case in point: San Francisco saw a nearly three-fold increase in turnout last fall – the city's first election since adopting the policy – when compared to the average turnout rate from the previous six odd-numbered year election cycles.[16] In other Californian cities that previously adopted the policy, turnout among younger voters nearly doubled, and Hispanic and Asian American voters also saw substantial turnout gains.[17]

This reform can also help New York City reduce election administration costs. In 2024, the Independent Budget Office reported that the city could save an estimated $42 million every other year with consolidated elections.[18] This assessment is significant in a city where the last mayoral primary and general elections cost approximately $60 million.[19] With a shift to even-numbered

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[10] Hajnal and Green, "Big Cities – Tiny Votes? America's Urban Voter Turnout," 13.
[11] Hajnal and Green, "Big Cities – Tiny Votes? America's Urban Voter Turnout," 13.
[12] *See* Harvard Law School Election Law Clinic, "Support for Resolution No. 189-A, Amendment to the New York State Constitution To Move New York City Elections to Even-numbered Years," December 3, 2024, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/60a559b59cfc63389f67f892/t/674f8d5c29915c7b8d59c005/1733266780394/Letter+to+NYC+Council+re+NY+Election+Alignment+vF.pdf.
[13] New York City Campaign Finance Board, *2023 Voter Analysis Report*, 18.
[14] Brigid Bergin, "What if NYC's Mayoral Election Was this Year? Experts Say More People Would Vote in It," *Gothamist*, April 29, 2024, https://gothamist.com/news/what-if-nycs-mayoral-election-was-this-year-experts-say-more-people-would-vote-in-it?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=shared_facebook.
[15] New York City Council, *Res. 0189-A-2024*, 2024–25 Sess. (N.Y.C. 2024).
[16] Hajnal and Green, "Big Cities – Tiny Votes? America's Urban Voter Turnout," 8.
[17] Hajnal, Kogan, and Markarian, "Who Votes: City Election Timing and Voter Composition," 377–79; and Citizens Union, *Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years*, December 2022, 40–41, https://citizensunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Moving-Municipal-Elections-to-Even-Numbered-Years-Citizens-Union-report_FINAL.pdf.
[18] Annie McDonough, "Independent Budget Office: Holding All Elections on Even Years Would Save NYC Millions," *City & State New York*, August 15, 2024, https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2024/08/independent-budget-office-holding-all-elections-even-years-would-save-nyc-millions/398851/#:~:text=New%20York%20City%20could%20save%20an%20estimated%20%2442,report%20from%20the%20city%E2%80%99s%20Independent%20Budget%20Office%20found.
[19] Citizens Union, *Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years*, 44.

years, city election officials can allocate resources in odd-numbered years towards other essential responsibilities to more equitably serve all voters, including voter registration, cyber and physical security enhancements, and upgrades to election infrastructure.[20]

The Brennan Center commends the New York City Charter Revision Commission for analyzing this important reform which would build a more participatory democracy for all eligible city voters. By shifting municipal elections to even-numbered years, the city can achieve the broad, representative turnout its elections deserve.

Respectfully submitted,

BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE
AT NYU SCHOOL OF LAW
Marina Pino, Counsel, Elections & Government
[redacted]

[20] *See* New York City Campaign Finance Board, *2022-2023 Voter Analysis Report*, May 1, 2023, 93, https://www.nyccfb.info/pdf/2022-2023_VoterAnalysisReport.pdf ("Consolidating elections would mean the City BOE would spend less on running elections year to year and concentrate on delivering crucial election services in dedicated election years.").

Subject:

Fw: [EXTERNAL] Brennan Center Public Comment re Effect of Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years

From: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

To: "Heinrich, Marc" [redacted], "Richman, Lily" [redacted], "Stuzin, Devin" [redacted], "Bogdanowicz, Genevieve" [redacted], Julia Meyers [redacted]

Date: Tue, 15 Apr 2025 23:41:40 +0000

From: Marina Pino [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 6:01 PM
To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Brennan Center Public Comment re Effect of Moving Municipal Elections to Even-Numbered Years

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Good afternoon –

I'm writing to share the Brennan Center's public comment on the effect of moving municipal elections to even-numbered years. We would be happy to discuss this policy further at your convenience, if helpful.

My best,
Marina Pino

Marina R. Pino
Counsel, Elections and Government
Office: [redacted]

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3848755 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 17 Apr 2025 03:49:00 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 11:47:48 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Daniel Battista

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Testimony uploaded as PDF file.

Written testimony submitted by:

Daniel Battista
[redacted]

[redacted]

As delivered in person at the Charter Revision Commission Hearing on Government Reform on:

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

My name is Danny Battista, I'm a lifelong New Yorker, a resident of the city for 20 years, 14 of which I have lived right here on Staten Island.

The topic tonight is Government Reform - and to quote part of the description of this hearing, "After a review of the entire Charter, the CRC may recommend changes intended to help City government work more efficiently and better serve all New Yorkers."

That's what brings me here this evening: better serve *all* New Yorkers.

I'm one of the 1.1 million registered voters in this city who, simply because of my choice to not affiliate with a political party - is completely shut out of our primary elections. This effectively omits the preferences of voters like me throughout the city who are otherwise ready and willing to participate meaningfully in our ongoing process of self-governance. This must not continue any longer.

It's an election year, and here we are in the middle of a primary season. A couple of weeks ago, I was out for a walk in my neighborhood. As I neared the waterfront by the ferry, I could see someone handing out flyers and

talking to people. A few moments later, they approached and questioned me directly as many of us have experienced.

“Are you a registered Democrat?,” they asked.

“Hi, I’m not - I’m independent…”

“Okay.”

And instantly - they turned on a dime and walked away - already gone before they could even finish saying the word ‘okay.’

There was no attempt or interest in introducing their candidate to me - what they stand for, why they are running, how their leadership might benefit me, or our city.

Perhaps this is poor electioneering. But it’s deeper than that. This behavior is in fact a sad and logical result of a contorted system.

In this instance - because I’m not a registered Democrat - I, like so many others in this city, are relegated to a second-class status, or one could even say a *non-status*.

Not only can voters like me *not vote* in our publicly-funded primary elections, but so profound and insidious is the dynamic that has been created over decades that has normalized excluding independent voters from the process that even speaking with an unaffiliated voter on the street is seen as futile. The system we have says to independent voters:

You don’t matter. You don’t exist. Talking with you is worthless and pointless.

New York City - a place I’ve always thought of as a beacon of possibility and progress - often referred to as the greatest city in the world - must finally join the other cities and states in our country that have open

primaries, where people can vote without the condition of identifying themselves with a political party. First and foremost, I am a New Yorker. One of “all New Yorkers” you are charged with recommending changes on behalf of in the name of making things better.

So please: make it better, make it fair, and make it right. Open our primaries and let all voters vote in New York City. Thank you.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8546411 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 17 Apr 2025 21:10:00 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 05:09:16 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Elizabeth Denys

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: New Yorkers badly need the process for approving new homes to be simplified in the Charter. Right now, the land use process outlined in the Charter is onerous both in time and costs to those seeking rezonings, and too many desperately needed projects to build additional homes and permanently affordable homes get delayed or denied. That doesn't even touch on the housing projects that never even make it off of a planner's desk and do not even attempt to undergo the ULURP process because of these costs or risk of rejection. Furthermore, the current process gives an outsized voice to those who favor the status quo and amplifies the voices of those who already have secure housing over those who need more housing the most. The process does not ensure that possible new development is contextualized within the city's housing crisis, and the piecemeal, localized process and informal but rampant practice of Council Member deference enable inaction, especially in well-resourced areas and neighborhoods that have historically failed to contribute their fair share of new housing. The Charter Revision Commission needs to rethink and streamline the rezoning process to ensure that New York City is meeting its fair housing goals as outlined in Where We Live NYC and Local Law 167 of 2023,

Speaker Adams's "Fair Housing Framework," to ensure everyone can afford to live here and stay here. The Charter Revision Commission must ensure that neighborhoods identified by LL167's "Fair Housing Framework" as failing to build their fair share of new homes and affordable homes cannot continue to lag behind and force other neighborhoods, which tend to be currently less well-resourced neighborhoods, to shoulder more than their fair share of the burden of building new homes. All projects to add new housing in neighborhoods that are not meeting fair housing goals should be required by the Charter to be automatically approved until these neighborhoods are contributing their fair share of new housing development. The Charter Revision Commission should combine and restructure the local land use review phases, specifically the Community Board and Borough President phases, to streamline and shorten the overall process and align the process to fair housing goals. The Charter Revision Commission should consider including the local City Council member in this advisory phase as well, in lieu of the current, binding City Council review stage (more on this later in my testimony). Currently, these advisory phases are biased towards the whims of well-housed minorities within a project's hyperlocal community, who have the time and energy to engage in multiple hours-long meetings, instead of towards understanding and addressing specific local concerns to ensure additional housing will be successful. Additionally, Community Boards, being made up of 50 volunteers and a small number of non-voting staff, do not have the appropriate resources to ensure their review processes and recommendations accurately reflect either the needs of residents within their boundaries or the repercussions of their decisions on residents of the city as a whole. Too often, these early phases never even casually engage with the realities of the housing crisis in our city - skyrocketing rents across the city, a historically low vacancy rate, severe overcrowding, and the financial precarity of rent-burdened and severely rent burdened households - unless a brave participant notes these facts, often to vicious heckling from others in the audience. Other models of community outreach that have been proven to better reflect the views and needs of the full population and explicitly engage participants in considering not just the physical changes to the built environment but also the local and citywide context of the housing crisis are needed to ensure these processes are in the service of all New Yorkers' needs. The Charter Revision Commission must also restructure the process to ensure the local City Council member does not get a late-stage, unevenly used veto for land use proposals. These late-stage vetoes add significant cost to developments which are then passed onto New Yorkers in rents or sales prices, and worse, the widespread practice of member deference runs directly against fair housing goals by letting a single person's stance on housing dictate the building opportunity within an area. The Charter Revision Commission should eliminate City Council review as a separate phase and either include the local Council Member in a non-binding earlier local review phase, as suggested above, or include them as a voting member of the City Planning Commission for the project. Finally, the land use review process should be significantly altered and streamlined for creating publicly-led developments for HPD-financed affordable housing on city-owned land. The Charter Revision Commission should require City Council to sign-off on these projects as without any of the current, prior review phases, so that the staff and resources required to shepherd these projects through the current nearly year-long process could be refocused on other high-priority projects. I thank the Charter Revision Commission for their attention to this vital issue. New Yorkers urgently need more

housing and more affordable housing now, and the Charter Revision Commission has a unique opportunity to restructure processes to greatly reduce the barriers to getting those new homes with fair housing principles in mind.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Lorraine Beals [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 12:57:23 +0000

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I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardless of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

Lorraine Beals

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Linda Qendro [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 12:57:43 +0000

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Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Linda Qendro

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Valerie Madeska [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 12:58:15 +0000

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I have been forced throughout my life to enroll in a political party if I want my vote to matter. Neither of the two largest parties reflects my values and beliefs. I am excited to be supporting open primaries. This change will mean that I am no longer forced to make a choice that does not reflect my values.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that I could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect my values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot.

Valerie Madeska

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Jared Wojcik [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 12:58:49 +0000

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I do not want, nor will I join a party of any kind. I am asking you to support and open primaries to those not affiliated with any political party.This change will mean that people will be able to make a choice that reflects their values and not force them to join a party to have a day in the world that they live in.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that people could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect their values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot.

Jared Wojcik

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Peter Newburger [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 12:59:26 +0000

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Non-partisan, special elections are nothing new and are a proven way to choose the best candidate from a field representing several different viewpoints. These elections have been one by candidates across the ideal spectrum. It is time that we applied this proven method to all citywide elections.

Special elections have been taking place in New York City for as long as I can remember. They are an effective way to let voters express their preference from a range of candidates and save the City the cost of running multiple different elections.

Peter Newburger

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Clarke Mclaughlin [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:00:11 +0000

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I have been forced throughout my life to enroll in a political party if I want my vote to matter. Neither of the two largest parties reflects my values and beliefs. I am excited to be supporting open primaries. This change will mean that I am no longer forced to make a choice that does not reflect my values.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that I could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect my values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot.

Clarke Mclaughlin

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Mark Picard [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:00:31 +0000

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Non-partisan, special elections are nothing new and are a proven way to choose the best candidate from a field representing several different viewpoints. These elections have been won by candidates across the ideological spectrum. It is time that we applied this proven method to all citywide elections.

Special elections have been taking place in New York City for as long as I can remember. They are an effective way to let voters express their preference from a range of candidates and save the City the cost of running multiple different elections.

Mark Picard

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: James Nowack [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:01:00 +0000

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New York City has always been at the forefront of democracy, and it is time that we continue to evolve. Having recently adopted Ranked Choice Voting, it is time that we take the next step and move to a system of open primaries. As a New Yorker, I am proud to be from a place known for innovation, and the time has come for us to take the next step.

This evolution will strengthen our democracy and bring more New Yorkers into the process. By continuing to evolve and adapt, we show the world we are leading the way. New York has been, and should continue to be, the world's most creative and innovative city. There’s no reason that shouldn’t be true for our elections.

James Nowack

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: RICHARD MURDOCK [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:01:27 +0000

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Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

RICHARD MURDOCK

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Elizabeth Peters [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:02:00 +0000

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I have been a registered Green for most of my life as Neither of the two largest parties reflects my values and beliefs. I am excited to be supporting open primaries. This change will mean that I am no longer forced to make a choice that does not reflect my values and could bring back the green party line status which your more recent regulations removed us from that.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that I could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect my values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. It means candidates can run on the party that most reflects their values rather than having to be endorsed by other parties or rely on those endorsements in order to run. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot. More viable candidates means more choice,more open debate on issues, and is overall more democratic.

Elizabeth Peters

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Joaquin Ramos [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:02:50 +0000

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New York City has always been at the forefront of democracy, and it is time that we continue to evolve. Having recently adopted Ranked Choice Voting, it is time that we take the next step and move to a system of open primaries. As a New Yorker, I am proud to be from a place known for innovation, and the time has come for us to take the next step.

This evolution will strengthen our democracy and bring more New Yorkers into the process. By continuing to evolve and adapt, we show the world we are leading the way. New York has been, and should continue to be, the world's most creative and innovative city. There’s no reason that shouldn’t be true for our elections.

Joaquin Ramos

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Angel Ayon [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:03:22 +0000

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I am registered independent since I became a naturalized citizen in 2008. I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardless of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

Angel Ayon

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Patrica Fahey [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:02:30 +0000

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I understand the importance of allowing all people, especially the newest New Yorkers, to participate in our electoral and civic life. Open primaries eliminate barriers to voting and would mean that all New Yorkers, particularly immigrants, would be able to participate in all our elections.

It is key to the very fabric of our city that we make our civic life one that all people can participate in, regardless of political preference or personal history. The people we elect to represent us should represent that shared belief in an open and inclusive city.

Patrica Fahey

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Patrick Hemsworth [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:03:57 +0000

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Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Patrick Hemsworth

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Brant MacDuff [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 18 Apr 2025 13:04:36 +0000

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I have been forced throughout my life to enroll in a political party if I want my vote to matter. Neither of the two largest parties reflects my values and beliefs. I am excited to be supporting open primaries. This change will mean that I am no longer forced to make a choice that does not reflect my values.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that I could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect my values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot.

Brant MacDuff

[redacted]

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3918491 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 13:41:31 +0000

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This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Shelly Warwick

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5935283 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 13:48:06 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 09:47:51 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Ann Goldstein

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-597084 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 13:52:01 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 09:51:40 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Mitchell A Grubler

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I am the Chair of the Queens Preservation Council and I am writing on its behalf.We strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. We urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5814338 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 14:02:00 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 10:00:16 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Ellen Kahn

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Giving developers free rein to build new residential and commercial buildings is not the way the city functions best, is sure to change living conditions for many. We have bills and laws for everything from driving to composting. There should not be any exception for development. Rather there should be rules and laws whereby developers present their plans for review and approval by our elected representatives.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2083099 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 14:34:55 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 10:34:05 AM

This form resides at
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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Ray Fritz

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods. strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods. strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5611902 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 14:48:44 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 10:48:22 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Janet Brand

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in NYC or to remove common sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impact of new development are adequately considered. I urge the commissioner not to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city and ensure the neighborhood character continues.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1177724 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 14:48:46 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 10:48:32 AM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Robbin Brosterman

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6731207 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 15:15:18 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11:14:59 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Dorothy Caeser

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight that ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods. Thank you for your attention.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1128108 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 15:24:06 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11:23:50 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Drunell Levinson

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7716089 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 15:28:50 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11:28:37 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Jennifer G Norton

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8942152 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 15:32:35 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11:32:24 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Jeanne Krier

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4353449 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 15:55:54 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11:55:09 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Amy Harlib

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: STOP THE GREEDY CORPORATE INTERESTS DESTROYING OUR CITY! I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7342328 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 16:02:43 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 12:00:26 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Rosalie Grossman

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: My neighborhood of Chelsea is already overrun with construction of new luxury high rise buildings, with rents that most working people cannot afford. New office space is not needed. Older buildings with character are being destroyed to create room for them.The streets, subways, and buses are ever more crowded. Stores have closed because commercial rents are unaffordable.Can the infrastructure stand more population?This just about the real estate industry making more money.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1309815 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 16:11:59 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11:55:09 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Amy Harlib

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: STOP THE GREEDY CORPORATE INTERESTS DESTROYING OUR CITY! I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3103948 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 17:02:03 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 01:01:49 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Michael H Glyn

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5684245 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 18:30:43 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 02:30:20 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Anne Mitcheltree

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I SRONGLY OPPOSE efforts to deregulate real estate development in New York City. I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to any removal of regulations and oversights which currently maintain a community-based review of environmental and architectural considerations necessary for maintaining neighborhood context and local cultural assimilation of new projects.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8795920 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 18:38:22 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 02:38:10 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Donna O. Mastrandrea

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: The proposed Charter Revision may appear to be a way to fast-track the construction of affordable housing, but at what cost? Sure, some building regulations may appear Byzantine, but basic protections when erecting a structure ensure that the construction workers are safe, and the eventual residents can live in apartments that don't contain lead paint or asbestos, or shoddy workmanship. Two scary examples of structures that were built in places that didn't have robust construction regulations: Grenfell Towers in London, a complex for lower income residents, which was destroyed by fire because it had been constructed of sub-standard materials; and the high-rise in Florida, which collapsed because it had crumbling pillars in the parking garage at its base. Some of our city sits on landfill, some on bedrock. There's Minetta Creek under a portion of the Village. Whatever is built has to be customized to the area's geological circumstances. Our fellow New Yorkers, whatever their income level, deserve to live in homes in which they can feel secure that the safest materials were used, the blueprints were accurate and followed scrupulously, there weren't any cost-cutting shenanigans, and the folks who built them had protective gear during the process. Streamlining the application process for new construction

makes sense. By-passing regulations does not.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1877673 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 18:53:16 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 02:53:05 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Faye Ellman

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods. Unchecked development over the past 20 years has rendered my home of 40+ years, Chelsea, unrecognizable. Demolition and oversized building continues apace with no end in sight. Faye Ellman

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8714074 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sat, 19 Apr 2025 19:32:34 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 03:31:49 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Nadine Locke

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1042861 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 00:27:55 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 08:27:39 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Judith Jacobson

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9766793 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 01:21:29 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 09:20:54 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: M O'Brien

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2492770 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 01:34:28 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 09:34:15 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Martha Foley

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3897054 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 07:36:35 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Sunday, April 20, 2025, at 03:36:18 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Cindy Hwang

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I work as a housing organizer in Lower Manhattan, and I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5883886 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 08:41:46 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Sunday, April 20, 2025, at 04:41:33 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Ron Greenberg

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2393422 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 14:32:25 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Sunday, April 20, 2025, at 10:32:13 AM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: R Richardson

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1999473 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 16:23:43 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Sunday, April 20, 2025, at 12:23:33 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Robert B Plutzker

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4213082 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 21:27:58 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Sunday, April 20, 2025, at 05:27:47 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Wendy

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4501056 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 21:29:23 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Sunday, April 20, 2025, at 05:27:48 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Wendy

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9554288 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Sun, 20 Apr 2025 23:35:07 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Sunday, April 20, 2025, at 07:34:53 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: N.Wechter

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9520256 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 2025 10:02:48 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 06:02:36 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Manuel

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods. Thank you MM

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4588800 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 2025 18:23:18 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 02:22:39 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Lynne Glasner

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: While I recognize the need to updates and change, when the changes to the physical structure and backbone of the city will be impacted and these changes will not be easily alterable and for all practical purposes permanent, we need to consider the long-term effects on the city. Deregulation is exactly the Wrong way to approach development. I strongly oppose these efforts, which will remove common-sense regulations and oversight that ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2216479 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 2025 19:58:14 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 03:57:52 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Kate Puls

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

FW: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4475300 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

From: Charter Info [redacted]

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 2025 20:37:15 +0000

From: agencymail [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, April 19, 2025 11:26 AM
To: Charter Info [redacted]
Subject: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4475300 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Saturday, April 19, 2025, at 11:25:39 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: General Inquiries

Name: Hedy Hauptman

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods. Hedy Hauptman

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Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6311942 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Mon, 21 Apr 2025 21:09:56 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 05:09:41 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Renee R

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I met with Mayor Adams on 2 occasions. I explained that New Yorkers are leaving in droves bc of crime as well as the high cost. There is a woman named Mary who sleeps in front of my building 60 Lafayette st, NY, NY She's been doing so for many years. Many ppl help her on a daily basis but she needs permanent housing, not a shelter where she said "she was beaten and robbed". She has been staying there because she knows she's on camera and is being watched by officers. Please help her find permanent housing. She's absolutely the nearest homeless person as she cleans up her trash as well as others. Thank you

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

New Hope Christian Fellowship

Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors and faith leaders in New York City, we are committed to fostering a more just and inclusive democracy—one that amplifies the voices of all communities, particularly those who have historically been marginalized. We write to you today in strong support of transitioning to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections. Such a change would break down barriers to participation, ensuring that all voters, regardless of party affiliation, have a meaningful say in the electoral process.

The current system of closed primaries disproportionately excludes independent voters, many of whom belong to minority and low-income communities. These voters, often facing systemic barriers to civic engagement, find themselves locked out of the most consequential electoral decisions simply because they are not registered with a major party. Open primaries would empower these individuals, giving them a direct voice in selecting candidates who best represent their interests and values. When participation is broadened, elected officials become more accountable to all constituents, not just a select group of party insiders.

Furthermore, non-partisan elections would help to reduce polarization and encourage candidates to engage with a more diverse electorate. In many local races, the real contest takes place in the primaries, effectively leaving out those who do not belong to the dominant party in their district. This system discourages competition, leading to low voter engagement and policies that do not fully reflect the needs of all New Yorkers. By implementing non-partisan elections, we can promote fairer campaigns in which candidates must appeal to the entire community, rather than a narrow partisan base.

From our work in churches across the city, we have seen firsthand how disillusionment with the political system leads many, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, to disengage entirely. Open primaries would restore faith in the electoral process by making it more accessible and responsive. Our democracy is strongest when all people—not just the politically connected—can exercise their fundamental right to vote in meaningful elections.

For these reasons, we urge you to support open primaries and non-partisan elections. New York City has long been a beacon of diversity and progress, but our electoral system must evolve to reflect these values. By adopting these reforms, we can create a more inclusive and representative democracy—one where every voice truly matters.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
Bishop Orlando FIndlaster
F11F97D8CF4A44D...

Bishop Orlando FIndlaster

Senior Pastor

[redacted]

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Bethany Baptist Church of Brooklyn

[redacted]

[redacted]

Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors and faith leaders in New York City, we are deeply committed to the well-being of our communities and the strength of our democratic institutions. Our city thrives when its government is responsive, inclusive, and accountable to all people, regardless of political affiliation. That is why we urge the Charter Revision Commission to support the transition to a system of open primaries and nonpartisan elections. Such a reform is essential to ensuring that every New Yorker has an equal voice in choosing their leaders, regardless of party registration.

Currently, our electoral system limits participation by effectively excluding millions of voters—particularly those who are unaffiliated with a major party—from crucial primary elections. Given that most elections in New York City are decided in the primary rather than the general election, this exclusion leaves many residents without a meaningful say in their representation. An open primary system would expand civic engagement, encouraging broader participation and ensuring that elected officials are accountable to the entire electorate, not just to party insiders.

Furthermore, a transition to nonpartisan elections would help break the entrenched duopoly of the Democratic and Republican Parties, reducing political polarization and fostering a more solutions-oriented government. Our city deserves leaders who are chosen based on their qualifications, ideas, and commitment to the common good—not simply their party affiliation. By opening the electoral process to all candidates and voters, we can create a system that prioritizes merit and public service over partisanship.

At its core, democracy is strongest when it is inclusive and representative. As faith leaders, we believe in the moral imperative of justice and fairness, principles that should extend to our electoral process. Open primaries and nonpartisan elections would revitalize trust in our institutions, ensuring that government serves all people, not just the politically connected. By adopting these reforms, New York City can set a national example of how to build a more equitable and functional democracy.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to take this crucial step toward strengthening our civic institutions and restoring faith in the democratic process. The future of our city depends on an electoral system that truly represents all New Yorkers. Thank you for your leadership and for considering this important reform.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Adolphus Lacey
44D908C216F6443...

Adolphus Lacey

Senior Pastor

Bethany Baptist Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

New Creations Ministry

Apr 8, 2025

Charter Revision Commission
New York City Charter Revision Commission
New York, NY

Subject: Support for Open Primaries and Non-Partisan Elections in New York City

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors and faith leaders committed to the well-being of our communities, we urge the Commission to adopt a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections in New York City. A government that is truly representative of the people must allow all voices to be heard in the electoral process. By transitioning to open primaries, the city can foster greater civic participation, increase voter engagement, and ensure that elected officials are accountable to all New Yorkers, not just those registered with a particular political party.

New York City is home to millions of independent and unaffiliated voters who are currently excluded from primary elections, which often determine the final outcome of many races. A system of open primaries would enfranchise these voters, allowing them to participate in selecting candidates who will ultimately represent them in government. Furthermore, a non-partisan approach to elections would prioritize candidates based on their qualifications and ideas rather than party affiliation, leading to a political system that is more responsive to the needs of the people.

We have already seen the effectiveness of non-partisan elections in New York City during special elections, where all candidates run on the same ballot regardless of party affiliation. These elections have been conducted smoothly and fairly, demonstrating that the city is fully capable of implementing non-partisan election processes. Expanding this system to all elections would enhance trust in government and encourage broader participation, strengthening our democratic institutions.

Open primaries and non-partisan elections would also help bridge divisions in our city, promoting unity over partisanship. At a time when civic engagement is critical, we must create an electoral system that invites all voices into the decision-making process. Faith communities like ours witness firsthand the impact of exclusionary policies, and we believe in advocating for a system that ensures fairness and inclusion for all voters, regardless of party affiliation.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage the Charter Revision Commission to embrace open primaries and non-partisan elections as a means to improve governance and civic institutions in New York City. By making this change, the city will take a bold step toward a more inclusive democracy that reflects the true diversity and will of its people.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
Minister John Williams
9AC97263A50A453...
Minister John Williams

JW

NCM

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Mt. Zion Church of God 7th Day
[redacted]

Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders in New York City, we write to urge you to support the transition to an open primary system and non-partisan elections. The foundation of democracy is the idea that every voice matters, yet our current closed primary system excludes millions of voters from participating in the elections that ultimately decide our city's leadership. At a time when trust in government is at historic lows, ensuring fair and inclusive elections is a moral imperative.

New Yorkers deserve elected officials who truly represent all the people, not just the small fraction of voters who participate in closed primaries. Under the current system, a vast majority of general election outcomes are effectively determined in primaries where only registered party members can vote. This excludes independent voters and discourages broader civic engagement. A transition to open primaries would ensure that every voter, regardless of party affiliation, has an equal voice in choosing the leaders who will shape our city's future.

Opening our elections to all voters would also help restore public confidence in government. Many New Yorkers feel disconnected from the political process, believing that elections are decided by party insiders rather than the people. A non-partisan system would encourage candidates to appeal to a broader audience rather than catering to a small, ideological base. This shift would foster greater accountability, encourage coalition-building, and produce leaders who are more attuned to the diverse needs of our city.

Furthermore, an open primary system aligns with the values of fairness and justice that we hold dear as clergy. Our faith calls us to stand for the dignity and inclusion of all people, principles that should also be reflected in our electoral system. No voter should be denied the opportunity to help select their representatives simply because they do not belong to a political party. By embracing open primaries, we can take a meaningful step toward a more just and representative democracy.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to recognize this pivotal moment and take bold action to ensure that all New Yorkers have a voice in the electoral process. By transitioning to open primaries and non-partisan elections, we can restore trust in our democracy and build a government that truly reflects the will of the people. We pray that you will act with wisdom and courage in making this critical decision.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
Pastor Gil Monrose
817A119DB616420...
[Your Name]

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Pastor
Mt. Zion Church of God 7th Day

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Hungry 4 God Church

Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders committed to justice, fairness, and the common good, we write to urge the Commission to adopt a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections in New York City. The foundation of democracy is the ability of all citizens to have a voice in their government. However, under the current system, hundreds of thousands of independent and unaffiliated voters are effectively disenfranchised, unable to participate in the crucial primary elections that often determine the final outcome of local races. We believe that implementing open primaries will better reflect the principles of inclusivity, equity, and broad civic engagement that are essential to a thriving democracy.

New York City is home to a large and diverse electorate, yet nearly one million registered voters—those who do not belong to a major party—are currently locked out of the electoral process during primary elections. Given that most local races are decided in the primaries, this exclusion means that a significant portion of our community has no real opportunity to express their preferences in the leaders who govern them. As pastors, we witness firsthand the frustration and disillusionment this creates among our congregants. Many feel that their voices do not matter because the system is structured in a way that limits their participation.

A transition to open primaries and non-partisan elections would not only empower independent voters but also encourage greater civic participation across all demographics. Under the current closed system, candidates primarily cater to party bases rather than the full spectrum of voters they are meant to serve. This leads to polarization and governance that may not reflect the interests of the entire community. By opening the primaries, candidates would need to appeal to a broader constituency, leading to a more representative and accountable government that prioritizes the needs of all New Yorkers rather than just partisan interests.

From a moral and ethical standpoint, ensuring that every citizen has an equal voice in the democratic process aligns with the fundamental values of justice and fairness. Democracy should not be reserved for a select group of party-affiliated voters; rather, it should be accessible to all, regardless of political affiliation. An open primary system would affirm the dignity of every voter and strengthen the social fabric of our city by fostering greater engagement, trust, and participation in our electoral system.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Charter Revision Commission to support a transition to open primaries and non-partisan elections. This reform is not just a political adjustment but a moral imperative that will lead to a more just and representative democracy for all New Yorkers. We pray that you will consider this vital change and stand on the side of inclusion, equity, and the democratic principles that bind us together as one city.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
[redacted]
A66025FD2D5C40F...

Lead Pastor

Hungry 4 God Church

Docusign Envelope [redacted]

Abundant Life Church

Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors and faith leaders in New York City, we write to you in support of transitioning to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections. Our city has long been a beacon of democracy, innovation, and inclusion, and we believe that adopting open primaries would further strengthen these values. By allowing all registered voters to participate in primary elections regardless of party affiliation, we can create a more representative and engaged electorate, ensuring that every voice is heard in shaping the future of our great city.

New York City is a laboratory of democracy, a place where bold ideas take root and inspire change across the nation. However, our current closed primary system limits participation and excludes nearly one million independent voters from the most critical stages of the electoral process. In a city that prides itself on diversity and civic engagement, it is imperative that our election system reflects these principles. Open primaries will foster broader voter participation, ensuring that candidates must appeal to a wider array of constituents rather than to a narrow partisan base.

Furthermore, research has shown that open primaries lead to increased voter turnout, a goal that should unite all who care about the health of our democracy. At a time when trust in government is low, a more inclusive system would encourage civic involvement and help bridge divisions by fostering coalition-building among candidates and voters alike. Faith communities understand the power of bringing people together, and we believe that open primaries can serve as a unifying force, allowing all citizens to contribute meaningfully to the democratic process.

Additionally, non-partisan elections would encourage a more issue-driven and less ideologically rigid political landscape. Candidates would need to engage with voters on substantive matters rather than relying solely on partisan loyalties. This shift would not only produce more accountable and responsive leadership but also create a government that is more reflective of the needs and priorities of all New Yorkers. Removing unnecessary barriers to participation aligns with our moral duty to promote fairness and equity in civic life.

In this defining moment for our city's democracy, we urge the Charter Revision Commission to embrace open primaries as a way to strengthen voter participation, promote inclusivity, and ensure that New York City remains a model for democratic innovation. We stand ready to support efforts that empower all citizens to have a voice in their government. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

8D2EE0000C6E4A4...

Rev. Karim Camara

Pastor

Abundant Life Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Wayside Baptist Church
[redacted]

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors committed to the spiritual and civic well-being of our communities, we write to urge the Commission to support the transition to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections in New York City. Our city has long been a beacon of democracy, a place where diverse voices come together to shape a more just and equitable society. However, the current system of closed primaries limits participation and weakens civic engagement by excluding nearly one million independent voters from the most consequential phase of our elections. At a time when our democracy depends on greater inclusion, we believe open primaries offer a vital pathway to strengthening New York City's democratic process.

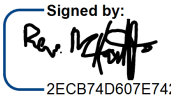
New York City is a laboratory of democracy, a place where innovative policies have historically set the stage for national reform. By adopting open primaries, we would reaffirm our city's leadership in democratic innovation. An open system would empower all registered voters—regardless of party affiliation—to have a say in electing their leaders. This change would not only increase voter participation but also foster a political culture that prioritizes broad-based ideas and solutions over partisan interests. By allowing all voices to be heard, we would encourage candidates to speak to the needs of the entire electorate, rather than catering to a small segment of voters within party primaries.

Beyond increasing participation, open primaries would strengthen the moral and civic fabric of our communities. When elections are inclusive, citizens are more likely to feel a sense of ownership in their government and are more engaged in civic life. As pastors, we see firsthand the disillusionment that many feel when they are shut out of the primary process simply because they do not belong to a particular party. This exclusion breeds apathy and frustration, weakening the very democratic values we seek to uphold. A more open and accessible electoral system would restore faith in the democratic process, encouraging a greater sense of collective responsibility for the common good.

Moreover, open primaries would help elect leaders who are accountable to all New Yorkers, not just to partisan bases. A system that includes independent and unaffiliated voters ensures that elected officials must appeal to a broader and more diverse constituency, leading to policies that reflect the needs of the entire city. In a time of increasing political division, New York has the opportunity to set an example by fostering a more inclusive and solutions-oriented approach to governance.

For these reasons, we strongly urge the Charter Revision Commission to embrace open primaries as a means of strengthening democracy, increasing civic engagement, and ensuring that every voter's voice is heard. New York City has always been at the forefront of democratic progress, and now is the time to take the next step in creating a system that truly represents all its people. We stand ready to support this effort and to work alongside you in building a more inclusive and participatory democracy.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Rev. M. Zidde Hamatheite

Pastor

Wayside Baptist Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Mt. Ollie Baptist Church
Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders committed to justice, equity, and the common good, we write to express our strong support for transitioning to a system of open primaries in New York City. Our democracy functions best when it reflects the voices of all its people, and the current closed primary system excludes a significant number of voters from participating in the electoral process. We believe that adopting open primaries and non-partisan elections would foster a more inclusive, representative, and fair democracy that serves the interests of all New Yorkers.

Under the current system, nearly one million independent and unaffiliated voters in New York City are unable to vote in primary elections, where many crucial decisions are effectively made. This means that a large portion of our city's electorate—many of whom are deeply engaged in their communities—are disenfranchised simply because they do not align with a political party. Open primaries would ensure that every eligible voter has an equal voice in shaping the leadership and policies that affect their lives. As pastors, we believe that civic engagement should not be hindered by party affiliation, and every citizen should have an opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

Furthermore, open primaries would encourage candidates to engage with a broader and more diverse electorate rather than catering solely to party bases. This shift would promote more accountability, bipartisanship, and issue-based campaigning rather than ideological division. By allowing all voters to participate, candidates would be incentivized to appeal to the general public's needs and concerns rather than a limited group of primary voters. This would lead to the election of leaders who truly represent the interests of the people rather than the extremes of political parties.

From a moral and ethical standpoint, we are called to support policies that promote justice and fairness. Excluding voters from participating in critical elections runs contrary to the principles of equality and shared governance that our faith upholds. By transitioning to open primaries and non-partisan elections, New York City would take a significant step toward strengthening democracy, reducing polarization, and ensuring that all voices are heard. This reform is not about benefiting one party over another but about creating a system that prioritizes the rights and voices of the people.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to embrace this opportunity to make our electoral system more inclusive, fair, and democratic. By adopting open primaries, we can help build a stronger, more united New York City where every voter has a say in our shared future. Thank you for your time and commitment to improving our democratic process. We pray for wisdom and guidance in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Rev. Reginald L. Bachus

Senior Pastor

Mt. Ollie Baptist Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

New Hope Christian Fellowship

Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors and faith leaders in New York City, we are committed to fostering a more just and inclusive democracy—one that amplifies the voices of all communities, particularly those who have historically been marginalized. We write to you today in strong support of transitioning to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections. Such a change would break down barriers to participation, ensuring that all voters, regardless of party affiliation, have a meaningful say in the electoral process.

The current system of closed primaries disproportionately excludes independent voters, many of whom belong to minority and low-income communities. These voters, often facing systemic barriers to civic engagement, find themselves locked out of the most consequential electoral decisions simply because they are not registered with a major party. Open primaries would empower these individuals, giving them a direct voice in selecting candidates who best represent their interests and values. When participation is broadened, elected officials become more accountable to all constituents, not just a select group of party insiders.

Furthermore, non-partisan elections would help to reduce polarization and encourage candidates to engage with a more diverse electorate. In many local races, the real contest takes place in the primaries, effectively leaving out those who do not belong to the dominant party in their district. This system discourages competition, leading to low voter engagement and policies that do not fully reflect the needs of all New Yorkers. By implementing non-partisan elections, we can promote fairer campaigns in which candidates must appeal to the entire community, rather than a narrow partisan base.

From our work in churches across the city, we have seen firsthand how disillusionment with the political system leads many, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, to disengage entirely. Open primaries would restore faith in the electoral process by making it more accessible and responsive. Our democracy is strongest when all people—not just the politically connected—can exercise their fundamental right to vote in meaningful elections.

For these reasons, we urge you to support open primaries and non-partisan elections. New York City has long been a beacon of diversity and progress, but our electoral system must evolve to reflect these values. By adopting these reforms, we can create a more inclusive and representative democracy—one where every voice truly matters.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
Bishop Orlando FIndlaster
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Bishop Orlando FIndlaster

Senior Pastor

[redacted]

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Clarendon Church Road

Apr 17, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders serving communities across New York City, we are deeply committed to justice, fairness, and civic engagement. One of the greatest moral responsibilities of our democracy is to ensure that every citizen has a meaningful voice in the electoral process. However, under our current system of closed primaries, a significant number of New Yorkers—including first-time voters, independents, and those unaffiliated with major parties—are effectively denied a say in elections that often determine our city's leadership. We urge the Commission to advance the transition to open primaries and non-partisan elections, ensuring a more inclusive and representative democracy.

The present system excludes nearly 1 million registered voters in New York City simply because they are not affiliated with a political party. Many first-time voters, eager to participate in shaping their communities, find themselves locked out of primary elections, where key decisions are made. For young people and new residents, this barrier discourages long-term civic participation and fosters disillusionment with a system that should welcome and empower them. Open primaries would allow all registered voters—regardless of party affiliation—to participate in the most critical stages of our elections, making democracy more accessible to everyone.

Beyond accessibility, open primaries and non-partisan elections promote accountability and fair representation. Under the current system, many races are decided in closed primaries, where candidates are incentivized to appeal to a narrow base rather than the broader electorate. This discourages coalition-building and often results in leaders who do not reflect the diverse views of their entire constituency. An open system would encourage candidates to engage with a wider range of voters, leading to more inclusive policies and governance that truly represents the people of New York City.

Additionally, an open primary system would strengthen trust in our democracy. When large segments of the population feel excluded, faith in government erodes, and political disengagement grows. As pastors, we see firsthand how political disenfranchisement leads to frustration and apathy, particularly among young people and marginalized communities. Removing barriers to participation would foster a more engaged electorate, reinforcing the democratic values of fairness, inclusion, and shared responsibility.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to take bold action in reforming our electoral system. By adopting open primaries and non-partisan elections, New York City can lead the way in ensuring that all voters—especially first-time voters—have a real opportunity to shape their government. It is time to embrace a system that upholds the dignity of every citizen and strengthens the democratic foundation of our great city.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
Rev. Dr. Charles Galbreath
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Rev. Dr. Charles Galbreath

Senior Pastor

Alliance Tabernacle Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Mt. Ollie Baptist Church
Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders committed to justice, equity, and the common good, we write to express our strong support for transitioning to a system of open primaries in New York City. Our democracy functions best when it reflects the voices of all its people, and the current closed primary system excludes a significant number of voters from participating in the electoral process. We believe that adopting open primaries and non-partisan elections would foster a more inclusive, representative, and fair democracy that serves the interests of all New Yorkers.

Under the current system, nearly one million independent and unaffiliated voters in New York City are unable to vote in primary elections, where many crucial decisions are effectively made. This means that a large portion of our city's electorate—many of whom are deeply engaged in their communities—are disenfranchised simply because they do not align with a political party. Open primaries would ensure that every eligible voter has an equal voice in shaping the leadership and policies that affect their lives. As pastors, we believe that civic engagement should not be hindered by party affiliation, and every citizen should have an opportunity to participate in the democratic process.

Furthermore, open primaries would encourage candidates to engage with a broader and more diverse electorate rather than catering solely to party bases. This shift would promote more accountability, bipartisanship, and issue-based campaigning rather than ideological division. By allowing all voters to participate, candidates would be incentivized to appeal to the general public's needs and concerns rather than a limited group of primary voters. This would lead to the election of leaders who truly represent the interests of the people rather than the extremes of political parties.

From a moral and ethical standpoint, we are called to support policies that promote justice and fairness. Excluding voters from participating in critical elections runs contrary to the principles of equality and shared governance that our faith upholds. By transitioning to open primaries and non-partisan elections, New York City would take a significant step toward strengthening democracy, reducing polarization, and ensuring that all voices are heard. This reform is not about benefiting one party over another but about creating a system that prioritizes the rights and voices of the people.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to embrace this opportunity to make our electoral system more inclusive, fair, and democratic. By adopting open primaries, we can help build a stronger, more united New York City where every voter has a say in our shared future. Thank you for your time and commitment to improving our democratic process. We pray for wisdom and guidance in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

4C0601B01A7F494...

Rev. Reginald L. Bachus

Senior Pastor

Mt. Ollie Baptist Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Safe Haven United Church of Christ
April 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders committed to the well-being of all New Yorkers, we urge you to consider the benefits of transitioning to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections in New York City. Our democracy is strongest when every citizen has an equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process, yet our current system effectively excludes millions of voters. By allowing all registered voters—regardless of party affiliation—to have a voice in primary elections, we can ensure that elected officials truly represent the interests of all New Yorkers, not just a small fraction of the electorate.

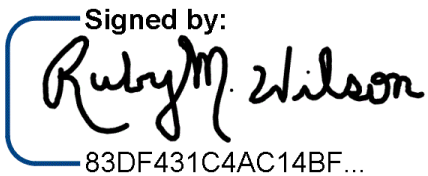
Under the current closed primary system, the vast majority of races in New York City are decided in low-turnout partisan primaries rather than in general elections where all voters can participate. This means that a small, highly motivated segment of voters—often representing ideological extremes—holds disproportionate power in selecting our leaders. Open primaries would encourage broader participation, ensuring that elected officials are accountable to the entire community rather than catering solely to the interests of a narrow partisan base.

Furthermore, non-partisan elections would shift the focus of campaigns from partisan loyalty to real solutions for our city's most pressing challenges. In a system where candidates must appeal to the full electorate rather than just their party's primary voters, we will see more leaders dedicated to practical governance, coalition-building, and results-driven policies. Our city faces urgent issues—housing affordability, public safety, education, and economic opportunity—that demand collaborative leadership rather than political posturing.

As pastors, we believe in a moral responsibility to advocate for fairness and inclusivity in our political system. Every New Yorker, regardless of political affiliation, deserves a say in choosing the leaders who will shape our city's future. An open and non-partisan electoral system will strengthen trust in our democracy, increase civic engagement, and ultimately lead to more effective and representative government.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to advance reforms that will open our electoral system to all voters. By embracing open primaries and non-partisan elections, New York City can set a national example of democracy that works for everyone, not just a select few. We look forward to your leadership on this crucial issue and pray for wisdom and courage in your decision-making.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

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Rev. Ruby Wilson

Senior Pastor

Safe Haven UCC

Docusign Envelope [redacted]

Abundant Life Church

Apr 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors and faith leaders in New York City, we write to you in support of transitioning to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections. Our city has long been a beacon of democracy, innovation, and inclusion, and we believe that adopting open primaries would further strengthen these values. By allowing all registered voters to participate in primary elections regardless of party affiliation, we can create a more representative and engaged electorate, ensuring that every voice is heard in shaping the future of our great city.

New York City is a laboratory of democracy, a place where bold ideas take root and inspire change across the nation. However, our current closed primary system limits participation and excludes nearly one million independent voters from the most critical stages of the electoral process. In a city that prides itself on diversity and civic engagement, it is imperative that our election system reflects these principles. Open primaries will foster broader voter participation, ensuring that candidates must appeal to a wider array of constituents rather than to a narrow partisan base.

Furthermore, research has shown that open primaries lead to increased voter turnout, a goal that should unite all who care about the health of our democracy. At a time when trust in government is low, a more inclusive system would encourage civic involvement and help bridge divisions by fostering coalition-building among candidates and voters alike. Faith communities understand the power of bringing people together, and we believe that open primaries can serve as a unifying force, allowing all citizens to contribute meaningfully to the democratic process.

Additionally, non-partisan elections would encourage a more issue-driven and less ideologically rigid political landscape. Candidates would need to engage with voters on substantive matters rather than relying solely on partisan loyalties. This shift would not only produce more accountable and responsive leadership but also create a government that is more reflective of the needs and priorities of all New Yorkers. Removing unnecessary barriers to participation aligns with our moral duty to promote fairness and equity in civic life.

In this defining moment for our city's democracy, we urge the Charter Revision Commission to embrace open primaries as a way to strengthen voter participation, promote inclusivity, and ensure that New York City remains a model for democratic innovation. We stand ready to support efforts that empower all citizens to have a voice in their government. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

8D2EE0000C6E4A4...

Rev. Karim Camara

Pastor

Abundant Life Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

April 8, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As pastors and faith leaders serving communities across New York City, we write to express our strong support for the transition to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections. Our congregations represent a diverse cross-section of New Yorkers, many of whom feel excluded from the electoral process due to the current system. We believe that open primaries will foster a more inclusive democracy, ensuring that every voter—regardless of party affiliation—has a voice in selecting candidates who will represent the interests of all New Yorkers.

The current system, which limits primary participation to registered party members, disproportionately disenfranchises independent voters, many of whom belong to communities of color, including African-American communities. A significant number of Black voters in New York City are unaffiliated with a political party, yet in a city where primary elections often determine the eventual officeholder, these voters are effectively denied a say in critical electoral decisions. Open primaries would ensure that all citizens, regardless of party registration, have the ability to participate in the selection of leaders who will shape policies affecting housing, education, criminal justice, and economic opportunity.

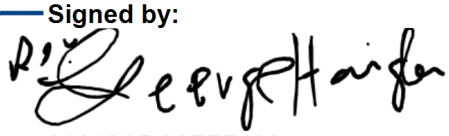
Furthermore, open primaries would increase voter turnout and engagement. Many voters in our communities feel disillusioned by a system that appears closed off to them, leading to low participation rates in local elections. By allowing all voters to participate in primaries, we can create a more dynamic and representative electoral process. This shift would also encourage candidates to engage with a broader electorate, fostering campaigns that are more inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs of our city, particularly within historically marginalized communities.

The benefits of non-partisan elections extend beyond voter participation. By reducing the influence of partisan gatekeeping, open primaries promote candidates who are accountable to all constituents rather than to a specific party base. This can lead to policies that are more equitable and responsive to the needs of Black and minority communities. Additionally, fostering a political landscape where all voters matter equally in primary elections will help strengthen trust in the democratic process and inspire more individuals to seek leadership roles within their communities.

As faith leaders, we believe that democracy functions best when all voices are heard. Open primaries would allow for greater civic engagement, a more representative government, and policies that reflect the needs of all New Yorkers. We urge the Charter Revision Commission to support this essential reform, ensuring that the principles of fairness and inclusion guide the future of our city's electoral system.

Sincerely,

Signed by:



94019ADC6E7F486...

Rev. George Haigler

Rev.

New Day Community Worship and Outreach Center

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Reflections Church

Apr 18, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders serving the people of Brooklyn, we write to urge the Commission to support the transition to a system of open primaries and non-partisan elections in New York City. Our communities, particularly those in historically underrepresented areas, have too often found themselves on the margins of the political process. A more inclusive electoral system will ensure that our elected officials truly reflect the diversity, needs, and aspirations of all New Yorkers, not just those aligned with a particular political party.

Under the current closed primary system, a vast number of residents—many of whom are independents or members of smaller political parties—are effectively shut out of the most consequential phase of our elections. This system disenfranchises voters in a city where many general elections are decided in the primaries. Open primaries would allow every registered voter to have a voice in choosing candidates, fostering greater participation, accountability, and engagement in our democratic process.

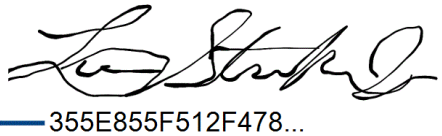
Furthermore, non-partisan elections would encourage candidates to appeal to a broader cross-section of voters rather than catering solely to partisan bases. This would lead to the election of leaders who are more representative of the whole city, including neighborhoods that have historically been overlooked. In our ministries, we see firsthand the struggles of communities fighting for basic resources, fair representation, and economic opportunities. A more inclusive election system would elevate the voices of these communities, ensuring that leadership is chosen based on vision, integrity, and service rather than party affiliation.

New York City prides itself on being a beacon of democracy, diversity, and opportunity. However, our electoral system must evolve to reflect those values. By adopting open primaries and non-partisan elections, we can strengthen our democracy, increase civic participation, and ensure that every New Yorker—regardless of party registration—has an equal stake in shaping our future.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to take bold steps toward a fairer, more representative electoral process. Our congregations, our communities, and our city deserve a system that empowers all voices and elects leaders committed to serving the needs of every New Yorker. Thank you for your time and dedication to this vital issue.

Sincerely,

Signed by:



355E855F512F478...

Pastor Louis Straker

Lead Pastor

Reflections Church

Docusign Envelope ID: [redacted]

Macedonia Baptist Church of Harlem
Apr 15, 2025

Dear Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

As faith leaders, we are committed to advocating for policies that promote fairness, inclusion, and justice for all New Yorkers. One of the most pressing challenges facing our city is ensuring that our electoral system allows every voice to be heard, particularly in communities that have historically been underrepresented in government. We strongly urge the Commission to support a transition to open primaries and non-partisan elections. Such a system would foster broader civic engagement, encourage competition, and ensure that our elected officials are accountable to the entire city, not just to a single party's base.

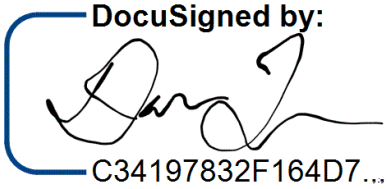
New York City's current closed primary system effectively excludes nearly one million independent voters from participating in the critical first stage of elections. This disproportionately impacts communities of color, immigrants, and working-class residents who may not be registered with a major party. In a city where the outcome of many races is often decided in the primaries, this exclusion weakens democracy and contributes to voter apathy. An open primary system would empower all eligible voters to participate, ensuring that elected officials reflect the true diversity and needs of our communities.

Furthermore, non-partisan elections would help break down the barriers of party politics, shifting the focus from ideological divisions to the real issues that matter—affordable housing, quality education, economic opportunity, and public safety. Too often, candidates in a closed system cater only to the most active partisan voters, rather than addressing the concerns of the broader electorate. By adopting a system where candidates appeal to all voters, we can encourage leadership that prioritizes the common good over political interests.

In Harlem and beyond, we need leaders who represent the full spectrum of our communities—leaders who understand the struggles of families living paycheck to paycheck, of young people seeking opportunity, and of elders who deserve dignity and security. Open primaries and non-partisan elections would create a more level playing field, allowing for a greater diversity of voices and perspectives in our government. This change is not just about electoral fairness; it is about the moral imperative to build a system that truly represents the people.

We urge the Charter Revision Commission to take this historic opportunity to strengthen democracy in New York City. By embracing open primaries and non-partisan elections, we can take a meaningful step toward a more just, equitable, and representative government—one that works for all New Yorkers, regardless of party affiliation. Thank you for your service to our city, and we pray that you will take bold action in the interest of justice and inclusion.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

C34197832F164D7...

Darren Ferguson

Pastor-Elect

Macedonia Baptist Church, Harlem

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8168229 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 00:47:09 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 08:47:00 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Kate Yezierska Hulley

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: New York is already too expensive for most teachers,nurses, police officers, builders, and especially for the essential workers who actually keep the city running for the rest of us all. I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. if you care about diversity, justice, equality at all, you must assure that affordable housing is protected and increased. Removing the checks and balances that control the greed of most developers destroys both the historical character of neighborhoods from the Bronx to Manhattan, to Brooklyn, but it also crushes any chance for more affordable housing. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new affordable development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7839355 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 14:24:35 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 10:24:08 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Susan Nial

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Statement of Susan Nial for Landmark West is attached hereto.

DRAFT

Statement of Susan Nial

Chair of the Landmark West! Advocacy Committee

Charter Revision Commission Manhattan Public Input Session on Housing and Use.

April 23, 2025. 5-8PM

Introduction

My name is Susan Nial. I am here to present the statement of Landmark West! (LW!). LW!, the Upper West Side grassroots' preservation advocacy group, is currently celebrating its 40th anniversary. LW! has spent many years working in the areas of preservation and land use with the goal of protecting our shared heritage as manifested in our landmarked buildings, historic districts and our neighborhoods. While some criticize preservationists by claiming that we want to "dip the city in amber" and that we value buildings more that "progress," the ultimate goal of our advocacy is to protect the quality of life of the people who live in those buildings and neighborhoods and protect our shared history that brings us together. Often those who scoff at preservation either fail to appreciate or simply refuse to acknowledge the importance not only of a shared history to our sense of community but also the terrible loss we all suffer when our landmarks and historic districts are destroyed with the purpose of allowing developers to make more money not just in shared history but also in the very real and calculable loss of affordable housing.[1] As Bonnie McDonald, president and CEO of Landmarks Illinois writes:

"Protecting naturally occurring affordable housing is also critical. As Subsidized rental units represent a small percentage of affordable housing in the U.S. In fact, 80 percent of all affordable rentals in large markets and 75 percent of affordable units nationwide are "naturally occurring affordable housing," or NOAH. These units are often small- or mid-sized rental buildings, over 35 years old, and broadly affordable but remain unsubsidized by any federal program. This type of housing, however, is particularly vulnerable because investors purchase these buildings at low cost, renovate them, and then raise rents — or, in some cases, reconvert or demolish them to create single-family homes.

An estimated 75 percent of the nation's 12 million affordable housing units are considered NOAH, according to Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies. By multiplying 9 million by 2.57, the average household size per U.S. Census Data, that amounts to more than 23 million people living in NOAH.

Developing preservation strategies to maintain these properties and to protect their affordability would go a long way towards protecting existing NOAH assets, (but McKinsey research indicated that overall, cities lack these strategies)." This is the kind of thinking that the Mayor and the Charter Revision Commission should explore rather than incorporating the often internally inconsistent provisions of the entire package of City of Yes (COY), some aspects of

[1] https://www.planetizen.com/features/130916-good-new-vital-role-preservation-solving-housing-crisis

which encourage the loss of affordable housing by allowing it to be converted to commercial spaces.

The City of Yes does not belong in the City Charter.

I am here today to talk about the very real threat to our neighborhoods and our stock of affordable housing that is posed by the attempt to set in stone the wrong-headed and anti-democratic elements of the City of Yes, including but not limited to changes in zoning and land-use overhaul, by enshrining it in the Charter of the City of New York. As the language of the proposed Charter Revision is not available, it is not possible for us to deal specifically with any legislative recommendations that the Commission may make regarding land-use, zoning, housing, or other elements of the COY package. Instead, we are responding to the brief given to this Commission by the Mayor. In the available materials relating to the Mayor's guidance to the Commission, there are two distinct and, frankly, contradictory suggestions. One to make the land use process more transparent and the other to enshrine the changes contained in COY in the Charter. COY limits the involvement of the public and even the City Council in important land use decisions by handing over decisions regarding special permits to an appointed body, thus bypassing both the public in the context of public hearings and the City Council, thus limiting transparency. The stated goal of this change is to increase the number of affordable housing units in the City of New York. To support both the massive changes to our zoning and land-use system of regulations, the Mayor has claimed that these changes must be inserted in the City Charter to increase the number of affordable housing units. To be blunt, neither the adoption of COY by the City Council nor its inclusion in the Charter will do anything to increase the number of affordable housing units and may decrease those units by allowing the conversion of affordable units to commercial spaces and allowing the building of larger and bulkier buildings that are not required to provide any affordable units at all.

Affordability is Optional.

In view of the public goal of "more affordable housing, it is important for the Commission to take notice and consider that affordability is optional under the COY. It appears in only one section of the new law, identified as the Universal Affordability Preference is and in that section, it is **optional**!

The section of the COY relating to the transferability of landmark TRDs allows a broader transfer of TDRs; however, if one takes advantage of the broader transference provided therein of TDRs there is **no requirement** that the increased development opportunities **include any affordable housing!** Currently the transfer of TDRs in this context are City Planning Commission Special Permits that are ULURP actions that require City Council involvement, the COY eliminates the City Council from the process.

Whether one supports COY or not, it is important to recognize that importing the COY regime and its components into the Charter will make it almost impossible to guarantee the kind of flexibility in Zoning and land-use issues that the City needs in order to respond to the changing needs of the City and or to respond to the unique needs and issues of our widely varying neighborhoods because of the cumbersome process by which the Charter can be amended. We urge the Commission not to follow the Mayor's lead in this regard.

The Commission should reverse the current trend of curbing the public's involvement, expand effective public involvement initiatives, and re-energize Community Boards.

In previous years, the Charter was amended in ways that limit and reduce effective public involvement. The Commission should reverse this trend in government of eliminating or limiting the ability of the public to have an opportunity for effective input. It is time to expand effective public involvement initiatives and eliminate superficial "public engagement" programs, which offer nothing more than box-ticking initiatives and feel-good meetings with ambiguous talk of "goals" other than solid proposals. This process is often mere political theater, lots of sound and fury symbolizing nothing.

In that regard, we would ask the Commission to consider the issues of transparency and the importance of effective public involvement in land-use, zoning, and housing issues. Neighborhoods are unique collections of people who have found a way to engage with each other and support each other in a variety of ways that work for them. As a result, a one-size-fits-all plan does not reflect that uniqueness and will undoubtedly destroy important aspects of the lives of the residents, not the least of which is **dislocation**. The residents of a neighborhood are the best source of important information regarding its needs and the effectiveness of the various networks that have grown up in that neighborhood that serve the needs of the residents. In short, they are the experts. While developers' "experts" and those engaged by the entity arguing for the passage or approval of a project or legislations are given almost unlimited time, local resident experts are limited to 2 to 3 minutes or sometimes don't have an opportunity to testify at the hearings at all. This should be changed.

Shutting these individuals out by limiting public hearings and instead replacing public hearings with nothing more than political theater, in which the City moves through neighborhoods spouting platitudes about goals, both short-term and long-term, that bear little or no resemblance to the actual impacts of the proposals the City wants to push through. This Commission should reinvigorate the public hearing and make it clear that it is the public hearing that must be protected. It should make it clear that **public hearings** in which members of the public are the key witnesses to which the various commissions, agencies and ultimately the City Council should be listening to rather than the paid experts of the developers and the City staff who have been tasked with making sure the development plans go through.

Public Meetings wherein public testimony is prohibited should not be allowed to eclipse the use of the public hearing. The Commission should require that all Agencies, Commissions, Boards and similar, ("Agencies") publish the exact legislation proposed or the applications made by the City or private individuals at least 30 business days before any public hearing both on their websites and in a separate notification to the public and interested parties including but not limited to LW!

LW! Also requests that the Commission revisit the designation of the opinions and or reports from Community Boards on issues of local interest as "advisory." This designation has led some

individuals and groups to refuse to show up to discuss their projects. Sadly, some City Agencies like the Landmarks Preservation Commission tell applicants not to respond to the criticisms or suggestions from the Community Boards and community groups on the basis that they are only advisory. This needs to change.

The Commission should also require that massive changes in Zoning, Land Use and Housing of the citywide like the COY be analyzed as one package and not broken up in its constituent parts. That analysis should pay close attention to and assess the cumulative impact of the entire package of changes on the relevant neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Atomization of projects and proposed legislative packages isn't good for the City, nor any of its residents, it should be forbidden in the Charter.

Thank you for your time and attention. LW! will return to comment on the actual language of the Commission's proposals once they are available. We will see you then.

Endnotes

We give all due credit to George Janes upon whom we have relied for his insightful and careful reading of the entire package of COY changes that range from COYHO, City of Yes for Housing Opportunity; COYEO, City of Yes for Economic Opportunity; and, COYCN, City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality, and impact each and every area of the City. LW! Would be happy to provide those reports to the Commission on request.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6330487 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 16:06:23 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 12:06:02 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Lauren Lavitt

[redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8083468 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 16:13:24 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 12:12:53 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Lynn Levy

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3637642 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 16:42:55 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 12:42:28 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Robert B Plutzker

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

FW: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5824132 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

From: Charter Info [redacted]

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 16:48:52 +0000

From: agencymail[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 12:45 PM
To: Charter Info <CharterInfo@citycharter.nyc.gov>
Subject: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5824132 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by
([redacted]) on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 12:44:53 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: General Inquiries

Name: Ben Gerson

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I am opposed to the mayor's ballot proposal seeking to override sensible regulation and community review of pending development projects.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2018018 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 17:23:43 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 01:23:30 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Mary Ann Fastook

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I am against any attempt to modify any regulations on development in the city. No change should be made to laws that make sure that historical and environmental factors are considered .Please do not strip away the necessary checks and balances on development in this city.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2333874 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 17:31:23 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 01:30:48 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Janet Ward

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-778088 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 17:34:18 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 01:33:23 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=14937240

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: marguerite o pitts

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: The proposed change in allowed public comment on development should be limited to weakening opposition to affordable and low income housing - “not in my backyard”- which has blocked this housing in the past. Other types of development proposals should have community input.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5147041 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 17:34:19 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 01:33:24 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=14937240

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: marguerite o pitts

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: The proposed change in allowed public comment on development should be limited to weakening opposition to affordable and low income housing - “not in my backyard”- which has blocked this housing in the past. Other types of development proposals should have community input.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9613533 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 17:55:30 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 01:54:49 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=6112611

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Francine Fialkoff

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I'm very disturbed by the effort to undermine public input and city council oversight of the building development process. The Mayor's proposal would give more freedom to developers. We don't need more towers for billionaires that destroy the character of our neighborhoods and displace average folks. We do need thoughtful development that includes affordable housing for families, who are leaving the city in droves.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-182957 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:09:14 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 02:08:46 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7958126

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Paul DiBenedetto - Chair, Community Board 11 Queens

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: As Chair of Community Board 11, Queens, I am deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities. Anything less takes away must needed transparency and violates public trust in our city government. Current public perception of our leadership exists in a perilous state of mistrust. If anything, we should be looking to only enhance public review and participation. Thank you.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2978953 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:10:17 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 02:09:55 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Shirley Secunda

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6791035 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:27:06 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 02:26:54 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Amy Harlib

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: STOP BIG GREEDY CORPORATE INTERESTS FROM DESTROYING OUR CITY! I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Greg Berman [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:27:18 +0000

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

Just a quick email to register my voice on behalf of open primaries for NYC. You are, no doubt, familiar with all of the problems with our current system, including the fact that our mayor is often effectively elected by winning the Democratic primary with what amounts to a very slim percentage of the voting public having registered their support. In this moment when liberal democracy is under great threat, open primaries hold out the potential of both strengthening democratic accountability and reducing political polarization. I hope the Charter Commission will seize the chance to reform the electoral process, allowing greater numbers of New Yorkers to fully participate in our democratic process.

Greg Berman

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Victor Almodovar [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:27:25 +0000

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

Non-partisan, special elections are nothing new and are a proven way to choose the best candidate from a field representing several different viewpoints. These elections have been one by candidates across the ideal spectrum. It is time that we applied this proven method to all citywide elections.

Special elections have been taking place in New York City for as long as I can remember. They are an effective way to let voters express their preference from a range of candidates and save the City the cost of running multiple different elections.

Victor Almodovar

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Steven Snachkus [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:27:45 +0000

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

New York City has always been at the forefront of democracy, and it is time that we continue to evolve. Having recently adopted Ranked Choice Voting, it is time that we take the next step and move to a system of open primaries. As a New Yorker, I am proud to be from a place known for innovation, and the time has come for us to take the next step.

This evolution will strengthen our democracy and bring more New Yorkers into the process. By continuing to evolve and adapt, we show the world we are leading the way. New York has been, and should continue to be, the world's most creative and innovative city. There’s no reason that shouldn’t be true for our elections.

Steven Snachkus

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7004948 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:36:02 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 02:35:37 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7960135

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: dale cohen

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: Mr. Adams and this spiteful commission - How dare you! I am furious about a changes that would weaken or SILENCE public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—IS CRITICAL to ensuring that any and all new development is contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. And frankly i do NOT TRUST YOU or your commission to make these decisions for us. You are by far the most UNETHICAL mayor NYC has ever had, and that is saying ALOT! As of now your “approval rating” is hovering in the 20% area. You have zero business changing anything in our city because you have lost the back of NYers. This Commission MUST preserve meaningful public input and maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities. I will end as i began, HOW DARE YOU silence the voices of NYers. Regards, Ms. Dale B. Cohen, Associate AIA, M’Arch Yale University, B’Science University of Michigan.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2845842 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 18:37:57 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 02:36:58 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=6112611

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Judith and Robert Delasi

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I am very concerned about the proposed changes in the NYC Charter, which will reduce the ability for public comment. Although some regulations need to be changes to ensure that affordable housing is developed, we must not create an environment for luxury housing without proper oversight.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7556053 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 19:03:41 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 03:03:19 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=12117859

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Katherine Redd

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I’m deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9443886 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 19:22:46 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 03:22:33 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=14618362

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Yvonne Groseil

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I am opposed to any changes that would weaken public participation in decisions about development in NYC. We must have a strong voice in preserving our neighborhoods even while development is necessary. Large developments that erase the history and chracter of our neighborhoods are destructive. The public oversight and review processes are essential parts of our democratic system and are necessary to preserving strong city govenment.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7863895 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 19:48:03 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 03:47:21 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Jena Lanzetta

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.)

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5511168 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 19:56:08 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 03:55:56 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=14720614

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Michele Randall

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I’m deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6850280 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 19:59:41 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 03:59:04 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Katherine O'Sullivan

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Mayor Adams has made clear he intends to use this process to make it easier for developers to build without public oversight, review, or approval, and pro-deregulation lobbying groups are joining in the push. As an New Yorker, by adoption, I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5433343 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 20:05:07 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 04:03:28 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7960135

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Margaret Loeb

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Mayor Adams and pro-deregulation lobbying groups have made clear that they want to fast track development and bypass community voices. I am deeply concerned abut any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in NYC. Public oversight and review processes--through which local communities, community boards and the City Council are engaged--are critical to ensure that new development is thoughtful, contextual and aligns with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect and preserve the character, history, and livability of our communities. importantly, our democratic systems begin with our local communities. Please do not allow steps to weaken the public review process. Democracy begins HERE.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6238493 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 20:05:07 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 04:03:26 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7958126

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Christina Wilkinson

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Mayor Adams and pro-deregulation lobbying groups have made it clear: they want to fast-track development, reduce oversight, and bypass community voices. The City of Yes for Housing Opportunity proposal last year sought to weaken the public review process—but fortunately, the City Council voted to preserve these safeguards for many new development proposals. If public review is undermined through Charter revisions, it could open the door to large-scale developments that proceed without regard for neighborhood context, environmental impacts, or long-term affordability.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8885496 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 20:11:17 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 04:11:02 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=6757166

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Frances Kazan

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: "I’m deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities."

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3400153 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 20:16:21 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 04:15:59 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7957542

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Kara Collins

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I'm genuinely worried about any proposed changes that would reduce the public's role in shaping development decisions across New York City. It's essential that local communities, community boards, and the City Council continue to have a voice in the planning process. These review mechanisms help ensure that development is considerate, appropriate for its surroundings, and responsive to the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I strongly encourage the Commission to safeguard robust public engagement and uphold the systems that preserve the identity, heritage, and quality of life in our communities.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8021963 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 20:30:53 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 04:30:09 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Nancy Linday

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7128157 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 21:24:26 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 05:24:02 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?link_id=18&can_id=9af083880b174c2dcd451870f020631a&source=email-go-vote-polls-are-open-until-9pm-4&email_referrer=email_2706830&email_subject=where-have-i-been&&

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Sarah Prinsloo

Email: [redacted]

Phone: 3[redacted]

Comments: I moved to NYC 8 years ago and have always loved the unique architecture so many other newer cities wish they could recreate. Yet we seem to be losing more and more of our older buildings to more modern and much taller buildings. Already, too many streets are enveloped in the shadow of taller buildings which makes the city feel cold. It also loses its charm. Developers aren’t concerned about the neighborhood. They’re concerned about money. Only the people living in the neighborhood, who walk the streets, care about what their neighborhood looks and feels like. I’m deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our

communities. Thank you

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6532855 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 21:26:35 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 05:26:08 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Jane Kendall

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our special neighborhoods. New York is a very special city. Our distinctive neighborhoods are what attracts people from all over the world. Let's not turn our city into a hodgepodge of tall splinter buildings and other deviations from what is now a pretty consistent feeling of small communities.

,

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1274311 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 21:26:35 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 05:26:08 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Jane Kendall

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our special neighborhoods. New York is a very special city. Our distinctive neighborhoods are what attracts people from all over the world. Let’s not turn our city into a hodgepodge of tall splinter buildings and other deviations from what is now a pretty consistent feeling of small communities.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3842184 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 21:56:39 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 05:56:11 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Pam Woodworth

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

FW: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8828561 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

From: Charter Info [redacted]

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 22:17:07 +0000

From: agencymail [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 6:01 PM
To: Charter Info <CharterInfo@citycharter.nyc.gov>
Subject: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8828561 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 05:59:35 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: General Inquiries

Name: Oren Root

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6269633 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 22:19:03 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 06:18:50 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Susan E. Sullivan

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3048113 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2025 23:48:42 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 07:48:29 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Amy Gilcrest

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods. This is especially to be considered to keeping of the scale and historical buildings of Greenwich Village and Soho. We have lost so much of NYC history by overdevelopment. In the spirit of notables like Jane Jacobs and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, I urge the city to maintain what is left of the charm and beauty of New York City. Sincerely, Amy E. Gilcrest 25 Cornelia St New York, NY 10014

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1615734 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 01:29:06 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 09:28:55 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=6127981

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: margaret schwarz

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: "I’m deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities."

Subject:

FW: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5383830 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

From: Charter Info [redacted]

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 02:19:51 +0000

From: agencymail [redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 9:16 PM
To: Charter Info <CharterInfo@citycharter.nyc.gov>
Subject: City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5383830 CRC Contact Form - General Inquiries

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 09:16:13 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: General Inquiries

Name: Dennis Bolet

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: New York history is a precious resource, appreciated by all, with the exception of a few. Please be careful not to displace it with unregulated developments benefiting those few. "I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods."

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5712601 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail <agencymail@customercare.nyc.gov>

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 10:56:49 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 06:56:37 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Robert Reid

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5606386 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 11:06:52 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 07:06:42 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Ellen Kolinger

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6269461 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 11:10:24 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 07:10:14 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Mary Atcher

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I oppose efforts to deregulate construction regulations in NYC.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-5216720 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 11:25:37 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 07:25:26 AM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7347318

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Denise Foley

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I'm deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities."

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3915359 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 12:41:52 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 08:41:35 AM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=9552848

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Alexander Johnson

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I am very concerned about potential changes that could weaken public involvement in how development decisions are made in New York City. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to preserve systems that protect the character, liveability and history or our neighborhoods. The city is already too dense and crowded, and infrastructure is insufficient to handle the current population.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Jaye Mateyko [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 13:01:27 +0000

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Jaye Mateyko

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Menachem Kagan [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 13:01:47 +0000

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

Political parties have become special interest groups standing between the government and the electorate. It is time that we allowed all New Yorkers to participate in elections. Open primaries mean New Yorkers can participate in primary elections regardless of whether they have registered with a political party.

New Yorkers should be able to participate directly in choosing their leaders. They should not have to choose to be affiliated with a party if they do not want to. We should make it as easy as possible for all New Yorkers to participate in elections, and open primaries do just that.

Menachem Kagan

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Alisa Glembotski [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 13:02:12 +0000

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

I have been forced throughout my life to enroll in a political party if I want my vote to matter. Neither of the two largest parties reflects my values and beliefs. I am excited to be supporting open primaries. This change will mean that I am no longer forced to make a choice that does not reflect my values.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that I could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect my values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot.

Alisa Glembotski

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Michael Tagariello [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 13:02:56 +0000

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

I'm one of the 1 million independent voters whose vote does not matter today.

Open primaries address this by fixing one of the major impediments to voting and empowering a million New Yorkers to participate in the most competitive and consequential elections. Reducing the number of non-competitive elections will incentivize more people to participate in the democratic process.

Addressing our abysmal voter turnout rates should be a key priority of the Charter Revision Commission. I hope that the city does not miss this opportunity to ensure that we have competitive elections in which all registered voters can participate. This will mean that New York City has a healthier and more robust democracy than ever before.

Michael Tagariello

[redacted]

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3693066 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 15:43:43 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 11:43:29 AM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?link_id=18&can_id=10697cbb639264c1b2a33435f5d68fea&source=email-go-vote-polls-are-open-until-9pm-4&email_referrer=email_2706830&email_subject=where-have-i-been&&

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Kathleen van Voorhees

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Dear Charter Revision Commission, I’m deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities. Sincerely, Kathleen van Voorhees 460 E 79th St NY, NY 10075

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8145685 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 16:13:10 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 12:12:51 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Nuha Ansari, FRIENDS of the Upper East Side

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: Please see attached letter addressed to Chair Buery.

FRIENDS
of the UPPER EAST SIDE

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Nuha Ansari
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 22, 2025

Richard R. Buery, Jr.
Chair, NYC Charter Revision Commission
Delivered via email

Re: NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission re. Public Oversight in the Land Use Process

Dear Chair Buery,

On behalf of FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, I write applaud your desire to address the City's housing crisis. A 2023 survey confirming a 1.4% rental vacancy rate is an alarming statistic, and we agree that bold, thoughtful solutions are needed to address affordability and access.

However, these solutions must not come at the expense of the public's role in shaping the city's future. Transparency, accountability, and community participation are essential pillars of a healthy planning process and a responsive city government.

During the Commission's first public hearing in February, former Deputy Mayor Vicki Been emphasized the lengthy and costly nature of approving new housing. Others echoed sentiments that the system makes it too easy to stop housing and too difficult to approve it. There have also been calls to diminish the influence of individual Council Members on land use actions within their districts, and to potentially weaken landmark protections in the name of development. These ideas reflect a growing movement toward limiting both political and public oversight of land use decisions.

While these concerns may stem from legitimate concerns, they risk painting democratic decision-making as a mere obstacle to be overcome. ULURP was created to ensure a predictable and transparent process that included meaningful input from those most affected—residents, community boards, borough presidents, and the City Council. It allows New Yorkers to voice concerns about how new development may affect infrastructure, affordability, neighborhood character, and historic resources.

We are especially troubled by proposals to exempt certain developments from ULURP entirely, or to shift final authority away from the City Council and toward unelected bodies. While well-intentioned, such changes could lead to a less responsive and less equitable system, in which local context and community needs are sidelined in favor of a narrow definition of housing production.

[redacted]

The public's ability to meaningfully participate in shaping our neighborhoods should not be viewed as a barrier to progress. Rather, it is the foundation of a just and inclusive planning system. If we truly want to build a more equitable city, we must preserve mechanisms that allow for thoughtful engagement—not eliminate them.

As you and your fellow Commissioners continue your important work, we urge you to consider the vital role that public review plays in ensuring that development in New York City is smarter, more sustainable, and more equitable. We respectfully request that any proposed Charter revisions maintain strong safeguards for public input and uphold the essential checks and balances that make our city's planning process accountable to its people.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective. FRIENDS looks forward to engaging further and ensuring that the values of transparency, equity, and community engagement remain central to any changes recommended by this Commission.

Sincerely,

Nuha Ansari
Executive Director

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-364384 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 16:35:55 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 12:35:06 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=6112611

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Marlene Charnizon

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I’m deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities."

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2915367 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 16:51:44 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 12:51:03 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Janet Linde

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1105724 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 17:08:47 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 01:08:12 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=7960135

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Helaine Battey

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I am deeply concerned about the proposed changes to the NYC Charter which would limit public input to how real estate development proceeds in NYC. Already in my neighborhood, Yorkville, once a quaint enclave of small buildings, has seen an increase in demolition of small buildings being replaced by huge skyscrapers. The entire landscape has changed here and around town. As a native NYer of 70+ years I am shocked by the disregard for preserving neighborhoods to build instead high rises that benefit developers but not alleviate the housing crisis faced by most NYers. Please do not change the charter to make it easier to tear down small buildings that house small businesses and hardworking citizens that make this city prosper.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-6408243 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 17:36:07 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 01:35:00 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: James Kettig, RA

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9842159 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 18:15:49 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 02:15:37 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: New York Landmarks Conservancy

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Please see the attached statement from the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Thank you

THE NEW YORK
LANDMARKS
CONSERVANCY

April 23, 2025

STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 2025

The New York Landmarks Conservancy is a 52-year old organization dedicated to preserving, revitalizing, and reusing New York's historic buildings and neighborhoods.

We support affordable housing. Many historic buildings provide existing affordable housing. We support converting underutilized commercial, institutional and other types of buildings into more affordable housing. We want to ensure that New York's rich diversity of architecture continues to enhance the City: creating jobs, housing New Yorkers, encouraging sustainability, and welcoming visitors from around the world.

Our comments focus on the benefits of preservation, of community participation in the land use review process, and how the City Charter can enhance both.

Preservation has been integral in helping City rebound from financial crises over the past five decades. The Conservancy's comprehensive studies on the economic impacts of preservation in New York City quantified the tremendous benefits. Less than 5% of New York City's land is under the regulation of the Landmarks Preservation Commission but those historic properties overdeliver benefits to the City. Hundreds of millions of dollars are invested annually in New York's historic buildings, creating thousands of jobs each year. Heritage tourism is a major component of the City's visitor industry, providing jobs for 130,000 New Yorkers.

When neighborhood rezonings increase maximum FAR and overlap with historic districts, those benefits are at risk. The approved upzoning in SoHo/NoHo and the proposed upzoning in the Ladies Mile and Madison Square North Historic Districts increase development pressure in those communities and the historic buildings within them. We ask the Commission to put safeguards in the place in the Charter to prevent neighborhood upzonings in historic districts.

Public participation is vital to the City's democracy, as established in the 1975 Charter Revision. The timeline and benchmarks of the ULURP process still take the same seven months they did when the voters approved ULURP 50 years ago. If projects require more time for community engagement before the formal start of ULURP, perhaps that is because they so severely challenge the existing zoning.

Residents and business owners who have made investments in their community deserve the same predictability that developers seek. Some proposals presented to this Commission explicitly aim to reduce the public's direct role and that of their representatives in the City Council. Relying on the City Planning Commission to make the final decision would negate the public voice. We ask the Commission to uphold the ULURP process and the opportunity it provides for New Yorkers to participate in land use decisions that effect their homes and communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Conservancy's views.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8423145 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 18:31:31 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by () on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 02:31:21 PM

This form resides at hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page?emci=6fbffdd1-961f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&emdi=b9681220-9e1f-f011-8b3d-0022482a9fb7&ceid=15478679

Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Mayesa Tasnim

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I would like to ensure the Charter Revision Commission does not interfere with or hinder the application of the Uniform Land Review Procedure, which allows for necessary public consultation for land use and development. Without the input of communities, large-scale development may go unchecked, leading to the loss of valuable areas, environmental damage, and affordable housing. Public input is vital to the process of decision-making. Each neighborhood is unique, and should be considered and respected. Those who are familiar with the area will be able to understand and appreciate the identity and value of the respective location, and implement caution when assessing development and its potential risks.

OFFICE OF THE
MANHATTAN
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

[redacted]

www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov
Mark Levine, Borough President

April 23, 2025
Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
2025 NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission

Thank you Chair Buery and Members of the 2025 NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate the CRC holding hearings specifically on housing and land use to hear about how we can address the most pressing issue facing New Yorkers through the City Charter.

We are in the grip of the worst housing affordability crisis in our City's history. Market rents have skyrocketed to unsustainable levels - $5,368 per month on average, with two-bedrooms often exceeding $6,500 in Manhattan. Nearly half of Manhattan's households are rent burdened. And with vacancy rates at just 1.4% citywide, the main driver of this crisis is clear – we are simply not building enough housing to keep up with demand. Tenants have very few options, especially for affordable housing, where the supply is even more constrained, leading to bidding wars for market-rate apartments, under-cover payments for the few rent stabilized apartments that are available, and applications for NYC Connect affordable housing lotteries vastly outnumbering available income-restricted homes.

The Office of the Manhattan Borough President plays an active role in housing creation and review in Manhattan, and under my leadership, we have made addressing our affordability crisis a top priority. In 2023, my office conducted a full survey of the borough, identifying rezonings and specific sites that together presented the opportunity for 71,000 units of badly needed housing here in Manhattan. We have encouraged community boards to actively prioritize addressing our housing shortage in their communities, and appointed members who agree that our housing crisis needs immediate action. And we have shortened our Uniform Land Use Review Procedure to just five days on any project included in our Housing Manhattanites report, or that is 100% affordable.

But during this work, I have seen the ways in which ULURP and other processes can, in certain situations, add time, cost and delays to badly needed projects – and as a result contribute to sky-high rents boroughwide. On average, the process takes about two to three years and can increase development costs by 11 percent to 16 percent due to the lengthy, multi-step review period. These added expenses are often borne by renters, making housing less accessible.

While we have made some important progress in recent years to mitigate increasing housing costs through initiatives like the Green Fast Track for Housing, state reforms, and passing the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity zoning changes, we must do more to address this crisis head on. The charter revision process is an important opportunity to examine where ULURP and the City Charter is presenting unnecessary barriers to or slowing down building more housing across New York City.

Allow some projects to move through ULURP in an expedited process

Review periods should conclude upon the submission of a recommendation by the relevant community board or borough president, rather than continuing until the maximum time allotted has ended. My office is now regularly making recommendations ahead of schedule in an effort to exemplify our commitment to solving our housing shortage. This change would ensure that once a recommendation is submitted, the process can move forward, allowing projects to advance more quickly. By ending the review period upon submission, we can strike a better balance between local input and the need for timely progress.

Require CPC approval only for certain project types

The Commission should amend ULURP so that applications for street grade changes or possibly even parking requirement waivers require only City Planning Commission approval, rather than undergoing the typical and full ULURP process. Street grade changes can be key for our city's resiliency and planning work, but often go undone due to unnecessarily onerous ULURP requirements. By streamlining these actions, applicants would save money that is passed on to residents under the current system.

In addition to reforming our housing and land use process, there is ample opportunity for this Commission to consider Charter amendments that would improve the function and transparency of our local government. I urge the Commission to take the following actions to ensure the stability of non-profit human services organizations, enhance our local government structures, and make our budgets more democratic and transparent.

Paying nonprofits on time

Human service non-profits provide New Yorkers of all stripes with essential services, including nutritious meals for seniors, health care and mental health services, childcare and afterschool programs, housing and legal services, and more. They must be paid on time. The Commission should consider reforming the City's procurement process by changing appointments to the Procurement Policy Board (PPB), requiring the PPB to create rules mandating that City agencies submit contracts for registration at least 30 days prior to the contract start date. The Commission should also cut down on payment delays by requiring the City to pay 80% of human services invoices soon after the invoice is received. And to ensure structural accountability, the Charter should provide the Mayor's Office of Contractual Services with a clearly defined mandate and responsibilities, similar to the way it lays our responsibilities for the Office of Management and Budget and Office of Operations.

Community Board support

Community Boards are an important piece of our city's local democracy and they must be supported and resourced effectively. But currently, the Charter is unclear about the support that Community Boards should receive and which agencies should provide it. The Charter should more specifically define the types of technical assistance that Borough Presidents' offices and the Civic Engagement Commission are mandated to provide, clarify the role of that the Civic Engagement Commission is meant to play in supporting Community Boards, ensure that the responsible agencies are properly resourced to provide dedicated Community Board support, and require DCAS to support Community Boards with finding accessible and adequate space for Community Board meetings.

Support for Community Education Councils

Community Education Councils provide parents and community member with an essential voice in our city's education policy. Like Community Boards, CECs must be supported effectively. Unfortunately, despite receiving some support from the DOE Division of Family and Community Engagement, CECs are largely on their own when it comes to meeting management, policy development, and community engagement. The Charter should be amended to place responsibility for the management and support of CECs firmly in the hands of the Department of Education so that they receive the resources and support they deserve.

Capital funding for local organizations

Manhattan is proudly home to many of the city's world-renowned academic hospitals and health care facilities, cultural organizations, and entertainment venues that draw New Yorkers from across the state and tourists from around the country and the world and generate significant economic activity. But when assigning funding for Borough Presidents' capital budgets, the Charter's funding formula does not take this impact into account. The Charter should be updated so that the formula for allocating capital funding to the Borough Presidents reflects the high concentration of major cultural and healthcare institutions in Manhattan.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2430472 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Ilan Rabinovitch

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I am writing to express my strong support for charter revisions that would establish open primaries in New York City elections. Under the current closed primary system, voters who choose not to register with a political party are effectively disenfranchised during a critical stage of the electoral process. In many districts across our city, the primary election essentially determines who will win office, as the general election may not be competitive due to the demographic makeup of the district. This means that independent voters have no say in selecting who will ultimately represent us. Open primaries would address this fundamental inequity by allowing all registered voters to participate in primary elections regardless of party affiliation. This would not only enfranchise the growing number of independent voters in our city but would also: - Increase voter participation and civic engagement - Reduce partisan polarization by encouraging candidates to appeal to a broader spectrum of voters - Lead to elected officials who are more representative of and responsive to their entire constituency, not just party members - Modernize our electoral system to reflect the changing political identification of New Yorkers The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, and no eligible voter should be excluded from

meaningful participation in the electoral process. I urge the Commission to recommend charter revisions that would implement open primaries in New York City.

Subject:

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Fair Housing Justice Center

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: Please see the attached testimony of the Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC).

Testimony for the New York City Charter Revision Commission
from the Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC) Submitted April 23, 2025

Thank you, Commissioners, for the opportunity to submit our testimony and contribute to this important discussion. The Fair Housing Justice Center (FHJC) is a nonprofit civil rights organization committed to eliminating housing discrimination, promoting inclusive and accessible communities, and strengthening the enforcement of fair housing laws throughout New York City and the seven surrounding counties.

For over two decades, FHJC has played a leading role in advancing housing equity and access across our region. We have assisted thousands of individuals and organizations in challenging discriminatory practices, filing complaints, and asserting their legal rights under local, state, and federal fair housing laws. Our organization operates a full-service fair housing program, including proactive investigations, systemic testing, litigation support, policy advocacy, education, and technical assistance.

Through our investigative work, FHJC has uncovered widespread discriminatory practices among both private housing providers and public agencies. Our legal actions—more than 160 in total—have resulted in increased compliance, opened access to over 80,000 housing units, and secured over $55 million in damages and penalties. Yet, despite these victories, discrimination remains a persistent force shaping housing opportunity and access in New York City.

We submit this testimony today to urge the Charter Commission to take bold, necessary steps to embed a stronger fair housing mandate within the City's planning, governance, and accountability structures.

As a member of the Thriving Communities Coalition (TCC), the FHJC supports the #OurNeighborhoodOurPlan initiative which calls for a fair and comprehensive planning approach. While we support the range of recommendations of the Thriving Communities Coalition, given our service area and expertise, we want to highlight and provide recommendations related to fair housing and fair housing enforcement. Specifically:

1. **Strengthening the Fair Housing Plan in the Charter (Charter, section 16-a) pursuant to the Thriving Communities Coalition Comprehensive Plan.**

   Fair housing policy goes beyond simply building more housing—it aims to ensure that everyone has equal access to opportunity, regardless of race, income, ability, or background. To create planning efforts that address historic and

ongoing residential segregation and create equitable access to infrastructure like schools, transit, parks, and fresh food, we call on the Commission to create a comprehensive plan and expand on existing plans, such as the fair housing plan in Section 16-a, to make fair housing enforceable. While fair housing policy exists in principle, enforcement remains a significant challenge. As observed by fair housing organizations, like the FHJC, fair housing laws often lack the enforceability needed to produce real change. While many legal protections exist on paper, discrimination and segregation persist in housing markets due to, among other factors, limited oversight, under-resourced enforcement agencies (such as the New York City Commission on Human Rights- CHR), and loopholes that allow noncompliance to go unpunished. Only through a comprehensive, enforceable, and community-driven approach can fair housing law truly dismantle structural inequities and create inclusive neighborhoods for all.

The Thriving Communities Coalition's comprehensive plan is outlined in Appendix A, attached to this testimony.

2. **Require fair housing planning documents, including those required under the City Charter, to evaluate how City laws, zoning codes, infrastructure investment, and program administration effect residential segregation, the relative success of fair housing enforcement efforts, and the location, availability, and accessibility of housing; for example, CHR should be required to release data on discrimination complaints received and to make preliminary determinations on whether discrimination exists, regardless of whether it proceeds with enforcement.**

The City must go beyond surface-level data collection and commit to a deep, structural review of its policies, regulations, and administrative practices. Importantly, data collection and analysis must provide meaningful insights into whether fair housing laws are being followed and if additional investment and/or oversight is needed to ensure compliance with the law. While both the *Where We Live* plan[1] and the recent *Fair Housing Framework*[2] represent important steps in recognizing housing inequities in New York City, there remains a critical need for stronger, enforceable measures. Beyond setting aspirational goals and assessments, we must build upon these existing fair housing initiatives by implementing concrete accountability mechanisms that ensure real, measurable progress toward equity. For example, due to a lack of resources and staff needed to enforce fair housing rights, CHR steers many complainants to its Early Intervention Unit; that unit often succeeds in securing housing for complainants. While we support efforts to expedite housing placement, it means that CHR does not record

[1] (2020) Where we Live NYC Plan
[2] (May 2023) Fair Housing Framework Policy Brief

this intervention as being generated by a complaint of discrimination. Thus, CHR data does not create an accurate record of the number of complaints received, nor does it provide data that a fair housing violation existed. **Just as important, bad actors have no incentive to stop discriminating.** This needs to be changed: even if complainants continue to be directed toward Early Intervention, CHR should be required to report data on complaints of discrimination received and the staffing resources to make a preliminary determination that discrimination existed, even if there is no subsequent enforcement.

This review should be ongoing, transparent, and developed with input and oversight from civil rights organizations, local enforcement organizations, community-based groups, and impacted residents.

Without this level of introspection and accountability, fair housing efforts will continue to fall short. Policies that fail to assess and reform harmful practices are not neutral—they perpetuate the status quo of racial segregation, housing instability, and exclusion.

3. **Any update to the City Charter as it relates to residential units must enforce stricter requirements and robust oversight around design and construction standards to ensure that all new developments and renovations are fully accessible to people with disabilities.**

New York City has consistently failed to ensure that newly constructed housing meets accessibility standards for people with disabilities, despite legal obligations under the Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act. Over 930,000 New Yorkers—nearly 11% of the population—identify as having a disability[3].

Individuals with disabilities are frequently unable to access housing that meets their needs and are routinely discriminated against in the housing process. FHJC's recent investigations and complaints reveal a troubling pattern: people with disabilities continue to face systemic discrimination in housing, including denial of reasonable accommodations, inaccessible living environments, and exclusionary practices that violate fair housing laws.

Individuals who use wheelchairs are frequently denied housing, and residential buildings routinely lack basic accessible features required by law. FHJC's testing has documented widespread noncompliance with laws that require accessibility and prohibit discrimination based on a disability, including inaccessible entrances, bathrooms, and kitchens. **Alarmingly, architects and professionals authorized to self-certify plans through the NYC Department of Buildings often fail to meet**

[3] U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). S1810: Disability Characteristics: 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates – New York City, NY.

accessibility codes, with little oversight or accountability[4]. This failure perpetuates discrimination and excludes a significant portion of New Yorkers from accessing safe, affordable housing[5].

If the City examined its own policy, for example at the Department of Buildings, which allows professionals such as architects to self-certify, they would find that many new buildings in NYC are non-compliant with the law.

Without analyzing such policies and practices, the City risks continuing a legacy of exclusion and inaccessibility that denies people with disabilities their right to safe, equitable, and accessible environments.

4. **Expand access to homeownership opportunities and implement reforms that ensure fairness and inclusivity in housing markets; the Commission's recommendations should include advocating with the Mayor and the City Council to pass the Co-op Disclosure Bill (0407-2024) currently pending before City Council.**

Homeownership is the cornerstone of wealth building; however, in New York City, it remains out of sight for many, particular communities of color. The racial gaps in homeownership rates remain wide[6], contributing to overall racial wealth disparities. Moreover, the City's 7,000 co-ops control more than 300,000 units[7], representing one of the most affordable homeownership options available. These units remain largely unaccountable, without transparency, frequently rejecting qualified applicants without providing a reason, a practice that is discriminatory in nature.

FHJC continues to receive complaints involving co-ops, yet these cases are notoriously difficult to investigate due to the lack of transparency in the approval and rejection process. Because co-op boards are not required to provide a reason for a rejection, it is impossible to conduct testing on their application processes, to either expose discrimination or to ensure that they are operating fairly. These practices lock out buyers and renters, perpetuate racial and economic segregation. For far too long cooperative housing has held on to its privilege and power, evading fair housing laws through the enablement of secrecy. **Notably, Westchester,**

[4] U.S. Department of Justice. (2023). Manhattan U.S. Attorney Settles Fair Housing Act Lawsuit Against Real Estate Developer and Architect for Failing to Build Accessible Housing
[5] FHJC (2025) REAL ESTATE GIANT'S BUILDINGS "UNAVAILABLE TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES"
[6] NYC Comptroller Office (2024) Spotlight: New York City's Homeowner Housing Market

[7] U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey: 2023.

Suffolk, Rockland, and Dutchess have already passed co-op disclosure laws, making the City's failure to do so all the more concerning.

The Commission should make it clear that all residential housing, including co-ops are mandated to abide by fair housing laws; amongst such action we call on the Commission to recommend the City pass a strong local co-op disclosure law that requires boards to provide written reasons for rejections[8]. Moreover, the City should advocate for the State Legislature to adopt and enforce a statewide co-op disclosure law that protects consumers, promotes transparency, and ensures accountability.

The City has been noticeably absent in addressing this problem. That must change. This is not a niche issue, it is a major fair housing concern with far-reaching consequences for access, equity, and opportunity.

Conclusion

Addressing these structural issues requires more than acknowledgement—it requires sustained, coordinated action, and the political will to make bold, often uncomfortable changes. New York City has often been described as a tale of two cities—one where privilege is preserved through restrictive zoning and planning policies, and another where communities of color and low-income residents are left to shoulder the burden of limited affordable housing options and government disinvestment.

Fair housing must no longer be a rhetorical commitment or a checkbox in a planning document. It must be a central, driving force behind how this City grows, invests, and governs. If we are serious about equity, we must stop mistaking performative planning for progress. The time for review is over. The time for action is now.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We eagerly anticipate the chance to work together with this Commission and its team to put these recommendations into action. For any questions or follow up please contact Britny McKenzie, Policy Director at bmckenzie@fairhousingjustice.org

[8] Int 0407-2024 Sales of cooperative apartments.

Appendix A

Proposed Charter Amendments

Add a comprehensive planning mandate by creating a new Chapter 8-A as follows
Chapter 8-A: Comprehensive Plan

Section 207. Comprehensive Plan

a. *Definitions.* As used in this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Community engagement: The term "community engagement" means outreach to and input from a broad, representative group of people from each community district, and the city as a whole, in the opportunity to influence policy decisions, by following best practices for outreach and robust, deliberative participation, through varied methods including but not limited to surveys, education and outreach materials, online platforms, interactive mapping tools, and community meetings facilitated to stimulate dialogue and deliberation involving varied views and interests.

Policy decisions: The term "policy decisions" means choices made by city agencies, commissions, bodies and elected officials as to how best to achieve the equity goals established pursuant to paragraph one of subdivision a of this section.

b. Commencing not later than February 1, 2027 and not less than every ten years thereafter, such agency or inter-agency working group as the mayor shall designate, shall conduct a comprehensive planning process for New York City. Such process shall be conducted in consultation with the appropriate city and state agencies and bodies, and with community engagement, and shall include:

(1) the establishment of equity goals, including but not limited to goals to reducing and eliminating disparities across race, geography, and socioeconomic status in access to opportunity and the distribution of resources and development, increasing access to affordable housing, promoting social, economic, and racial integration, and advancing environmental justice and access to healthy environments, with such goals incorporating those goals developed by existing plans including but not limited to the fair housing plan pursuant to section sixteen-a, and the long-term sustainability plan pursuant to subdivision e of section 20.

(2) the establishment of quantitative citywide and community district level targets including but not limited to targets for housing, school seats, community facilities, open space, and infrastructure and resiliency, with such targets incorporating those targets required by existing plans including but not limited to the fair housing plan pursuant to section sixteen-a.

(3) the creation of community district level plans detailing how best to achieve these targets, including but not limited to through the use of, zoning, capital budgeting, expense

budgeting, and policy decisions, designed in coordination with community boards and with the necessary resources provided for community boards to fulfill this role, including community engagement.

c. No later than February 1, 2029, and no later than every tenth February 1 thereafter, the council shall adopt a single resolution establishing paragraphs one, two, and three of subdivision b of section two hundred seven as together encompassing the comprehensive plan for New York City.

d. Once adopted the comprehensive plan shall be considered the "well considered plan" for New York City pursuant to section 20(25) of the state's General City Law and must be considered by all city agencies, commissions, bodies and elected officials, in future decisions including but not limited to zoning, capital budgeting, expense budgeting, and policy decisions, and such decisions must detail how they are in accordance with the plan.

2. Fair Housing Plan

1. Amend Section 16-a. Fair housing plan and housing reports. by adding a new subdivision as follows

g. *Achieving housing production targets.* Pursuant to section one hundred ninety-seven-c and section one hundred ninety-seven-d, special consideration shall be given to applications going through the uniform land use review procedure where:

1. The application proposes new affordable housing where one hundred percent of the proposed dwelling units are affordable housing dwelling units, and where the weighted average of all income bands for such units does not exceed fifty-five percent of the area median income adjusted for the size of the household.

2. The application proposes new affordable housing within a community district that has been deemed a low affordability area and is not concurrently within a community district that has been deemed a high displacement-risk area, provided that the housing production targets for the community district established pursuant to subdivision d of this section were not met during the most recently completed five-year period

2. Amend Section 197-c. Uniform land use review procedure. as follows

b. The following documents shall be filed with the department of city planning: (1) applications under this section, (2) any amendments thereto that are made prior to approval of such applications pursuant to this chapter, (3) any written information submitted by an applicant

for purposes of determining whether an environmental impact statement will be required by law, [and] (4) documents or records intended to define or substantially redefine the overall scope of issues to be addressed in any draft environmental impact statement

required by law, and (5) a statement of alignment determining if the application matches the criterion established pursuant to subdivision g of section sixteen-a. The department of city planning shall forward a copy of any materials it receives pursuant to this subdivision (whether or not such materials have been certified as complete) within five days to each affected borough president, community board or borough board.

c. The department of city planning shall be responsible for certifying that applications pursuant to subdivision a of this section are complete and ready to proceed through the uniform land use review procedure provided for in this section. The department shall promulgate rules to determine whether such applications align with the criterion established pursuant to subdivision g of section sixteen-a. Upon certification of an application, the department shall give notice of such certification to the council. If an application under this section has not been certified within six months after filing, both the applicant and, if the land use proposed in an application is consistent with the land use policy or strategic policy statement of the affected borough president, the affected borough president shall have the right at any time thereafter to appeal to the city planning commission for certification. The commission shall promptly, but in any event within sixty days of the filing of such an appeal, either certify the application or state in writing what further information is necessary to complete the application. If such an appeal is brought by an affected borough president, the affirmative vote of five members of the commission shall be sufficient to certify the application.

3. Amend Section 197-d. Council Review. as follows

b. The following decisions filed with the council pursuant to subdivision a of this section, shall be subject to review and action by the council:

(1) any decision of the city planning commission to approve or approve with modifications a matter described in paragraph three of subdivision a of section one hundred ninety seven-c, except where it has been deemed to match the criterion in subdivision g of section sixteen-a pursuant to subdivision b of section one hundred ninety seven-c, a matter described in paragraph [or] eight of subdivision a of section one hundred ninety-seven-c, a disposition of residential real property (as defined in this paragraph) pursuant to paragraph ten of subdivision a of section one hundred ninety-seven-c (except for dispositions to companies that have been organized exclusively to develop housing projects for persons of low income), a plan pursuant to section one hundred ninety-seven-a, or a change in the text of the zoning resolution pursuant to sections two hundred or two hundred one. For purposes of this section, residential real property shall mean real property improved by structures, whether or not occupied, built for or converted to a use which is primarily residential, but shall not include property subsequently converted to non-residential use;

(3) any other decision of the city planning commission to approve or approve with modifications a matter described in subdivision a of section one hundred ninety-seven-c, including a matter described in paragraph three of subdivision a of section one hundred

ninety-seven-c, that has been deemed to match the criterion in subdivision g of section sixteen-a pursuant to subdivision b of section one hundred ninety-seven-c if within twenty days of the filing of such decision pursuant to subdivision a of this section, the council resolves by the majority vote of all the council members to review the decision of the commission.

4. Amend section 215 Ten-year capital strategy. as follows

c. Any project included in the ten-year capital strategy which addresses the goals and strategies of the fair housing plan pursuant to subdivision b of section sixteen-a or which advances the housing production targets identified at both the citywide and community district level pursuant to subdivision d of section sixteen-a or which addresses the obstacles identified in the most recent strategic equity framework pursuant to subdivision e of section sixteen-a, shall be so identified in the ten-year capital strategy.

[c] d. In the preparation of the preliminary ten-year capital strategy, the department of city planning and office of management and budget shall consider (i) the strategic policy statements of the mayor and the borough presidents pursuant to section seventeen, (ii) relevant citywide, borough and community plans adopted pursuant to section one hundred ninety seven-a, and (iii) the reports pursuant to section two hundred fifty-seven comparing the most recent ten-year capital strategy with the capital budgets and programs adopted for the current and previous fiscal years.

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Claudette Brady

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

modifications that better align projects with the community's values and needs. To remove or weaken the Community Boards' role in ULURP would be to silence the most immediate voice of the people. It would shift power away from neighborhoods and concentrate it in more centralized, often less accountable hands. At a time when New Yorkers are increasingly calling for more say in the decisions that shape their lives, we must protect, not diminish, local input and democratic participation. I respectfully urge the Commission to preserve the full role of Community Boards in the ULURP process. Doing so reaffirms our city's commitment to inclusive planning, community empowerment, equitable development, and democracy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Claudette Brady Executive Director Save Harlem Now!

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9557066 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

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To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Claudette M Brady

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Dear Chairperson and Members of the Commission, Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the proposed New York City Charter Revision and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process. Save Harlem Now! (SHN!) strongly urges that the authority and responsibilities that Community Boards currently hold in the ULURP process remain intact and protected within the City Charter. Community Boards are the most local form of government representation in New York City. They are made up of dedicated volunteers who live and work in the neighborhoods they represent and who bring an intimate understanding of their communities' unique needs and challenges. This level of grassroots engagement is irreplaceable. The ULURP process is participatory and democratic. It allows the public to weigh in on land use decisions that directly affect their neighborhood's character, affordability, environment, and quality of life for future generations. While Community Boards may not have binding power over the outcomes of ULURP decisions, their advisory role is essential to the process. Their review brings transparency and ensures thorough local vetting which often results in meaningful

modifications to proposals that better align projects with the community's values and needs. To remove or weaken the Community Boards' role in ULURP would be to silence the most immediate voice of the people. It would shift power away from neighborhoods and concentrate it in more centralized, often less accountable hands. At a time when New Yorkers are increasingly calling for more say in the decisions that shape their lives, we must protect, not diminish, local input and democratic participation. SHN! respectfully urges the Commission to preserve the full role of Community Boards in the ULURP process. Doing so reaffirms our city's commitment to inclusive planning, community empowerment, equitable development, and democracy. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Claudette Brady Executive Director Save Harlem Now!

HARLEM SAVE NOW!

Preserving Our History & Architecture

NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION TESTIMONY
Wednesday, April 23, 2025

Dear Chairperson and members of the Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the proposed New York City Charter Revision and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process.

Save Harlem Now! strongly urge that the authority and responsibilities Community Boards currently hold in ULURP remain intact and protected within the City Charter.

Community Boards are the most local form of government representation in New York City. They are made up of dedicated volunteers who live and work in the neighborhoods they represent and who bring an intimate understanding of their communities' unique needs and challenges. This level of grassroots engagement is irreplaceable.

The ULURP process is participatory and democratic. It allows the public to weigh in on land use decisions that directly affect their neighborhood's character, affordability, environment, and quality of life for generations.

While Community Boards may not have binding power over the outcomes of ULURP decisions, their advisory role is essential to the process. Their review brings transparency, ensures thorough local vetting, and which often results in meaningful modifications to proposals, modifications that better align projects with the community's values and needs.

To remove or weaken the Community Boards' role in ULURP would be to silence the most immediate voice of the people. It would shift power away from neighborhoods and concentrate it in more centralized, often less accountable hands.

At a time when New Yorkers are increasingly calling for more say in the decisions that shape their lives, we must protect, not diminish, local input and democratic participation.

I respectfully urge the Commission to preserve the full role of Community Boards in the ULURP process. Doing so reaffirms our city's commitment to inclusive planning, community empowerment, equitable development, and democracy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Claudette Brady

Claudette Brady
Executive Director

[redacted]

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8588852 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Stephen P Morgan

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I'm deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities."

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2594912 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 21:52:21 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 05:52:06 PM

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Simeon Bankoff

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Please find attached a complete set of my comments to the Charter Commission.

Campaign for a Livable Cityw
New York City Charter Revision Commission Testimony
April 23, 2025

Hello, my name is Simeon Bankoff and I am a historic preservation and community development consultant currently working with the Campaign for a Livable City. I'd like to thank the Commission for giving us the opportunity to speak and hope that we can work together to make meaningful changes through this process.

As Roberta discussed, we're in a crisis.

The solution is not to remove all regulations on development but to encourage it mindfully and thoughtfully. Development may be appropriate in certain contexts, but we cannot forget the importance of the city that exists. Preservation of our city keeps New Yorkers in their homes. It keeps them connected to essential amenities that make communities livable. A house is not a home unless you have access to a network of parks, grocery stores, and reliable transportation. We need to work to keep these networks in place.

Our proposals are aimed at ensuring that what we lose is fully replaced. As Roberta mentioned, all too often we learn of tenants forced out of their homes, only to have the site replaced with fewer units at a far higher price.

Removing essential housing stock and replacing it with far more profitable housing that doesn't serve the needs of and is counter to the interests of the City but currently, our policies actively encourage it. The Rent Guidelines Board reports that since 2010, an average of 729 Class A buildings and 1,499 units of Class A housing have applied for demolition permits annually. Additionally, since 1994, there has been an estimated net loss of at least 153,410 rent stabilized units.

That's an average LOSS of 5,110 rent-stabilized apartments PER YEAR. Even assuming that only 50% of the units demolished were in some kind of rent stabilization program, replacing them and only them would still add 750 units a year or would cut the losses to rent-stabilized apartments by 15%.

Therefore, we propose that the Department of Buildings only approve construction permits if no apartments are lost. To ensure that buildings are not demolished without a replacement plan, there should be a short look-back period, so that if an owner tears a building down, they can't get permits unless they build something with the same number of units that existed right before the demolition.

Secondly, we suggest the City apply a demolition fee where apartments will be lost. Under our proposal, the demolition fee would defray the cost of replacing those lost units within the community district where the building is located. The fees would go in a capital reserve fund, established specifically for that community district, and the funds would be used exclusively for affordable housing development.

Additionally, we are supportive of:

- the Community Land Act, land banking, and related bills that would help community land trusts bring more land and housing into permanently affordable community ownership,
- expanding certificate of no harassment programs to ensure New Yorkers can remain in their homes, and
- enhancing the City's commitment to the Right to Counsel for tenants facing eviction through the permanent allocation of sufficient funding so that all low-income tenants facing eviction have access to an attorney to fight for their right to stay in their home and expanding services to address troubling rise in evictions of moderate-income tenants.

Thank you for your time.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4513548 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 21:52:22 +0000

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Name: Simeon Bankoff

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Please find attached a complete set of my comments to the Charter Commission.

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Thank you for your time.

Subject:

FW: Testimony -- Elijah Hutchinson, Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice

From: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

To: "Bogdanowicz, Genevieve" [redacted], "Brodheim, Adam" [redacted], "Berkovitz, Casey" [redacted], "Holbrook, Rob" [redacted]

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 14:29:34 +0000

From: Chananie, Helen [redacted]

Sent: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 5:53 PM

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Cc: Schmid, Kathleen [redacted]; Russell, Jacob [redacted]; Holbrook, Rob [redacted]; Mangin, John [redacted]; Forgione, Emily [redacted]

Subject: Testimony -- Elijah Hutchinson, Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice

Hello,

Attached is the testimony of Elijah Hutchinson, Executive Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, delivered at the April 9th public hearing of the Charter Revision Commission.

Thank you,
Helen

HELEN CHANANIE | Senior Policy Advisor, Resilience & Strategic Planning

she/her/hers

NYC Mayor’s Office of Climate and Environmental Justice
253 Broadway - 14th floor | New York, NY 10007
[redacted]

Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice

Testimony of Elijah Hutchinson, Executive Director, Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice
Delivered before the New York City Charter Revision Commission, April 9, 2025
Written testimony submitted April 23, 2025

Dear Commissioners,

My name is Elijah Hutchinson and I'm the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice (MOCEJ). Thank you for helping us make it easier to build infrastructure for the future—infrastructure that will ensure a safer and cleaner city, creating the jobs necessary for our residents to provide for their families.

New York City is facing a climate crisis now.

- Climate threats including stormwater, coastal, and groundwater flooding continue to challenge the city, while sea level rise is making these types of flooding worse.
- The New York City Panel on Climate Change (NPCC) projects almost two feet of sea level rise by the 2050s and up to more than five feet of sea level rise by 2100. By the 2080s, the number of days per year with rainfall exceeding two inches is projected to double.[i]
- Heat is the deadliest threat from climate change in New York City, with more than 500 heat-related deaths on average each year. The NPCC projects that in the next decade, we could have over 50 days a year with maximum temperatures at or above 90 degrees – nearly two months of very hot weather. It's like adding an extra month of summer we're not used to.

Delivering climate infrastructure protects New Yorkers, and modernizing our infrastructure also brings significant economic benefits.

- Climate events generate annual health-related economic costs of over $4 billion and result in an additional 500 deaths in New York City every year.[ii]
- Many areas of the city are vulnerable to coastal storms. New York City has 520 miles of coastline, and one-sixth of its land lies within the current 100-year floodplain, exposing about 440,000 residents to heightened flood risks. This area represents $250 billion in property value at risk, including roughly 14,500 businesses that employ more than a quarter of a million people.

- Spending money on resilience pays off. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that for every $1 spent on resilience, $13 is saved in economic costs, damages, and cleanup.[iii]
- New York City's Resilience Finance Task Force found $50 billion of resilience infrastructure would protect approximately 1.7 million residents and one billion square feet of real estate from direct storm-related damage, and the whole city from indirect losses. Over decades, a comprehensive coastal defense system would protect against repetitive damage, avoiding over $220 billion in physical, social, and economic losses through the year 2100, paying for itself many times over.[iv]

Over the past 15 years, New York City has led the country in building innovative climate infrastructure: green infrastructure to capture our stormwater, coastal protection projects that keep hundreds of thousands of people out of harm's way, and energy efficient building systems that provide heating and cooling without polluting our neighborhoods' air. We have learned, and are continuing to learn, how to design and build projects that bring multiple benefits to our communities. But now we need to scale in order to build climate infrastructure to support all of our neighborhoods that will be impacted by extreme weather, particularly our most vulnerable communities.

So, how can the Commission help?

First, we need to make it easier to use our streets and sidewalks, the backbone of New York City, in new ways to prevent flooding, provide shaded open space for New Yorkers, and to support the new public electric infrastructure that will power our cars and replace our fossil fuel-powered building heating systems while also providing cooling. Our rights of way—or our streets and sidewalks—are climate corridors. We are redesigning them to support healthy ways to move around our city, absorb stormwater, charge electric vehicles (EVs) and keep batteries for scooters out of people's homes, and provide community space that is shaded by trees. Our current system of establishing legal right-of-ways was created long before we understood the concept of climate change, and we can no longer keep our public space frozen in time– we must be more nimble to respond to change, particularly at our waterfront.

But building in our streets is complicated. First, we often have to acquire slivers of property before we can even start a project, which has to go through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). If we want to raise a road to protect against flooding—again, ULURP. And much of our waterfront is mapped with "paper streets" extending beyond the changing shoreline or with marginal streets at a bulkhead, so almost all work done to enhance public access and job-intensive uses on our shoreline requires ULURP, even though it doesn't impact a street that people use. If we can speed up the process to build in our streets by reducing the requirements for small land acquisitions, changes to a street's grade, or work on underused mapped streets without going through ULURP, we will create a pathway to build shaded flood protective corridors, public curbside EV chargers, and the thermal network building heating and cooling systems of the future.

Furthermore, the current state of the city map is established by a record of over 1,000 amendment maps maintained by five different Borough Topographical Bureaus, which can delay the delivery of resiliency projects, as they often overlap mapped public places. A modernized, centralized, and digitized city map would bring our planning process into the 21st century to prepare us for 22nd century climate risks.

Second, we need to better leverage other types of City-owned property. The City made a commitment in "PlaNYC," our climate action plan, to install climate infrastructure, like solar panels, on all City-owned property. The extraordinary work of multiple agencies to meet this commitment has shown us ways the Charter makes work much harder.

The charter requires that we go through ULURP when we change the use of a City-owned property—called site selection. While it is important that communities understand what City facilities are being sited in their neighborhoods, ULURP also applies to changes of use that make neighborhoods healthier, safer, and greener, like resiliency projects and waterfront access that *must* be located on land that is often city owned. The charter provides ambiguous language for the application of Site Selection ULURP, which has been expanded upon by case law in challenges to past sitings of controversial uses, without providing full clarity. This uncertainty delays the delivery of projects that conservatively choose to pursue ULURP. More insidiously, agencies could create a less-than-optimal project design to avoid the looming shadow of a ULURP delay.

Also, the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) does incredible work to build solar on City buildings, primarily our schools, but needs to lease property to partners in order to build larger solar arrays that provide more reliable energy for our neighborhoods or bring benefits directly to New York City residents' pocketbooks. However, leases require ULURP and a competitive lease auction, both delaying and creating high risk for community solar and energy storage projects. An auction is even required for the City to lease to a state partner like the New York Power Authority (NYPA), which delivers considerable clean energy projects throughout the state. DCAS' partnership with NYPA has been instrumental in achieving the City's clean energy mandates, as well as the State's goals set forth in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. These projects not only generate clean energy — they ensure the benefits flow to every day New Yorkers.

Another place we need to use our streets and sidewalks is to install publicly accessible EV charging locations. In both "PlaNYC" and "PowerUp NYC," the City's first long term energy plan, the City committed to doing our part to support our transition to EVs from the cars, trucks, buses, and construction equipment that currently pollutes our air and burns diesel fuel. The City also launched the Green Rides initiative, which will create incredible demand for EV charging as it requires all ride share vehicles to be EV or publicly accessible within five years. However, currently we have limited tools to build charging—the City's Department of Transportation (DOT) must contract with private partners to install chargers in the sidewalk, and this takes money. We don't have the tools we need to let a growing market of service

providers, in partnership with and consistent with DOT requirements, install chargers to support New Yorkers. There are two tools we usually use to build in the right of way—revocable consents and franchises. Revocable consents cannot apply to EV charging unless an adjacent property owner wants to install the charter, making installation harder to plan and risks not truly being publicly accessible. Also, generally, existing revocable consent and franchise Charter requirements are extraordinarily burdensome and require extensive and often prohibitive reviews and processes that could be more streamlined without sacrificing transparency and stakeholder input. We should have as many tools as possible to deploy EV chargers to transform how kids get to school, deliveries get made, businesses operate, and everyday New Yorkers drive. While MOCEJ is committed to getting people out of cars, making New York a more walkable, bikeable, transit-oriented City, when people do need vehicles, we need to make it easy for them to be electric.

Finally, my office is working with dozens of stakeholders and City agencies to create a voluntary and equitable program for New Yorkers to sell their homes and small business properties when faced with insurmountable flood risk. The program is currently in development with lessons learned from previous buyout programs and involving extensive public engagement—both from home and business owners who would be eligible and from surrounding neighbors who want to know the plans for their community. We are extraordinarily proud to be bringing this resource to New Yorkers, but right now if you decide that you are ready to move, your next step would be to go through ULURP. Many property owners likely wouldn't take that step—instead they would sell to another private purchaser, not the City. This could not only render the program useless, it could also prevent the City from removing people from harm's way AND transitioning the property to a better use, whether that is reconstructed wetlands and natural areas, public access and recreation, flood protection infrastructure, or safe, elevated housing designed to protect against flooding risk.

The Charter Revision Commission offers a unique opportunity to make New York City's governance system work better for the people who live and work here, and for the New Yorkers of the future.

Sincerely,

Elijah Hutchinson
Executive Director,
NYC Mayor's Office of Climate & Environmental Justice

[i] Christian Braneon, Luis Ortiz, Daniel Bader, Naresh Devineni, Philip Orton, Bernice Rosenzweig, Timon McPhearson, Lauren Smalls-Mantey, Vivien Gornitz, Talea Mayo, Sanketa Kadam, Hadia Sheerazi, Equisha Glenn, Liv Yoon, Amel Derras-Chouk, Joel Towers, Robin Leichenko, Deborah Balk, Peter Marcotullio, Radley Horton, (2024) *"NPCC4: New York City climate risk information 2022—observations and projections," Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, vol. 1539, no. 1.*

[ii] McPhearson,T.,Towers,J.,Balk,D.,Horton,R.,Madajewicz,M.,Montalto,F.,Neidell,M.,Orton, P.,Rosenzweig,B.,Bader,D.,Chen,Z.,DeGaetano,A.,Evans,C.,Golkhandan,M.R.,Gurian,P., Kaatz,J.,Herreros-Cantis,P.,Lo,R.,Ortiz,L.,Braneon,C.,Branco,B.,Campbell,L.,Dubay,F., Graziano,K.,Jiang,L.,Johnson,M.,Kennedy,C.,Kioumourtzoglou,M.-A.,Kleyman,J., Kleyman,J.,Knowlton,K.,Limaye,V.,Matte,T.,MunozPerez,S.,Reed,D.,Shakya,M., Svendsen,E.,Tipaldo,J.,Zoraghein,H.(2024*).New York City Town+ Gown Climate Vulnerability, Impact, and Adaptation Analysis Final Report*. https://climate.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/NYC-VIA-Report.pdf

[iii] U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Allstate, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2024). *The Preparedness Payoff: The Economic Benefits of Investing in Climate Resilience.* https://www.uschamber.com/security/the-preparedness-payoff-the-economic-benefits-of-investing-in-climate-resilience

[iv] NYC Department of Environmental Protection, NYC Economic Development Corporation, and NYC Office of the Mayor (2025) *Securing a Resilient New York City: Funding and Financing Shoreline Protection.* *www*.nyc.gov/assets/dep/downloads/pdf/climate-resiliency/rftf-report-shoreline-protection.pdf

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8538146 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Wed, 23 Apr 2025 23:23:20 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 07:23:06 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Frampton Tolbert

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: April 23, 2025 Dear Charter Commission Members: Thank you for allowing the Historic Districts Council to submit testimony to the Commission. HDC is the citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods. We represent a constituency of more than 500 Community Partner organizations to help them preserve the places that matter to them. Part of the Charter Commission's role is to review our existing land use processes and propose changes to those systems. HDC strongly supports new housing and believes that preservation should be seen as a tool to make that happen, especially through adaptive reuse projects and contextual development. But that is not why we are here today as the charter is not necessarily the place to create these incentives and resources. We understand that one thing the Commission may do is identify how to streamline the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), the process for major land use decisions in the city. ULURP is one of the main ways that community members and stakeholders can be involved in land use decisions. The process allows several entities to weigh in on proposals including Community Boards (advisory), the Borough President (advisory) and City Council (binding). The Charter Commission's current plan may be to eliminate some or

all of this review. HDC opposes a plan that would diminish or eliminate public participation. Efforts to shut the public out of processes that shape their lives and communities follow a dangerous local and national trend of dismantling civic structures and perpetuating the idea that only the wealthy and connected can or should make decisions about the neighborhoods that matter to us. HDC is a longtime advocate for public processes. For more than 50 years, we have reviewed all major applications at the Landmarks Preservation Commission, because we believe community input makes our city more livable for all. We have seen time and again how public testimony has added vital information to the public record, and helped shape projects into even better versions of themselves. Community boards are already advisory, so removing their thoughtful review would only dampen civic engagement in the city. The Borough President's role is similarly advisory and equally important. With their staff of land use experts and planners, Borough Presidents are well positioned to consider all aspects of a project and make thoughtful recommendations to improve a project. HDC believes that we may need to improve ULURP so that small-time developers and property owners can create projects and more housing in a process that mostly benefits large developers who have the time and resources to fund these projects and timelines. But the solution as some suggest is not to stifle community participation. The Public is not the problem. HDC urges the Commission not to eliminate public participation in land use review processes. Sincerely, Frampton Tolbert Executive Director [redacted]

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

April 23, 2025

Dear Charter Commission Members:

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Sincerely,

Frampton Tolbert
Executive Director

[redacted]

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4121327 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 03:21:23 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 11:20:59 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Roberta Gratz

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: Please find full testimony attached.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-4957280 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 05:20:47 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 01:20:34 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Kimberly Cruz

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: We The People are trying to have a civil conversation, please cement our civility into the Charter as charter rights protect civilians in a civil war. Remember We The People of New York City have always been different. Do not allow Red and Blue markers dictate your next move for our nation when dogs and babies can achieve better categorization with this farce we are stating are political parties that are waiting for the dust to settle as we further allow the deregulation of our governments. Artificial intelligence is here. Measles is here. Fires are here. We can not breathe our own air during the summers, we can not educate our own children, and we can not protect our elderly-- we are a failing city but we are not a dead city so allow my words to give us life again as We The People are yearning for real honest leadership where you can look at your image in the mirror, enter your house of worship, and still pray with hope in your heart. We The People are hope for All The People of this World as We The People lead with integrity given through the U.S. Constitution, New York State Constitution, and the New York City Charter. Value the letters you are about to alter for the sake of humanity.

Written testimony

February 24,2025 Queens

- Charter was formed in 1898 between the boroughs, we all chose to consolidate power;
- 1624 – when the Dutch came with created charter rights on this land, now we have the NYC charter of 1898;
- Amendments that do have a Fair Share Guide: A Guide for City Agencies from the Giuliani Administration https://www.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/about/publications/fair_share_guide.pdf
- I am a Purple Patriot, I rise because Alice Paul rose during the most crucial time in America for my right to vote in the United States of America. The Civil Rights Activists. All the intersectional activists of the 21st century who have had a moment in the spotlight to rise. I rise up because we as a species have to rise up against the chains that are invisibly and visibly being strapped around us as we age in our civil society.

This is more of the testimony I wanted to give in person:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PX1_G5LynqY Time (hour 2:20-2:32)
Start:
During an interview, Page recalled his childhood home "was usually a mess, with computers, science, and technology magazines and *Popular Science* magazines all over the place", an environment in which he immersed himself.[30] Page was an avid reader during his youth, writing in his 2013 Google founders letter: "I remember spending a huge amount of time pouring [sic] over books and magazines".[31] According to writer Nicholas Carlson, the combined influence of Page's home atmosphere and his attentive parents "fostered creativity and invention". Page also played instruments and studied music composition while growing up. His parents sent him to music summer camp—Interlochen Arts Camp in Interlochen, Michigan, and Page has mentioned that his musical education inspired his impatience and obsession with speed in computing. "In some sense, I feel like music training led to the high-speed legacy of Google for me". In an interview Page said that "In music, you're very cognizant of time. Time is like the primary thing" and that "If you think about it from a music point of view, if you're a percussionist, you hit something, it's got to happen in milliseconds, fractions of a second".
BUT WAS THIS ALL ON HIS OWN OR WAS IT HIS ENVIRONMENT?
Page was first attracted to computers when he was six years old, as he was able to "play with the stuff lying around"—first-generation personal computers—that had been left by his mother and father.[26] He became the "first kid in his elementary school to turn in an assignment from a word processor".[32] His older brother Carl Victor Page Jr.[28]:ch. 2 also taught him to take things apart and before long he was taking "everything in his house apart to see how it worked". He said that

"from a very early age, I also realized I wanted to invent things. So I became interested in technology and business. Probably from when I was 12, I knew I was going to start a company eventually."

So I ask this great city of New York, my home, my native land, can we say the same of each bright apple in every household that houses 8 million people if we can say that to be true? I say, no, we have even heard the remarks of our governor state that people in the Bronx do not even know how to use a computer. Why? I, and the report by Kinetic Civic Education, will tell you the observations from a citizen's point of view.

A den of iniquities in our court system, in our political machines, in our current political parties, in our federal and state government has corrupted the morals of The People who are supposed to lead this free world. our municipalities can still rise up as we have the Lenape people's history underneath our feet. The shepherds who had thousands of years of roaring nations amongst them and still these merchants continued.

Mercantilism is an old practice. It highlights our ability to negotiate social contracts. As we progress in society our contracts and understanding of contracts must come with discernment. A moment of silence to see if this aligns with the work of the divine as we replenish the Earth with the fruits of our labor.

This past decade has been a clear silent civil war.

Peace takes time but it does mean social action. We are not machine men with machine hearts so we must show the rest of the world our human power. We have created paradise or at least we were on our way entering with new hope. Citizens United completely altered the political landscape and now we have the consequences. The 2008 financial crisis hit many households. I was nine. I was given hope. I am a purple patriot as all parties have failed my generation to have true progress. As I respect all those with Purple Hearts who continue to be soldiers of this free world.
New York City has spirit, NYC is the beacon of hope, the big Apple, the transformative 7 line that connects us to all of our brothers and sisters around the world. If you haven't visited come, don't be scared. Look around, we are your neighbors. Do not take our silence as a people as a sign of weakness. We are New York Strong and we have been experiencing the poison of old thought leaders rigging the game for those who look like me and who have been dedicated to the truth for the last decade of her life.

We The People who know that the divine is the true leader of all living beings in this universe, know that silence has power, and our message is to bring total royalty to The Mother. Women have to be given the mic, the chance at the table to bring peace. Not all women are prepared, but all mothers know that even when life comes, it comes with love and pain— without self sacrifice how can we create the loving embrace of a merciful mother, a merciful father, a lamb of this great green earth.
No matter the creed, you have a Light with a capital L that will shine away the darkness wherever you step.
Release your Light. Speak up.
I sit here, pleading for a change with regulation and oversight. Nothing more.
No more will we allow the accumulation of wealth at the expense of the poor— the poor in mind, body, soul, and connection to the divine. The poor get poorer while the rich get richer.
No more will we allow the false prophets to spread lies on social media.

We must be a turtle, a turkey, and a wolf when it comes to fighting for our family. Our generational wealth.
What is wealth? Where is the wealth of NYC? Who can change the wealth of an individual? Of a family? Of a dynasty? Of the legacy of humanity?
Wealth
1.
an abundance of valuable possessions or money
some people buy boats and cars to display their wealth"
Wealth
2.
plentiful supplies of a particular resource
"the country's mineral wealth"
Wealth
3. plentiful supply of a particular desirable thing.
the tables and maps contain **a wealth of** information

I have immense wealth. Take it as you like. I have New York Spirit and that has a value no one needs to know but me and God. We must not assume people's words. We must not be blinded as we are our own saviors. We have the Temple we do desire on this earth. We must do the good work to keep all of us safe. All Light. All temples. All of those who breath a single breath on this green earth. So how do you do it in a specific way:

1. Create the council of Civilian Protection with the current civic leaders who are under the arm of the Queens BP (should be autonomous but groundwork and organization has been created)
2. Create the People's Assembly 25-25-25-25-25. 125 of random people inside the Congressional District that uses the census and has federal, and state implications. 25 -25 for state Senator and state assembly, 25-25 for US Senator and US rep. 25 for the city council rep (or 5 since city council is smaller?) This calculation is based on what our founding fathers wanted 1:30000 not 1:772000
3. Take the funding away from the mayor's annul $258,000 as a punishment for disarray and give $250/mo to each who wants to be part of the first cohort of people. $2000 from April-November 8 months for this new egg of a democracy. New random people in the assembly and for the civilian protection council those civic leaders who have been monitoring change under the wing of the QBP.

Do not alter NYC's Charter in a way that describes people but alter it with the minds and hands of the leaders of tomorrow, those who were very young adults before COVID and those who have their prefrontal cortex fully formed after COVID. We are the sponges you need and We are here to clean up this mess that our leaders are too shy, ashamed, or greedy to state out loud.
I am here. I am your neighbor. Do unto others as you would like others to do unto you. Lift every voice and sing. Rise up so I can hear you. We need change and we need it now. The lives of our children, parents, friends and family depends on it
The Simpler, most effective, and efficient way May be as complicated as the technologically advanced way.
The old way of life May lead us to progress just as the new way of life. The hybrid of nature is what we should strive to be. Elastic, flexible to whatever comes our way.

March 4 Bronx Housing and Land use: I did not attend in person or on Zoom so I do not know what was covered.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59Q_lhgGANc

Some suggestions:

- Fix a way so that all of March on the weekends you are not creating repairs for the Green(456) and Orange (BD) lines at Yankee Stadium. We see a decrease in services where shuttles can be created for local folk during important holidays – Irish, Black, Latino, Bengali, all Americans of the Bronx
- There should be an evacuation plan for Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island to get to mainland USA from the island i.e. ferries, MTA lines, shuttle lines ready to go without stressing or oppressing the evacuation efforts of The People of The Bronx
- Economic deserts that need revitalization from actual real honest community planning; many of these communities want to stay alive but the infrastructure is just rotting around local communities that have invested back into their community
- You should read The Bronx Times Reporter Volume 45 Number 14 April 4-10, 2025 where Civic Centers have stated that the residents have said "CasiNO"-- against the casino developments in Bally Links next to the Whitestone Bridge and we are just allowing this to bypass real discernment… the community does not want it and this does not seem like a project that will bring sustainable growth when pandemics hit and measles is out.

April 9 Government Reform Staten Island

1. Zoom Testimony(Time 2:19-2:23)
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYwFCOCWuPk
2. Board of elections does not allow candidates to justify their signatures as the Board just accepts without any proper reasoning that when candidates receive emails in their spam box, even though this is a real barrier to democracy, the commissioners do not see this flaw as a major defect in electoral processes from a top-down approach (if the Board of elections fails a candidate, the candidate should be placed on the primary June ballot); that is a barrier to the elections when vital election documents are being sent to

spam– this has kept competitiveness from rising as the incumbents do not allow competitive candidates to rise up using different tactics under the sun against candidates that may be rising for that philosophical public servant we need, the one of our Founding Fathers, and those are the candidates that The People are not even told about during unpredictable times

   a. A better space for the history of the reality of the elections beside Ballotopedia
   b. Oversight of the elected leaders. Create local councils with real people who will have to give oversight to the federal, state, and city legislation 25 people for the Congressional

3. Housing and the lack of oversight of professionals making these repairs to adhere to the housing maintenance code which is there to keep us from falling to Charles Dickens era conditions
   a. Housing court — Housing preservation and development — code enforcement — professionals making the corrections
   b. Why should we care about the way corrections are made: well unchecked repairs lead to disasters for families and for the city

"**Nearly a year after a partial building collapse in the Morris Heights section of the Bronx displaced dozens of families, the New York City Department of Buildings has released its findings. The report points to negligence by the engineer in charge, identifying a failure to recognize critical masonry as structural.**

The collapse occurred on Dec. 11, 2023, at 1915 Billingsly Terrace, sending a significant portion of the building tumbling down in the middle of the day and leaving dozens of families homeless just before Christmas. "
"Queens tenants left homeless after a contractor attempted to remove lead paint with a blowtorch have filed suit against one of New York City's largest residential landlords.
The complaint, filed by McLaughlin & Stern and Parlatore Law Group, alleges A&E Real Estate Holdings is grossly negligent for the blaze, which broke out on Dec. 20, 2023, in the Sunnyside building."
https://www.law.com/newyorklawjournal/2024/06/28/tenants-sue-one-of-nycs-largest-residential-landlords-over-blowtorch-fire/?slreturn=20250410-12122
https://www.fox5ny.com/news/bronx-building-collapse-report-claims-engineers-negligence-cause

1. ** make it an amendment that professionals get fined for the failure of repairs or falsifying documents that will be presented in court and certified in the Housing Preservation and Development Agency as that is the data that is being used to make changes but this data is faulty when false certifications are being accepted.
2. Ventilation, measles, structural deficiencies, there is also this ability for landlords to use anyone off the street to do the repairs and we do not have regulation over what is in legal code. In a sanctuary city, which I do not completely oppose but with the current leadership at the federal, state, and local city council level, they have allowed our charter rights to be stressed for their own agenda and propaganda. We have lived with this concept and if the system's backbone was strong this idea of sanctuary or not would not strain a democracy– we are strained because we have not had strong leadership with strong backbones in support of strong infrastructure.
3. not only that but mail theft, a federal crime, is not being taken seriously by NYPD, 911 responders have to write a report for every single mail theft incident and they do not do it even though people's livelihoods will completely change;
4. In court, it is a cash economy and that means those with cash will get justice
5. There are harassing tactics that with the new means of technology and the range of age groups that need housing children to the elderly, the tactics are reaching the court to deceive the court.
6. I invite you to visit the courtroom and actually see what the changes to the charter will do. When you mindlessly follow just a small cohort of people who have been "aiding" all government agencies with their input and their ideas gathered but are still missing the ball
7. On or before May 1, 2025, Local Law 157 mandates the installation of natural gas detectors in specific residential properties, including private dwellings and Class A multiple dwellings, and potentially Class B multiple dwellings.
    1. Why is this important
    2. New York State banned high-volume hydraulic fracturing in 2020 after an extensive investigation into its environmental impacts
    3. Governor Hochul has confirmed her opposition to fracking and has signed a bill banning the use of carbon dioxide for oil and gas extraction, further solidifying the state's ban.

4. Gas in households and the oversight of this on public land is important especially when the Interior Department and all other agencies of the government expanding fossil fuels are doing it without any oversight as we have allowed the gutting of the EPA at a federal level.

2. New Constructions without the community being told the real realities of these developments without return to the community. Developments of such a large degree in an age where pandemics, measles, and all other environmental diseases can halt the fruits of these developments and they will be bailed out by our local funds.
    1. There is one casino: Resorts World New York City 110-00 Rockaway Blvd, Jamaica, NY 11420
    2. Elected officials are bending the knee in three boroughs: Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn
    3. How are we allowing the creation of a red light district in the heart of queens and to take our Flushing Meadows land that our children have enjoyed for decades.

On March 13, 2020 Daily Eagle reported that
" Acting Queens Borough President Sharon Lee has rejected a land use application to rezone a piece of the Flushing Creek waterfront for residential use, a proposal that would facilitate a large mixed-use development in Downtown Flushing. Queens Community Board 7 had voted to recommend the rezoning proposal last month, despite fervent opposition from many community members.
Lee issued her advisory recommendation on March 12 as part of the city's Universal Land Use Review Procedure, or ULURP, citing the risk of displacement for long-time residents of Flushing, particularly older adults and individuals on fixed-incomes.
"The scale and scope of the plan will significantly change the landscape of Downtown Flushing with long lasting impacts on the area within and surrounding the [Special Flushing Waterfront District]," Lee wrote in her recommendation.
"Downtown Flushing, however, is not immune to the consequences of transformative large-scale new development that inadvertently leaves many behind, such as displacement of long-time residents and families."

1. Water, food, air — brush fires, water is saltier, and the food is contaminated

On Queens Borough Civic Calls we were able to talk to the FDNY leaders, those who are in charge of evacuating the city, these people are from NJ, how are they

going to find all the people who need help? How will these networks be efficient at the local language to get the maximum population to safety.

These are points that were made by speakers that I agree with and want to echo:

- The struggles of local journalism
- Local solidarity
- Local matters do not align on the ideological spectrum as national matters
- Your view on housing might be different than your view on public safety and these party labels should allow for the complex views of Americans today
- A more competitive general election
- Nonpartisan primary versus an open primary
- A more localized election — support for these policies across the city
- The Democratic Party should stand for something but it is hard to understand the factions that make up these factions
- Some of these factions can have a separate party label that mean significant things to voters

April 23 Manhattan Housing and land use

Ubuntu" is sometimes translated as "I am because we are" (also "I am because you are"
Life is complicated and important. Jury duty is actually fun for me. We are in a reconstruction era, after slavery was abolished it was an era where we attempted to create structure for racial “friendship”… this isn’t new. We did this when women were not people, and we were attempting to understand how a black body can enter into new spaces of privilege. Once in the Constitution or in the Charter, it’s given right. ////
The community boards are not our local government. We do not have legislative districts when Long Island has these legislative districts. We do not have a collective fund when nonprofits are lacking in filling the gap or the current climate we are in. Solidarity around a People’s Democracy Fund around civics and this program can be the roll out of a multicultural, multigenerational, multitalented pool of We The People so some amendments:

1. Technocratic citizens assembly with a People’s Assembly attached to it — CHITE city services, health (public health official team should be funded), insurance, transportation, education. Have this set up and funded for ten years. This can fix an education and targeted training for community boards to rely on. There are many advocacy groups that exist but don’t exist in the minds of those who actually need it in real time.
2. A monthly Census Assembly and local government civic center… the funding would be the salaries of the five federal representatives who already have to represent 772,000 people
3. Climate Leaders/ Warriors — air (particles, dust, deregulation), water, and land (brush fires) to evaluate borough specific emergency plans leaning and learning from coastal cities from around the nation… on a call the NY queens chief said we did not have climate conditions similar to those. You do not have to be anti-development to want a clean world. Some of the investments we are asking will expand development but also be stewards of this Earth as we are not uncivilized animals.
4. Add Neuroprovacy data to not be collected. Connecticut and Colorado have implemented acts that secure some accountability. Be data driven but know how the data is taken. Where will people report this data? NYPD increase in surveillance usage with drone usage, robodogs used in FDNY, misconduct,

qualified immunity, Housing Preservation and Development. Transportation. Education.

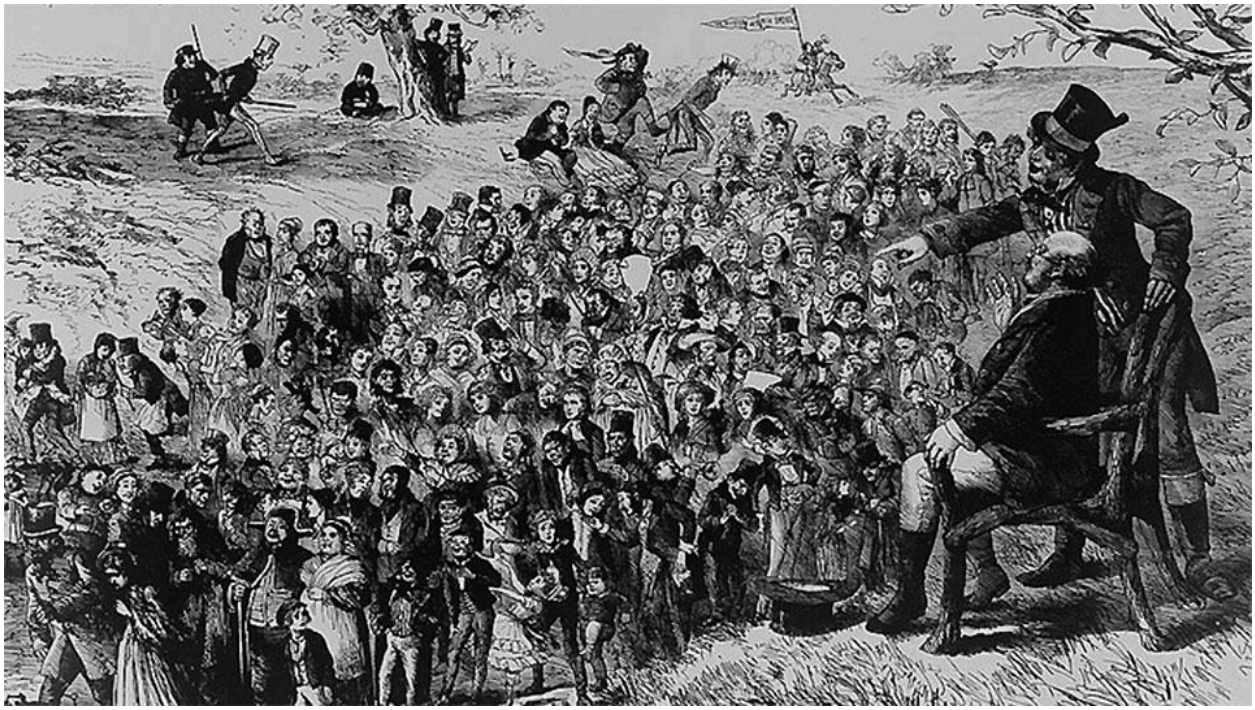
**** for development and infrastructure investment**** We have to have a balanced intellectual language. I build, you destroy, I can alter, change, innovate, and you can also do it all the same but I do not have to die or fall to Charles Dickens Era conditions for you to accept that truth. I can thrive and strive for a better tomorrow, using my first amendment, while I still can use it, to ask for a local government to actually be funded outside of the agreements we have with city council, borough presidents, and then community boards. We are super glueing these concepts together to form a real local government when we know that We The People of New York City deserve our God given right to freedom and to be free we must remove the shackles of 1898, remove the shackles that are not being understood by the Fair Share component to this age in 2025:

We The People of All Five Boroughs deserve to be seen by God and if that means one more body of We The People then I will accept that to be funded i.e. five Congressional salaries should be used to fund the Technocratic People's Council which will only be a tool for Borough Presidents, the Community Boards which are very local business-friendly, and the City Council. We The People deserve more knowledge, more real life consequential knowledge at the governance level or you as a Charter Commission of 2025 are truly lacking foresight to what We The People actually need. We do not live in a vacuum, we are not mindless sheep, and We Will Get Leadership. We Declare it to be.

As a Civics Leader in 2025, I say read my book if you actually want to learn about the New York City Spirit from a Child that was raised with the honor of this city's air, land, and water. I am a Child of God, I am a Child of this City, and I believe that We The People will remember our Roots to seed the Knowledge Tree of Democracy

For God,
For Country,
And For the Sixth,

Kimberly Cruz of Queens
Yale University and The Bronx High School of Science Alumna
Author of Hindsight is 2020: The Tree and Key to Democracy



“Although Dickens’s authorial perspective always remained petty bourgeois, he never forgot how his father was imprisoned for debts and that the financial circumstances of his family forced him to leave school at the age of 12 and work a 10-hour day in a blackening (shoe polish) factory. This experience led to his lifelong conviction that no child should ever endure such suffering… In the novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*, published shortly afterward, he also described the conflict he experienced between expectations and reality in the U.S…When Charles Dickens began writing in 1836, the literacy rate in England was under 50 percent. More than any other writer of his time, Dickens must have helped inspire a desire for literacy among the ordinary people, by publishing stories—mostly serialized in magazines—that people really wanted to read because they could relate to the characters.
”https://peoplesworld.org/article/charles-dickens-put-ordinary-people-at-the-heart-of-the-story/

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-8510907 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 06:44:46 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 02:44:25 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Tania Arias

[redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Dear members of the Commission, I have read the report on the proposed changes to the City Charter and attended your April 23rd hearing on Land Use via Zoom. I hereby present my testimony. After reading the report on the proposed changes to the Land Use process and after listening to the hearing, the first image that comes to mind is the one where a machete is being used to perform brain surgery. I was disturbed by the comment from one of the committee members who stated that the communities interfere with the needs of “the City”. The “city” is not a detached entity separate from its communities. In fact, the City is the result and product of these communities. They are one and the same. No one has a better knowledge of the nature and needs of a community than those who comprise it. The imposition of projects within a community without its input is not only detrimental to the community, it is a road to disaster for our beloved city. The actions, or in this case resistance to action, by a handful of recalcitrant community leaders in certain wealthy or politically powerful districts should not be used as the argument for the removal of the ULURP process at the community level. This is akin to banning hammers just because one disturbed individual used it to hit a woman over the head. Hammers

are used to build homes, they are a necessary tool for good. One bad use of it does not void it for others. As you heard last night, the ULURP process is actually the shortest step in a lengthy, and often years long, process. There are many factors that delay the building of affordable housing, not the least of which, is the profit goal of developers. In the great majority of cases, developers have only one goal in mind, their profit, regardless of the impact their proposed project poses to the community. Perhaps it is best to truly understand why some communities oppose these projects which oftentimes exceed height, volume and quality of life standards for the community. I, personally, have knowledge that my Community Board has been lobbying for affordable housing for many, many years. We not only ask for it, we encourage and insist on it being a priority. Instead, an enormous science center was approved which will bring thousands of people into our district, without any housing attached to it. The ULURP process resulted in benefits such as obtaining school and preK spaces but, in spite of the Board's continued requests, did not result in affordable housing stock to accompany the development. As you can see, our requests for affordable housing did not result in their development during the ULURP process. The ULURP process is, obviously, not the problem. I thank the Commission for their efforts and hard work, for listening to our leaders and community members as you weigh all of the factors involved in this momentous decision. I urge the Commission to consider the ULURP process as the quintessential expression of a democracy and of the spirit of this extraordinarily inclusive city. Let's find a way to engage with those recalcitrant communities that use this great tool (ULURP) as a weapon instead of the great tool it is for the good of all. Thank you for your attention to my testimony. Sincerely, Tania Arias

---

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-2068906 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 14:13:22 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 10:13:08 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: N.Wechter

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Testimony

I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1573363 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 15:41:50 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Thursday, April 24, 2025, at 11:41:33 AM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Laura Perez Sanburn

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

Fw: [EXTERNAL] CB8M April 2025 Resolutions

From: "Schierenbeck, Alec" [redacted]

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 16:12:58 +0000

***

Alec Schierenbeck
Executive Director
NYC Charter Revision Commission
[redacted]

From: Chen, Meagan [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2025 11:57 AM
To: Schierenbeck, Alec [redacted]; Labadie, Madeline [redacted]; Mangin, John [redacted]
Subject: Fw: [EXTERNAL] CB8M April 2025 Resolutions

Hi - I received this email from Manhattan CB8 - not sure how they got my email address or if you all got this too, but passing along. Let me know if I need to do anything here besides acknowledge receipt.

From: Kevin Wu [redacted]
Sent: Thursday, April 24, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Chen, Meagan [redacted]
Cc: Community Board 8 Manhattan <info@cb8m.com>; Will Brightbill [redacted]
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CB8M April 2025 Resolutions

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov<mailto:phish@oti.nyc.gov> as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

Hi Meagan,

The Community Board 8 Manhattan Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force resolutions

regarding the elimination of Community Board Term limits, need for an urban planner, preservation of historic districts, language of ballot issues, and ULURP process are attached.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best regards,

--
Kevin Wu
Assistant District Manager
Community Board 8 Manhattan
[redacted]

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager

[redacted]

The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

April 23, 2025

Richard R. Buery Jr., Chair
New York City Charter Revision Commission
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

RE: Preservation of Historic Districts

Dear Chair Buery Jr.,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on April 16, 2025, the Board approved the following resolution by a vote of 23 in favor, 14 opposed, 4 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

> **WHEREAS** the purpose of a Historic District is to preserve and protect areas that have significant historical, architectural, cultural, or archaeological value; and
>
> **WHEREAS** Historic Districts help maintain the character and the integrity of places that reflect important aspects of a community's past; and
>
> **WHEREAS** Historic Districts protect unique or representative architectural styles and building technology that might otherwise be lost to modern development; and
>
> **WHEREAS** Historic Districts foster a sense of pride, contributing to a community's unique identity, and continuity; and
>
> **WHEREAS** preserving and reusing older buildings is often more environmentally sustainable than demolition and new construction;
>
> **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CB8M recommends that the Charter Revision Commission approve a ballot amendment that preserves the historic nature, cultural legacy, unique architectural styles, and significance of the geographic sizes of New York City's many Historic Districts; they should not be reduced in size to accommodate new development; the possibility of supporting new construction should not be considered as a criteria for establishing a reduced Historic District.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner
Co-Chairs, Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District

Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member, 8th Council District

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager

[redacted]

The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

April 23, 2025

Richard R. Buery Jr., Chair
New York City Charter Revision Commission
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

RE: The Language of Ballot Issues Should be Objective, Factual, and Accurate

Dear Chair Buery Jr.,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on April 16, 2025, the Board unanimously approved the following resolution by a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

> **WHEREAS** New York City ballot measures often deal with issues of city law and government that are complicated and/or unfamiliar to the general public; and
>
> **WHEREAS** valid ballot measures should be presented to the public in a matter that enables voters to understand what they are voting on; and
>
> **WHEREAS** descriptions of ballot measures should not promote a particular viewpoint or outcome but only state the facts;
>
> **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CB8M recommends that the Charter Revision Commission approve a ballot initiative to amend the New York City Charter to require that ballot measures be presented on the ballots objectively, factually, and accurately.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner
Co-Chairs, Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
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Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member, 8th Council District

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager

[redacted]

The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

April 23, 2025

Richard R. Buery Jr., Chair
New York City Charter Revision Commission
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

RE: Need for an Urban Planner

Dear Chair Buery Jr.,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on April 16, 2025, the Board unanimously approved the following resolution by a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

> **WHEREAS** Community Boards are asked to review land use applications, including zoning changes and new development plans through their role in the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), thus playing a vital role in shaping local development; and
>
> **WHEREAS** Community Boards would benefit from the expertise of a professional urban planner; and
>
> **WHEREAS** Community Boards do not have the budget to engage their own urban planner;
>
> **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CB8M recommends that the Charter Revision Commission approve a ballot initiative to amend the New York City Charter to require that each Borough President retain the services of an urban planner whose services can be utilized by that borough's Community Boards, which would benefit from the expertise of an urban planner on development and other projects.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner
Co-Chairs, Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
Honorable Edward Gibbs, NYS Assembly Member 68th Assembly District
Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member, 8th Council District

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager

[redacted]

The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

April 23, 2025

Richard R. Buery Jr., Chair
New York City Charter Revision Commission
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

RE: ULURP Process

Dear Chair Buery Jr.,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on April 16, 2025, the Board unanimously approved the following resolution by a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

> **WHEREAS** ULURP (the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) is the official procedure that New York City uses to review and approve land use and zoning changes; and
>
> **WHEREAS** these changes can include things like rezoning, special permits, site selections for public facilities, and major changes to city maps; and
>
> **WHEREAS** ULURP provides for the inclusion of community voices and elected officials' and city agencies' input which are involved in the decision-making process; and
>
> **WHEREAS** ULURP Applications are reviewed, as follows: Community Board, 60 days, Borough President, 30 days, City Planning Commission, 60 days, City Council, 50 days, and the Mayor, 5 days; and
>
> **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CB8M recommends that the Charter Revision Commission approve a ballot initiative to amend the New York City Charter to ensure that review times for Community Boards and Borough Presidents not be reduced;
>
> **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that as Community Boards do not meet in August, any ULURP applications submitted after July 1st should have Community Board review increased by 60 days.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner
Co-Chairs, Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
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Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager

[redacted]

The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

April 23, 2025

Richard R. Buery Jr., Chair
New York City Charter Revision Commission
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

RE: Elimination of Community Board Term Limits

Dear Chair Buery Jr.,

At the Full Board meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan held on April 16, 2025, the Board approved the following resolution by a vote of 27 in favor, 12 opposed, 3 abstentions, and 0 not voting for cause.

> **WHEREAS** as the result of a recent City Charter revision, the membership on Community Boards is term limited; and
>
> **WHEREAS** long-serving Community Board members often have deep historical knowledge of zoning, development, and community issues that newcomers may lack; and
>
> **WHEREAS** this expertise allows them to more effectively review complex land use proposals and advocate for the community; and
>
> **WHEREAS** without term limits, Boards can maintain a stable leadership structure and avoid frequent turnover, which can disrupt the discussions of ongoing initiatives and stymie long-term planning; and
>
> **WHEREAS** continuity ensures more effective relationships with city agencies, elected officials, and developers; and
>
> **WHEREAS** experienced Board members, having built credibility and relationships over time, are often better equipped to challenge developers or city agencies when needed. Their knowledge of past battles and victories gives them a strategic advantage in dealing with ongoing concerns and long-term debates; and
>
> **WHEREAS** because of resignations and other reasons, vacancies are normally filled by new, inexperienced members; and
>
> **WHEREAS** rather than being term-limited, current members should be evaluated for re-appointment based on their contributions, attendance, community engagement, and knowledge;
>
> **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that CB8M recommends that the City Charter Revision Commission approve a ballot initiative to amend the New York City Charter to eliminate term limits for members of Community Boards, thus keeping effective members and supporting good governance and representation.

Please advise us of any action taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

Valerie S. Mason *Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner*

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Edward Hartzog and Sharon Weiner
Co-Chairs, Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force

cc: Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of New York
Honorable Eric Adams, Mayor of the City of New York
Honorable Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Honorable Jerry Nadler, 12th Congressional District Representative
Honorable Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 28th Senatorial District
Honorable José M. Serrano, NYS Senator, 29th Senatorial District
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Honorable Alex Bores, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Honorable Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member 76th Assembly District
Honorable Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Honorable Julie Menin, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District
Honorable Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member, 8th Council District

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-9267906 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 16:37:04 +0000

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Mark Levine

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: see attached

OFFICE OF THE
MANHATTAN
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

[redacted]
www.manhattanbp.nyc.gov
Mark Levine, Borough President

April 23, 2025
Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine
2025 NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission

Thank you Chair Buery and Members of the 2025 NYC Mayoral Charter Revision Commission for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate the CRC holding hearings specifically on housing and land use to hear about how we can address the most pressing issue facing New Yorkers through the City Charter.

We are in the grip of the worst housing affordability crisis in our City's history. Market rents have skyrocketed to unsustainable levels - $5,368 per month on average, with two-bedrooms often exceeding $6,500 in Manhattan. Nearly half of Manhattan's households are rent burdened. And with vacancy rates at just 1.4% citywide, the main driver of this crisis is clear – we are simply not building enough housing to keep up with demand. Tenants have very few options, especially for affordable housing, where the supply is even more constrained, leading to bidding wars for market-rate apartments, under-cover payments for the few rent stabilized apartments that are available, and applications for NYC Connect affordable housing lotteries vastly outnumbering available income-restricted homes.

The Office of the Manhattan Borough President plays an active role in housing creation and review in Manhattan, and under my leadership, we have made addressing our affordability crisis a top priority. In 2023, my office conducted a full survey of the borough, identifying rezonings and specific sites that together presented the opportunity for 71,000 units of badly needed housing here in Manhattan. We have encouraged community boards to actively prioritize addressing our housing shortage in their communities, and appointed members who agree that our housing crisis needs immediate action. And we have shortened our Uniform Land Use Review Procedure to just five days on any project included in our Housing Manhattanites report, or that is 100% affordable.

But during this work, I have seen the ways in which ULURP and other processes can, in certain situations, add time, cost and delays to badly needed projects – and as a result contribute to sky-high rents boroughwide. On average, the process takes about two to three years and can increase development costs by 11 percent to 16 percent due to the lengthy, multi-step review period. These added expenses are often borne by renters, making housing less accessible.

While we have made some important progress in recent years to mitigate increasing housing costs through initiatives like the Green Fast Track for Housing, state reforms, and passing the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity zoning changes, we must do more to address this crisis head on. The charter revision process is an important opportunity to examine where ULURP and the City Charter is presenting unnecessary barriers to or slowing down building more housing across New York City.

Allow some projects to move through ULURP in an expedited process

Review periods should conclude upon the submission of a recommendation by the relevant community board or borough president, rather than continuing until the maximum time allotted has ended. My office is now regularly making recommendations ahead of schedule in an effort to exemplify our commitment to solving our housing shortage. This change would ensure that once a recommendation is submitted, the process can move forward, allowing projects to advance more quickly. By ending the review period upon submission, we can strike a better balance between local input and the need for timely progress.

Require CPC approval only for certain project types

The Commission should amend ULURP so that applications for street grade changes or possibly even parking requirement waivers require only City Planning Commission approval, rather than undergoing the typical and full ULURP process. Street grade changes can be key for our city's resiliency and planning work, but often go undone due to unnecessarily onerous ULURP requirements. By streamlining these actions, applicants would save money that is passed on to residents under the current system.

In addition to reforming our housing and land use process, there is ample opportunity for this Commission to consider Charter amendments that would improve the function and transparency of our local government. I urge the Commission to take the following actions to ensure the stability of non-profit human services organizations, enhance our local government structures, and make our budgets more democratic and transparent.

Paying nonprofits on time

Human service non-profits provide New Yorkers of all stripes with essential services, including nutritious meals for seniors, health care and mental health services, childcare and afterschool programs, housing and legal services, and more. They must be paid on time. The Commission should consider reforming the City's procurement process by changing appointments to the Procurement Policy Board (PPB), requiring the PPB to create rules mandating that City agencies submit contracts for registration at least 30 days prior to the contract start date. The Commission should also cut down on payment delays by requiring the City to pay 80% of human services invoices soon after the invoice is received. And to ensure structural accountability, the Charter should provide the Mayor's Office of Contractual Services with a clearly defined mandate and responsibilities, similar to the way it lays our responsibilities for the Office of Management and Budget and Office of Operations.

Community Board support

Community Boards are an important piece of our city's local democracy and they must be supported and resourced effectively. But currently, the Charter is unclear about the support that Community Boards should receive and which agencies should provide it. The Charter should more specifically define the types of technical assistance that Borough Presidents' offices and the Civic Engagement Commission are mandated to provide, clarify the role of that the Civic Engagement Commission is meant to play in supporting Community Boards, ensure that the responsible agencies are properly resourced to provide dedicated Community Board support, and require DCAS to support Community Boards with finding accessible and adequate space for Community Board meetings.

Support for Community Education Councils

Community Education Councils provide parents and community member with an essential voice in our city's education policy. Like Community Boards, CECs must be supported effectively. Unfortunately, despite receiving some support from the DOE Division of Family and Community Engagement, CECs are largely on their own when it comes to meeting management, policy development, and community engagement. The Charter should be amended to place responsibility for the management and support of CECs firmly in the hands of the Department of Education so that they receive the resources and support they deserve.

Capital funding for local organizations

Manhattan is proudly home to many of the city's world-renowned academic hospitals and health care facilities, cultural organizations, and entertainment venues that draw New Yorkers from across the state and tourists from around the country and the world and generate significant economic activity. But when assigning funding for Borough Presidents' capital budgets, the Charter's funding formula does not take this impact into account. The Charter should be updated so that the formula for allocating capital funding to the Borough Presidents reflects the high concentration of major cultural and healthcare institutions in Manhattan.

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Paul Selver
Nadir Settles
Wendi Shafran
Ethel Sheffer
Jane Silverman
Brian Smalley
Meenakshi Srinivasan
Mark E. Strauss
David Walsh
Adam Weinstein
Alan H. Wiener
Mark A. Willis
Emily Youssouf
Emeritus
Peter Salins

TESTIMONY TO CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION MANHATTAN HEARING ON HOUSING AND LAND USE, 4/23/25 HOWARD SLATKIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Good evening, Chair Buery and Commissioners. My name is Howard Slatkin, and I am Executive Director of Citizens Housing and Planning Council. I am pleased to testify before you again to build on the testimony I presented to you back in February.

I will summarize here our proposals for changes to the land use review process, including an additional proposal not included in our initial report. I will also touch on the topic of citywide or comprehensive planning.

Proposed Changes to the Land Use Review Process

We have recommended three main sets of changes to the land use process:

1. Adjust ULURP roles to better integrate local perspectives within broader public priorities.
2. Create an avenue to delegate review of small projects to the Borough Presidents.
3. Streamline the review of urgent affordable housing investments.

Specifically, these changes would:

- Provide a procedural check on member deference that would compromise broader city interests or priorities, by allowing a supermajority vote of the

City Planning Commission to override or modify a Council vote on a land use action.

  - This would allow officials with a borough-wide or citywide purview to counterbalance excessive localism.
  - This would replace the current mayoral veto, and notably would empower appointees of the Borough Presidents, whose votes would be necessary to comprise a supermajority

- Give the Council Speaker an appointment to the City Planning Commission.
  - This would provide opportunities for cooperative and coordinated review, rather than the sequential and rivalrous review that occurs today.
- Make Council review of all land use actions optional, rather than mandatory.
  - This would provide an opportunity to complete the process nearly two months faster if the Council is content with the outcome at the CPC.
- For minor applications of strictly local significance, allow the process to conclude with the BP's review, if the Commission declines to call up the BP's decision.
  - This would increase access to the process for small applications that do not raise broader questions of policy.
  - A list of actions eligible for this provision would be defined by the CPC and Council. Could include extension of a commercial overlay, or extension of an existing district boundary. (It would not include actions subject to an EIS.)
- Streamline review of urgent affordable housing investments:
  - Do not require ULURP for disposition of City-owned property for affordable housing development
  - Exempt from ULURP NYCHA campus plans that are undertaken in partnership with residents

[redacted]

- **New item:** Allow the BSA to provide project-specific zoning relief for affordable housing developments in areas where there has been an insufficient supply of affordable housing.
    - BSA would have authority to waive zoning based on findings of programmatic necessity and neighborhood character
    - This would be project-specific relief; it would not change underlying zoning. This proposal is detailed further in the written testimony I am submitting.

On the topic of citywide or comprehensive planning, which has come up in the Charter Revision Commission's hearings, I would like to present some overall perspective.

We should not harbor illusions that complex or challenging decisions can be prefigured in a comprehensive plan. ("These tough choices would be so much easier if only someone had already made them!") Our city and our environment are too dynamic, and there is abundant evidence that decision making needs to be nimble. We should be wary of the impulse for today's officials to attempt to tie the hands of their successors, but instead strive to base decisions in sound facts and clear rationales.

If we want decision makers to advocate for the broader interest, it behooves us to help them – and other participants in public debate – with an articulation of that broader interest, to help ground and explain their decisions. It is extremely valuable to do this before a specific proposal is being considered. This can enable decision makers and project proponents to "tap the sign" rather than have to justify proposals from the ground up.

The goal should not be to pre-make decisions or subject them to multiple layers of procedure, but rather to provide a fact base and narrative that supports coordinated

decision making by multiple parties on an ongoing basis. I'll call this **"comprehensible planning."**

Part of this is to publish regularly authoritative and publicly accessible data on key factors affecting planning decisions, including on population, housing, and development. In addition, it would be beneficial to have the City Planning Commission adopt a set of comprehensible, narrative policy statements to guide land use and capital investment decisions. These would not predetermine decisions but rather guide them, and provide grounds for any supermajority vote to override a Council decision. They would also serve as the basis for the Ten Year Capital Strategy and other documents in the capital budget process.

I will be happy to provide more details about any of these recommendations, and thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

[redacted]

Attachment: Additional Proposal for Charter Revision

Charter waiver of zoning for 100% affordable housing

In addition to the changes proposed in CHPC's *Key Charter Reforms for Housing and Land Use,* the following change is proposed:

Provide relief to facilitate affordable housing developments in areas where zoning is inadequate and there has been an insufficient supply of affordable housing.

- BSA would, by application, have authority to waive zoning regulations to facilitate the development of housing that will be affordable subject to a 30-year regulatory agreement from a City, State, or federal agency, to be owned by an HDFC
- Project-based approval, more like a variance or special permit than a rezoning – does not change the underlying zoning of the area
- Applies within Community Districts where amount of affordable housing built in recent years falls below a "low" threshold
- Findings are limited to programmatic necessity, neighborhood character, in order to support timely review
- HPD would be the applicant for such approvals, and would explain programmatic necessity

Notes:

- Would reside at BSA because of the nature of approval and review
- Differs from a Mayoral zoning override; does not in any way limit the availability of that process to the extent it is available today

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-496338 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 17:55:04 +0000

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Tania Arias

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Dear members of the Commission, I have read the report on the proposed changes to the City Charter and attended your April 23rd hearing on Land Use via Zoom. I hereby present my testimony. After reading the report on the proposed changes to the Land Use process and after listening to hearing, the first image that comes to mind is the one where a machete is being used to perform brain surgery. I was disturbed by the comment from one of the committee members who stated that the communities interfere with the needs of “the City”. The “city” is not a detached entity separate from its communities. In fact, the City is the result and product of these communities. They are one and the same. No one has a better knowledge of the nature and needs of a community than those who comprise it. The imposition of projects within a community without its input is not only detrimental to the community, it is a road to disaster for our beloved city. The actions, or in this case resistance to action, by a handful of recalcitrant community leaders in certain wealthy or politically powerful districts should not be used as the argument for the removal of the ULURP process at the community level. This is akin to banning hammers just because one disturbed individual used it to hit a woman over the head. Hammers are used to

build homes, they are a necessary tool for good. One bad use of it does not void it for others. As you heard last night, the ULURP process is actually the shortest step in a lengthy, and often years long, process. There are many factors that delay the building of affordable housing, not the least of which, is the profit goal of developers. In the great majority of cases, developers have only one goal in mind, their profit, regardless of the impact their proposed project poses to the community. Perhaps it is best to truly understand why some communities oppose these projects which oftentimes screed height, volume and quality of life standards for the community. I, personally, have knowledge that my Community Board has been lobbying for affordable housing for many, many years. We not only ask for it, we encourage and insist on it being a priority. Instead, we were offered SPARK

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-22749 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Thu, 24 Apr 2025 20:43:43 +0000

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Erica Bersin

Email: [redacted]

Phone:

Comments: I'm deeply concerned about any potential changes that could weaken public participation in how development decisions are made in New York City. Public oversight and review processes—through which local communities, community boards, and the City Council are engaged—are critical to ensuring new development is thoughtful, contextual, and aligned with the long-term needs of our neighborhoods. I urge the Commission to preserve meaningful public input and to maintain systems that protect the character, history, and livability of our communities. Thank you

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-3367027 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2025 11:36:17 +0000

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Annie Levers, on behalf of Brad Lander

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: Please see attached.

LANDER
for Mayor

Testimony on Behalf of Brad Lander, New York City Comptroller
& 2025 Mayoral Candidate
Mayor Eric Adams 2025 Charter Revision Commission
Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM
New York Law School

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Annie Levers, I am testifying this evening on behalf of Brad Lander, New York City Comptroller and mayoral candidate. I'd like to thank Chair Richard Buery, the Commissioners, and the Commission staff for convening this hearing.

Over the last several years, Brad Lander has proposed a robust set of charter revision proposals ranging from strengthening the City's fair share laws to modernizing its fiscal framework. Given the Commission's emphasis on land use reforms, my testimony this evening will focus exclusively on proposals for tackling the city's housing crisis.

To boost New York City's housing supply, build political consensus for growth, and ensure that expansion is backed by critical investments in infrastructure, Brad's housing plan proposed detailed revisions to the New York City Charter. These revisions would allow the City to immediately expedite rezonings for increased density while laying the groundwork for a long-term Comprehensive Plan, a best practice that Brad has championed for decades but the City has failed to implement.

These recommendations are aligned with proposals from the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD) and Open New York to make the City's Fair Housing Framework enforceable.

The Charter should be amended to empower the Mayor to declare **a temporary "Housing Emergency"** alongside mechanisms to streamline and fast track new development. Under this framework, the Mayor would convene a "**Citizens Assembly**" to address the housing

affordability and homelessness crisis no less than 100 days after the declaration of the emergency. The Citizens Assembly would be a group of randomly selected, diverse New Yorkers who are unencumbered by the entrenched interests and political dynamics that too often stall out growth.

The Assembly would be required to **develop and adopt** plans for increased density and transit-oriented growth that fulfill the targets and mandates of the City's **Fair Housing Framework.** These plans would provide New Yorkers with more detailed land use and infrastructure visions for their neighborhoods.

The Citizens Assembly plans would be sent for comment to **Community Boards, Borough Presidents, and adoption by the New York City Council,** requiring a two-thirds Council vote to reject the plan altogether.

For rezoning actions that the City Planning Commission determines comply with the Citizens Assembly plans, the Charter should establish **an alternative, streamlined 90-day ULURP review and public comment period**, cutting the ULURP clock from roughly 7 months to 90 days. Rezoning actions that comply with the Citizens Assembly Plan would not be subject to Council review or approval.

To supplant the emergency process, the Charter should be amended to **require the development of a Comprehensive Plan within two years** of the start of the Housing Emergency declaration. With the adopted Comprehensive Plan in place, the Charter should **make permanent the streamlined 90-day ULURP review and public comment period** for any rezoning actions that comply with the comprehensive plan.

Additionally, I strongly encourage the Commission to **put the original City of Yes proposal on the ballot to New Yorkers** to deliver the additional 20,000 units that were lost after negotiations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening. I've attached more details on these proposals in Appendix A, below. I would be happy to meet with Charter staff and Commissioners to explore these proposals further and answer any questions that you have. Thank you.

Appendix A: Detailed Charter Revision Proposals

The Charter should be amended to empower the Mayor to declare **a temporary "Housing Emergency"** alongside mechanisms to streamline and fast track new development and a requirement to develop a long-term comprehensive plan.

- The Mayor would be required to convene a "**Citizens Assembly**" for increased housing supply to add 500,000 housing units over ten years to address housing affordability and homelessness no less than 100 days after the declaration of the temporary Housing Emergency for New York City.
- The Assembly will be **randomly selected** (in line with best practices for successful Citizens Assemblies) to reflect New York City's rich diversity in race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geography, age, gender, ability, and more. The Charter-mandated responsibilities of the Assembly would include:
    - **Reviewing independent studies** on demographics, economics, infrastructure (including state of repair and capacity), housing, land use, sustainability, resilience, and environmental factors from the past and upcoming 10 years.
    - **Evaluating "access to opportunity" and "displacement risk"** by overlaying education, economic, transit, civic infrastructure, and health data on indicators of vulnerability.
    - **Developing and adopting, by majority vote,** plans for increased density and transit-oriented growth that fulfill the targets and mandates of the City's Fair Housing Framework, enhance access to opportunity, and minimize climate and displacement risks. These plans would be required by the Charter to include guidelines for housing affordability, tenant protections, job creation (with labor standards and local hire requirements), climate and open space commitments, critical infrastructure investments, and necessary city services.
- To build consensus and a shared vision for growth, the Charter should require the approved Citizens Assembly plan to be sent for comment to **Community Boards, Borough Presidents, and adoption by the New York City Council.** The Charter should require a two-thirds Council vote to reject the plan altogether.

Once adopted by the Assembly and the New York City Council, these Citizens Assembly plans should be used to **streamline & expedite the City's ULURP to make it easier to build**. The Charter should be amended to require the following during the declared housing emergency:

- At ULURP Certification, the **City Planning Commission (CPC) would be required to make a determination on the application's compliance** with the Citizens Assembly plan. For plans that do not comply, rezoning applications would go through ULURP as it currently exists.
- For rezoning actions that CPC determines comply with the Citizens Assembly plans, the Charter should establish **an alternative, streamlined 90-day ULURP review and public comment period** for rezoning actions deemed by the CPC to be in conformance with adopted plans for housing growth, cutting the ULURP clock from roughly 7 months to 90 days. During the 90-day review period, the CPC would take comments from members of the public, Community Boards, Borough Presidents and City Council

members. Rezoning actions that comply with the Citizens Assembly Plan (or once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan), would not be subject to Council review or approval.

To supplant the emergency process, the Charter should be amended to **require the development of a Comprehensive Plan within two years** of the start of the Housing Emergency declaration. The Charter would require the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Align the City's capital and land use planning by establishing **a regular, 10-year comprehensive planning cycle** tailored to New York City's unique history and geography. The Charter-mandated comprehensive plan would be designed in line with the New York City Council's recommendations and accompanying legislation. The Charter would require adoption of the Comprehensive Plan by the New York City Council. Once adopted, the Housing Emergency would be lifted.
- With the adopted Comprehensive Plan in place, the Charter should be amended to **make permanent the above streamlined 90-day ULURP review and public comment period:** At ULURP certification, the CPC would be required to make its compliance determination. Rezoning applications that comply with the comprehensive plan would be subject to a streamlined 90-day open comment period and would not require Council approval.

These Charter revisions would build a shared vision for housing growth that complies with the City's Fair Housing Framework, streamline and expedite development in line with those plans, and lay the groundwork for true, citywide comprehensive planning.

Additionally, I strongly encourage the Commission to **put the original City of Yes proposal on the ballot to New Yorkers** to deliver the additional 20,000 units that were lost as the result of negotiations that weakened the proposal. These Charter amendments would:

- **Completely eliminate parking minimum requirements** citywide, enabling developers to choose whether or not they want to build the spaces moving forward (rather than being required to build parking space by law).
- **Legalize the building of small accessory dwelling units**, such as garage and basement conversions and backyard "cottages" or tiny houses, citywide (with the exception of neighborhoods and units at severe risk of flooding).
- **Re-legalize two and four story housing above storefronts on commercial streets** in low-density areas, including areas that are mostly developed with one- and two-family homes.
- **Allow the construction of three- to five-story apartment buildings within a half a mile of subway or rail stations**, including single-family districts.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1636880 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2025 16:09:11 +0000

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by [redacted] on Friday, April 25, 2025, at 12:08:46 PM

This form resides at
hxxxs://www[.]nyc[.]gov/site/charter/contact/contact-charter[.]page

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Benjamin Kallos

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: See attached testimony from April 23, 2025 hearing.

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

2025 Charter Revision Commission
Manhattan Public Input Session on Housing and Land Use
Wednesday, April 23, 2025

3-Minute Testimony & Executive Summary

Distinguished members of the Charter Revision Commission, thank you for your individual service to the people of this great city, for the partnership I had with many of you when I served in the Council, and for your service on this Charter Revision Commission.

Through Charter Revision, we've been able to empower voters to adopt big bold changes that could not have been accomplished any other way. Following one Charter Revision where I testified, the voters adopted the 8 to 1 public match that paved the way for the full public matching system I authored and allows anyone to run for office on small dollars.

I have prepared a three-minute summary of detailed testimony which I welcome an opportunity to discuss further with Commissioners and staff. I am proposing 18 amendments to the Charter along six main themes which can be taken together as three ballot proposal, for which I have provided draft language.

The first theme is to "Increase Housing Supply":

1. **Vacancy Tax** - Let's get 20,000 apartments previously used for short-term rental back on the market by expanding a law I authored to register every multi-family housing unit and tax the vacant units.
2. **Renovate and Repair Rent Regulated Apartments** – Let's get 90,000 rent regulated apartments back on the market by overhauling Unlocking Doors with $100,000 per unit.
3. **Use Market Rate Housing to House the Homeless** – It costs the city $8,000 a month to shelter a family. I proposed with Fred Shack that we use this money buy market rate apartments for homeless families in every community, including the Upper East Side, this would be less expensive and permanently affordable housing.
4. **Stop Predatory Equity from Buying of the Housing for Families**

The second theme is "Delivery Affordable Housing for More New Yorkers":

5. **Set Median Income for Affordable Housing to Census Blocks Instead of Area Median Income** - The Median Household Income in the East Harlem Neighborhood Tabulation Area which I represented is $39,490, while under the Area Median Income for an individual earning $179,355 qualifies for affordable housing, let use the number from the Census Block.
6. **Replace Rent Regulated Housing Torn Down to Make Way for New Mixed-Income Buildings** – The math is simple, when a developer tears down 4 brownstones with 80 units of affordable rent regulated housing, they need to replace it before getting subsidies.
7. **Count the Number of People Getting Affordable Housing, Not the Units** – Our city needs more housing for families, not studios and one-bedrooms, lets count people.
8. **Require Market Rate Buildings to Include Units for Families** – The unregulated real estate industry has built studios and 1-bedrooms to the exclusion of 2- and 3-bedroom apartments, building apartments for families must become a mandate.

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

Third, "Build More Housing Now"
9. **Rezonings Must Have Expiration Dates and Cannot Linger for Generations** – The Con Ed rezoning was nearly 20 years ago, it's still an empty lot. The Blood Center approved 4 years ago moved their headquarters to Westchester and will never get built.
10. **Modernize Building Plans with Automated Review** – Building plans and permits can take months, even years, and automated review would be more accurate and speed up development.

Fourth, "**Empower Communities and Homeowners"**
10. **Empower Communities to Lead Upzoning for Density and Affordability** – Fund community urban planners and land use experts to file ULURP applications on behalf of Community Boards.
11. **Fund Homeowners Seeking to Convert Single-Family to Multi-Family Homes to Overcome Exclusionary Zoning and Democratize Rental Unit Ownership**

Fifth, Make Affordable Housing and Our City More Accessible, proposals 12 – 16 are to add elevators to new and existing affordable housing, subways, and make it easier to downsize.

Sixth, "**Incentivize Building City Infrastructure as Part of New Development"**
17. **Build More Schools with a Bonus for Developers**
18. **Build More Beds for Formerly Homeless Families with As of Right Bonus**

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

I. **Increase Housing Supply**

1. **Increase Supply Today by Forcing Every Housing Unit Back on the Market -** Expand Housing Registration and Implement a Vacancy Tax
2. **Get 90,000 Rent Regulated Apartments Back on the Market -** Provide Funding for Owners of Rent Regulated Housing for Necessary Renovations and Repairs
3. **Use Existing Market Rate Housing to Meet Affordable Housing Needs Now** – Purchase Housing Languishing on the Open Market for Conversion to Affordable Housing Now
4. **Housing for Humans, Not Predatory Equity –** Restrict Hedge Funds from Buying Housing

II. **Deliver Affordable Housing for More New Yorkers**

5. **Make New "Affordable Housing" Actually Affordable Where It Is Built** – Require Housing at or Below the Median Incomes from Census Blocks Versus Area
6. **Developers Must Replace Affordable Housing They've Torn Down Before Getting Subsidies for "New Units"** - Only Subsidized Net-New Units
7. **Count Affordable Housing for New Yorkers and Families Instead of Units to End the Race to Build More Studios** - Require Affordable Housing to Include More Units for Families
8. **Build a City That is Affordable for Families, Not Just Young Urban Professionals** - Require All New Housing to Include More Units for Families

III. **Build More Housing Now**

9. **Rezonings Must Have Expiration Dates and Cannot Linger for Generations** - Require Developers to Act within 5-years of a Rezoning
10. **Cut Red Tape That Delay Building New Housing** – Digital Submission of Building Plans with Automated Review

IV. **Empower Communities and Homeowners**

11. **Empower Communities to Lead Upzoning for Density and Affordability** – Fund community urban planners and land use experts to file ULURP applications on behalf of Community Boards
12. **Fund Homeowners Seeking to Convert Single-Family to Multi-Family Homes to Overcome Exclusionary Zoning and Democratize Rental Unit Ownership**

V. **Make Affordable Housing and Our City More Accessible**

13. **Make All New Affordable Housing Accessible** - Require Elevators in All New Affordable Housing
14. **Allow Owners of Affordable Housing to Add Elevators** – Provide Waivers to Allow Addition of Elevators to Existing Buildings with Affordable Housing
15. **Make It Easier for Seniors and Disabled to Move to Downsize or Move to Ground Floor Apartments**
16. **Make Our Subways Accessible** - Force Developers Over Subway Stations to Build Elevators

VI. **Incentivize Building City Infrastructure as Part of New Development**

17. Build More Schools with a Bonus for Developers
18. Build More Beds for Formerly Homeless Families with As of Right Bonus

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

DRAFT BALLOT PROPOSALS

Ballot Question #1 – Increase Housing Supply

This proposal would amend the City Charter to:

Force landlords of multi-family buildings to register every apartment and pay a vacancy tax on homes kept off the market for 6-months.

Keep hedge funds out of the housing market by making them wait 180-days to make offers and once owned pay annual real estate taxes at 50% of purchase price indexed for inflation.

Provide permanent home ownership for homeless families by providing a downpayment together with allowance to use City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement to pay for mortgage and home ownership expenses.

Help owners of rent regulated affordable housing renovate apartments in need of repair with grants, low-interest loans, and tax abatements in exchange for regulatory agreements guaranteeing 40 or more years of affordability.

Shall this proposal be adopted?

Ballot Question #2 – Deliver More Affordable Housing Now

This proposal would amend the City Charter to:

Only allow affordable housing subsidies for units for incomes at or below the median income for a Neighborhood Tabulation Area instead of the broader tri-state Area.

When existing rent regulated affordable housing must be torn down to build new affordable housing, require developers to replace those units, and only provide subsidies for new affordable housing.

Build more housing for families by requiring half of all units in market rate and affordable housing developments to have 2, 3, or 4 bedrooms as may be further determined by the city.

Immediately move on new rezonings by requiring private applications to finish development within 5-years of approval.

Build faster by requiring digital submission of plans to the city for automatic review and adoption of a performance-based building code.

Shall this proposal be adopted?

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

Ballot Question #3 – Empower Communities and Homeowners in Planning a More Affordable Accessible City

This proposal would amend the City Charter to:

Provide expert support and funding from the city for Community Board and community organizations in every neighborhood to propose new plans to increase density that must be acted on by the City Planning Commission.

Fund and provide technical assistance to homeowners seeking to add housing on their property with an accessory dwelling unit or building a multi-family building within 3-years of a upzoning.

Make affordable housing and public transit accessible by requiring elevators in all new housing and preservation projects over 2-stories and in any development over a public transit station.

Provide a preference for residents of affordable housing in the city to downsize to smaller units or to transfer from inaccessible units to accessible units of the same or smaller size.

Provide an as of right bonus for developers who include a public school or affordable housing or shelters for homeless in districts without sufficient seats or services.

Shall this proposal be adopted?

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

DETAILED PROPOSALS

I. Increase Housing Supply

1. **Increase Supply Today by Forcing Every Housing Unit Back on the Market -** Expand Housing Registration and Implement a Vacancy Tax

New York City will never be able to build our way out of our affordable housing crisis until every unit that has been built or will be built is actually on the market. The Commission can expand Local Law 64 that I authored to expand registration of affordable housing to include every unit of multi-family housing. As part of this registration, landlords are already required to share existing rents and vacancy status. With the exception of units under renovation or on the market for less than 6-months, landlords would pay a tax equivalent to the price they are seeking for the unit into a fund to pay for new affordable housing. Following implementation of the law I authored to require registration of short-term rentals, I was angry to learn from Skift, that bad actors have refused to put some 20,000 homes back on the market as rentals. A Vacancy Tax might be just what we need to force 20,000 units back on the market. Vacancy taxes have been implemented with success in Vancouver and recently enacted in San Francisco, Berkley, and Tahoe. This Commission should let the people vote to punish bad landlords with a Vacancy Tax to force housing back on the market at affordable rates.

2. **Get 90,000 Rent Regulated Apartments Back on the Market -** Provide Funding for Owners of Rent Regulated Housing for Necessary Renovations and Repairs

More than 88,830 rent regulated apartments are laying vacant according to estimates. These homes sit there vacant as 31,729 children woke up in a shelter today, together with their 27,432 parents. The vast majority of our city's homeless populations are and have always been some 18,253 families who make up 59,161 people in our shelters. With the elimination of a loophole allowing landlords to raise rent regulated rents with Major Capital Improvements (MCI) many say they can't afford to renovate units in order to make them habitable for new tenants. The city must overhaul the failed Unlocking Doors pilot launched under Mayor Eric Adams by increasing funding from $25,000 to up to $100,000 per unit tied to the actual costs of renovations. The overhaul could restructure funds as low-interest loans together with regulatory agreements with forgiveness for renewal. It is of note that subsidies for affordable housing can be as much as $1 million per unit and this $100,000 figure, even when indexed for inflation will be a bargain for taxpayers. Whether it is through Unlocking Doors, or another vehicle, something must be done to get these 90,000 rent regulated and affordable homes back on the market. I urge the Commission, to place language in the Charter mandating HPD move forward with funding to cover the cost of necessary renovations and repairs in rent regulated housing in exchange for regulatory agreements guaranteeing 40- to 99-years of affordable housing.

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

3. **Use Existing Market Rate Housing to Meet Affordable Housing Needs Now** – Purchase Housing Languishing on the Open Market for Conversion to Affordable Housing Now

31,729 children woke up in a shelter today, together with their 27,432 parents. The vast majority of our city's homeless populations are and have always been some 18,253 families who make up 59,161 people in our shelters. I previously joined Fred Shack, CEO of Urban Pathways to propose buying vacant apartments to house the homeless. In 2021, there were some 4,600 homes with 2 or more bedrooms on the open market. Even at the heft price of a million dollars in the wealthiest and whitest of neighborhoods, purchasing would still be far less expensive than the $6,000 a month the city spent on shelters. As of the most recent Mayor's Management Report, family shelter facilities cost $270.51 per day or more than $8,000 a month and housing prices have come down. The Commission should let voters decide on a fund to connect working families living in shelters with housing with the money they need to buy a home where they can cover maintenance and taxes moving forward.

4. **Housing for Humans, Not Predatory Equity –** Restrict Hedge Funds from Buying Housing

Private equity firms like Carlyle, bought up more than 150 buildings, with clusters in Bushwick and Bedford-Stuyvesant, according to the New York Times, who touted "A Private Equity Firm Might Be Your Next Landlord." Families and first time home buyers shouldn't have to compete with private equity and whether this Commission models a solution on Governor Hochul's proposal to force private-equity to wait 75-days or a local version of Senator Liz Krueger's End Hedge Fund Control of New York Homes Act to tax hedge funds at 50% of fair market value, something must be done. The Commission should offer a Charter amendment that lets voters stick it to hedge funds as they take back their neighborhoods.

II. Deliver Affordable Housing for More New Yorkers

5. **Make New "Affordable Housing" Actually Affordable Where It Is Built** – Require Housing at or Below the Median Incomes from Census Blocks Versus Area

New York City affordable housing regulators have the ability to set affordability for any incomes under state and federal limits, which are as high as 165% and 250%. Under these limits a single person can qualify for so called "affordable housing" at 165% if they earn under $179,355 or at 250% if they earn $271,750. Rents for a one-bedroom at 165% would be $4,805 a month and at 250% it would be $7,280. If you don't believe me you can see for yourself from HPD. In contrast the Median Household Income for the East Harlem Neighborhood Tabulation Area is $39,490, according to City Planning's Population MapViewer. This Committee should amend the Charter to restrict the city from subsidizing housing that exceeds median household income for the census block.

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

6. **Developers Must Replace Affordable Housing They've Torn Down Before Getting Subsidies for "New Units"** - Only Subsidized Net-New Units

During my term in the City Council, the Upper East Side had more housing starts than most any other district, however, we still had a net loss of housing according to City Planning. That's because New York City and Manhattan in particular has very few vacant lots. That means every 20-story high-rise that went up needed to displace at least four or more brownstone walk ups with as many as 20 rent regulated affordable homes with rents often below $2,000, totaling a loss of 80 units. However, new buildings often had larger, luxury condominium units that were far from affordable starting at a million dollars or more. Even if the new building somehow built 80 units, with 20% set aside for affordable housing, that's only 16 units, tied to the New York City Area Median Income with so called "affordable rents" as high as $4,483 for a studio. Before a real estate developer receives a zoning bonus, tax abatement, low-interest loan, or other subsidy for affordable housing, they should be required to replace the rent regulated units they've displaced in their new construction.

7. **Count Affordable Housing for New Yorkers and Families Instead of Units to End the Race to Build More Studios** - Require Affordable Housing to Include More Units for Families

Mayor de Blasio promised to build or preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing, then upped the number to 300,000. Mayor Adams promised to build or preserve 100,000. Even the HPD's affordable housing tracker only tracks units and only counts 275,759 since 2014. This has led to a focus on studios and one-bedrooms, to the exclusion of families. It is time to prioritize building more 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom affordable homes for families. These additional rooms, cost little more to build, while offering to house a multiplier of residents. This Commission should require the City to track the number of each sized unit and count the actual of number of families and people in those families who actually get affordable housing.

8. **Build a City That is Affordable for Families, Not Just Young Urban Professionals** - Require All New Housing to Include More Units for Families

Families are being forced out of the city because they can't find an affordable place to live with children. A couple in New York City is fine to share a studio or one-bedroom. But once you add children to the mix, making a studio or one-bedroom work can be challenging, especially as children grow. Existing and new construction continues to produce studios and one-bedrooms, making two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments scarce. In my district on the Upper East Side, one of the leading losses of housing was from families combining apartments to accommodate growing families. Where a solely profit driven real estate sector will continue to fail to meet this need, this Commission must require all new development projects to include sufficient 2- and 3-bedroom units to accommodate the need for families with room for the 1.6 million children who make up 20% of our city.

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

III. Build More Housing Now

9. **Rezonings Must Have Expiration Dates and Cannot Linger for Generations** - Require Developers to Act within 5-years of a Rezoning

The Con Ed rezoning between First Avenue and the FDR and 38th and 41st Streets has been sitting empty for more nearly two-decades since the rezoning was approved in the 2000s. In my district, the Blood Center Rezoning heralded as a project to help our city recover from the pandemic passed in 2021, only for the Blood Center to move its headquarters from the UES to Westchester, with no plans to move forward on a site that has now been converted from residential housing to what would be a valuable commercial parcel. One thing is clear, in a litany of these cases, the community and city never got what was promised. That's why the Commission must amend ULURP in the Charter with a strict 5-year timeline for site-specific rezonings to break ground, get built, and deliver on their community benefits or see the changes revert back for the city and community to negotiate for what may be very different needs 5-years later.

10. **Cut Red Tape That Delay Building New Housing** – Digital Submission of Building Plans with Automated Review

Delays in permits stall projects and drive unnecessary costs. Adopting a strict timeline for permitting systems supported by expert automated review (whether or not it is bolstered by AI) could speed new housing construction. Similarly, new construction materials promise more efficient and lower cost options for new housing but are thwarted by overly proscriptive building codes which should be replaced by a performance-based code. The Commission should require the Department of Buildings to use automated tools to speed construction and renovations as well as adopting a performance-based code.

IV. Empower Communities and Homeowners

11. Empower Communities to Lead Upzoning for Density and Affordability – Fund urban planners and land use experts to file ULURP applications on behalf of Community Boards

When Speaker Melissa Mark Viverito supported a community-led upzoning of East Harlem, City Planning refused to act on it. In Sutton Place in my district, we were able to raise the money to bring our own application, a version of which was adopted. I proposed as Chair of the Governmental Operations Committee, that this Commission mandate urban planners who work for the community boards and require that the Department of City Planning have to act on upzonings proposed by Community Boards seeking to do their part to add affordable housing to our city.

12. Fund Homeowners Seeking to Convert Single-Family to Multi-Family Homes to Overcome Exclusionary Zoning and Democratize Rental Unit Ownership

The worst part about an upzoning is that the only way for residents living in the neighborhood to benefit is by selling their home to a developer and leaving the community they called home. The city could win support from homeowners who typically oppose upzoning by offering to make them landlords with their own rental income. Homeowners could be offered subsidies, technical assistance, and paired with reputable contractors for them to add accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or replace their single-family homes with multi-family buildings that include permanently affordable rental housing. The Commission should offer voters the opportunity to create this fund to overcome exclusionary zoning and democratize rental unit ownership.

VI. Make Affordable Housing and Our City More Accessible

13. Make All New Affordable Housing Accessible - Require Elevators in All New Affordable Housing

As Chair of the City Council's Land Use Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions, I was stunned to learn that on the construction of new affordable housing projects built on city land that was given away for free with hundreds of thousands of dollars in subsidies per unit, buildings were not accessible, apart from less than a handful of ground floor units. The Commission must require that all new multi-family multi-story affordable housing projects be 100% accessible.

14. Allow Owners of Affordable Housing to Add Elevators – Provide Waivers to Allow Addition of Elevators to Existing Buildings with Affordable Housing

As Chair of the City Council's Land Use Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions, I was disappointed when multi-million-dollar investments in preserving affordable housing did not include accessibility improvements due to restrictions that made adding elevators difficult. This Commission should empower the Board of Standards and Appeals to offer relief form city laws and regulations for affordable housing projects to add elevators and other accessibility improvements.

15. Make It Easier for Seniors and Disabled to Move to Downsize or Move to Ground Floor Apartments

As we age our families change. From single, to a couple, to raising a family, to empty nesters, to grandparents, and sometimes, single once more. However affordable housing can become like a pair of golden handcuffs keeping New Yorkers in apartments that may not meet their needs whether under housed or over housed or experiencing a mobility disability trapped on the fifth floor of a walk up. This Commission should provide a preference for residents of existing affordable housing who are downsizing or transferring to accessible units, this would free up larger units for families, and free New Yorkers free.

Benjamin J. Kallos, Esq
Former N.Y.C. Council Member

16. Make Our Subways Accessible - Force Developers Over Subway Stations to Build Elevators

New buildings are going up over existing inaccessibly subway stations without adding elevators. The Commission should require any development over a subway station to add elevators to all levels of inaccessible stations.

VII. **Incentivize Building City Infrastructure as Part of New Development**

17. Build More Schools with a Bonus for Developers

We do not have enough school seats to meet existing needs let alone capacity for the expansion of 3K and one day universal childcare. In my district, I have offered developers broad support to provide additional height, square footage, or direct funding from the city to build schools. We found success with a new pre-kindergarten center in a new development on 95th and 3rd Street which now also serves 3K. This offer should be formalized by the Commission for any new projects in districts where the Department of Education Blue Book indicates need for school seats.

18. Build More Beds for Formerly Homeless Families with As of Right Bonuses

As Council Member, I led the Eastside Taskforce for Homeless Outreach and Services (ETHOS), a coalition of elected officials such as Senator Liz Krueger and then-Borough President Gale Brewer, faith, and non-profit leaders who were YIMBY for new shelters, new housing for formerly homeless, and services for the homeless. Together we welcomed housing for formerly homeless women and children across the street from the elementary school my daughter now attends with these children. We also supported a new shelter on 91st Street down the block from my daughter's elementary school supported near unanimously by Community Board 8 Manhattan. Even with the track record of the coalition I led, when I proposed multiple-sites to upzone to provide for shelters and supportive housing, then Mayor de Blasio's administration refused to move forward with any of the sites. We need more shelters, housing for homeless, and services for those in poverty in every neighborhood including the Upper East Side. Developers should have as of right bonuses and incentives for building housing for the homeless, shelters, and services in underutilized Community Districts.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Shiela Rodriguez [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2025 19:18:14 +0000

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I've been turned away at the polls because I'm registered independent. I didn't realize at the time that independents couldn't vote in the primaries and I felt excluded.

It is too hard to vote in New York City, and voter turnout does not reflect the city as a whole. Open primaries address this by fixing one of the major impediments to voting and empowering a million New Yorkers to participate in the most competitive and consequential elections. Reducing the number of non-competitive elections will incentivize more people to participate in the democratic process.

Addressing our abysmal voter turnout rates should be a key priority of the Charter Revision Commission. I hope that the city does not miss this opportunity to ensure that we have competitive elections in which all registered voters can participate. This will mean that New York City has a healthier and more robust democracy than ever before.

Shiela Rodriguez

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Yvonne Lee [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2025 19:18:34 +0000

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I've been registered independent since 1994. If there's one thing my mother taught me, it was about political amnesia, how politicians will promise you the moon while they're running, and then forget about it once they're elected.

Like many New Yorkers, I have spent much of my life being unable to vote in competitive elections. Too often, the winning candidate is a foregone conclusion by the time of the general election. New Yorkers like me find themselves locked out of the races where the winning candidate is chosen simply because we do not choose to or want to belong to a political party.

By opening this system, many New Yorkers will be newly enfranchised and will vote in far greater numbers. It is my hope that the Commission will not miss this opportunity to allow many New Yorkers of all political stripes to fully participate in our democratic process.

Yvonne Lee

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Michael McCann [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2025 19:18:57 +0000

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I have been forced throughout my life to enroll in a political party if I want my vote to matter. Neither of the two largest parties reflects my values and beliefs. I am excited to be supporting open primaries. This change will mean that I am no longer forced to make a choice that does not reflect my values.

Being able to vote in an open primary would mean that I could choose and rank the candidates who best reflect my values, regardless of their affiliation with a political party. Moving to this system will not only open primary elections to a larger electorate but also help diversify the kinds of opinions and candidates appearing on the ballot.

Michael McCann

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Support Open Primaries

From: Yvonne Murray [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2025 19:19:42 +0000

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I have been a lifelong resident of Brooklyn and a longtime political activist. I was once a Democrat, but have been an independent for a long time. I left the Democratic party deeply disappointed with how they did business. I have often worked as a poll worker and always found it outrageous to see independents mislead or turned away from the polls on primary day. Every voter needs to be able to vote in every tax payer funded election. It is overdue for our primaries to change. It is too hard to vote in New York City, and voter turnout does not reflect the city as a whole. Open primaries address this by fixing a major impediment to voting and empowering a million New Yorkers to participate in the most competitive and consequential elections.

The Commission has the opportunity to put this issue before New Yorkers this fall. Please don't miss this chance to create a more democratic election process and a healthier and more robust civic life than ever before.

Yvonne Murray

[redacted]

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] NYSAFAH Testimony - Manhattan

From: Lorrie Pizzola [redacted]

To: "CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov" <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>

Date: Fri, 25 Apr 2025 20:02:37 +0000

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Attached please find written testimony by Jolie Milstein, President and CEO of the NYS Association for Affordable Housing in response to the CRC's Manhattan Public Input Session on Housing and Land Use.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment. We remain available for any questions or follow up.

Lorrie L. Pizzola
Director of Policy
[redacted]

[redacted]

NYSAFAH Testimony
New York City Charter Revision Commission
Manhattan Public Input Session on Housing and Land Use
April 23, 2025

My name is Jolie Milstein, I am the President and CEO of the New York State Association for Affordable Housing (NYSAFAH), the trade association representing the developers and professionals who are building and preserving affordable housing across New York City and State.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony on how the City Charter can be reformed to better address the housing crisis facing millions of New Yorkers. The land use process must evolve to meet the urgency of this moment, and we believe the Commission has a critical role to play in ensuring that our system is more responsive, more equitable, and more effective in supporting the production of affordable housing.

We extend our thanks to the Charter Revision Commission and its staff for their dedicated work in this regard.

RECALIBRATE THE ULURP PROCESS

The Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) was created to provide transparency and consistency in how land use decisions are made. However, over the past three decades, the process has often served to amplify narrow opposition rather than balance local perspectives with citywide needs, particularly when it comes to housing.

Too often, affordable housing proposals are blocked or diluted due to the practice of "member deference," where individual Council Members wield de facto veto power over land use actions in their districts. This custom has delayed or halted countless projects that align with citywide needs but provoked local resistance. Such local resistance may not be widely held within the community, as we know that affordable housing is a universal need, but a rather a small, vocal and organized opposition is still able to taint the process. ULURP roles must be adjusted to better Integrate local perspectives within broader public priorities

The New York Citizens Housing and Planning Council's *Elephant in the Room: How ULURP's Skewed Political Incentives Prevent Housing* report issued in February of 2025 reminds us that today's ULURP process was shaped by decisions made in the early 1990s that, while well-intentioned, have contributed to the scarcity and inequitable distribution of housing across the five boroughs. The report documents how the current process gives significant weight to local

opposition while underemphasizing the urgent, citywide imperative to build more affordable housing. This is an imbalanced process that is weighted against affordable housing, particularly in neighborhoods with political power and well-resourced opposition who may not even represent the range of voices in the community.

We recommend recalibrating ULURP's decision-making framework to ensure that local perspectives are heard, including both opposition and support, but also situated within a broader understanding of the city's housing crisis. Charter reform should embed equity and affordability as explicit priorities in land use decisions. As such we support reforms that would:

- Empower the City Planning Commission (CPC) to override or modify City Council votes with a supermajority.
- Replace the current Mayoral veto with a more collaborative and transparent line-item modification authority.
- Grant the Council Speaker a seat on the CPC, ensuring a citywide perspective is embedded earlier in the process.
- Make Council review optional rather than mandatory, saving time when Council is satisfied with the CPC outcome.

These changes would preserve local input while rebalancing power among citywide elected officials, creating a framework that promotes cooperative governance over political stalemates.

STREAMLINE PROCESS FOR LOW-IMPACT & SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS

Affordable housing developers frequently encounter delays on small, non-controversial projects that nonetheless require full ULURP review.

We propose that the Charter create a mechanism allowing certain low-impact or small-scale land use proposals to be delegated to the Borough Presidents for review and approval. These could include modest rezoning actions or infill developments that do not materially alter neighborhood character, impose infrastructure burdens or require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). CPC would still reserve the right to review projects if warranted.

This would reduce costs and time for small-scale developers, while maintaining city oversight. Delegation would reduce bottlenecks, free up citywide planning resources for larger strategic efforts, and give Borough Presidents more flexible tools to support housing and community development initiatives aligned with local needs.

FAST TRACK URGENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS

As we work together to solve our city's affordable housing crisis, we must look for ways to remove unnecessary barriers to affordable housing production.

We urge the Commission to recommend a new "fast track" pathway for affordable housing projects that do not raise complex land use issues, such as the disposition of City-owned land that requires no zoning changes. These projects often face needless delays due to bureaucratic overlaps or redundant review steps.

At a time when the housing crisis is deepening and shelter populations are growing, the City must act decisively to accelerate affordable housing production. Streamlining reviews for qualified affordable housing projects will not only speed up delivery but also reduce public costs and administrative burdens.

PROJECT SPECIFIC ZONING RELIEF

We strongly support granting the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) the authority to provide project-specific zoning relief for affordable housing developments in areas where there has been an insufficient supply of affordable homes. Under this proposal, the BSA would be empowered to waive certain zoning requirements based on clear findings of programmatic necessity and compatibility with neighborhood character. It is important to note that this relief would be specific to individual projects and would not alter the underlying zoning regulations. We believe this targeted flexibility is essential to advancing affordable housing in high-need areas.

THE TIME IS NOW

We are at an inflection point. The land use process created 30 years ago is no longer fit for today's housing challenges. As the *Elephant in the Room*: *How ULURP's Skewed Political Incentives Prevent Housing* report makes clear, reform is long overdue. By realigning ULURP to balance local and citywide priorities, empowering Borough Presidents with new tools, and creating pathways for faster affordable housing development, the Commission can help ensure that every community does its part to meet our shared housing responsibilities.

NYSAFAH stands ready to work with you to make these reforms a reality. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony.

Contact: Jolie Milstein, NYSAFAH President/CEO, at [redacted] or [redacted].

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-116073 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

From: agencymail [redacted]

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Date: Sat, 26 Apr 2025 18:09:12 +0000

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Mary Loftus

Email:

Phone:

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-1370766 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Margaret McCarthy

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as important parts of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

City of New York - Correspondence #1-1-7233249 CRC Contact Form - Submit Written Testimony

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Topic: Submit Written Testimony

Name: Nicole Swartzentruber

Email: [redacted]

Phone: [redacted]

Comments: I strongly oppose efforts to deregulate development in New York City, or to remove common-sense regulations and oversight which ensure that environmental and other impacts of new development are adequately considered. I urge the Commission not to seek to strip away necessary checks and balances on the development process in our city, and ensure that neighborhood character and historic resources continue to be considered as part of the evaluation of appropriate new development in our neighborhoods.

Subject:

[EXTERNAL] Written Testimony for Manhattan Public Input Session on Housing and Land Use

From: Nicholas [redacted]

To: CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2025 03:25:56 -0400

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To the Charter Revision Commission,

Hello, I am Nick, a resident of Long Island City. I am loosely affiliated with Open New York but otherwise a member of the general public. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide this written testimony.

As you all know, the city is experiencing a historic housing shortage. Despite an incredible demand for housing, it's clear our government needs to swiftly act to remove these barriers to housing. While the recent City of Yes and City for All plans were important, they still fall very short of what's necessary to even keep NYC rents from rising even more.

Personally, the biggest problems I see are:
1) The tedious and exhausting ULURP public engagement process. These Community Board meetings are incredibly unproductive and generally unrepresentative of the public for which housing projects are for. Those who most need housing built, those who are working all day, 40+ hours to meet their rent are not the ones who are able to attend these community board meetings and input sessions. One way this could be improved is to combine the CB and BP reviews, which reduces the total overhead to attend these engagements, and finding better ways to engage the public (such as tabling sessions).

2) Some neighborhoods produce almost no housing, which unfairly burdens other neighborhoods. We should provide a fast track option to advance housing in resources that are in well resourced areas. Most importantly, council members representing these low-growth neighborhoods would not be able to simply block all new housing.

Thank you,
Nick Leung

Subject:

Written Testimony MN CB 6 April 23 2025

From: "Berkovitz, Casey" [redacted]

To: Charter Testimony <CharterTestimony@citycharter.nyc.gov>,
"Russell, Jacob" [redacted]

Date: Mon, 28 Apr 2025 21:36:20 +0000

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Casey Berkovitz
Director of External Affairs
New York City Charter Revision Commission
cell: [redacted]

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD SIX

[redacted]

Testimony to the New York City Charter Revision Commission at their Manhattan Public Input Session on Housing and Land Use

Delivered at New York Law School on April 23, 2025.

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Gabe Turzo, and I am the 2nd Vice Chair of Manhattan Community Board Six, which represents over 155,000 New Yorkers in Manhattan Community District 6.

Manhattan Community Board Six has a long history of advocating for affordable housing within our East Midtown district. Rather than opposing new housing construction, we actively seek more affordable housing options.

We advocate for affordable housing by working closely with applicants, agency partners, and our elected officials. The Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) formalizes this collaboration and ensures that there's an opportunity to address community concerns.

A recent example of this successful partnership is the SPARC Kips Bay ULURP application, which involved redeveloping a City-owned property in our district. Through collaboration between the applicant, our council member, and Manhattan Community Board Six, the project was able to address multiple needs within the district. While the project did not ultimately include housing, community input through the ULURP process led to the preservation of several hundred units of affordable student housing, and the City committed to developing a comprehensive housing plan for Manhattan Community District 6.

Some may seek to dispense with or significantly weaken ULURP for the sake of expediency. But to community boards, the first point of contact with their city government that many New Yorkers have, we see ULURP as a crucial mechanism for better decision-making through public input. Local residents possess valuable insights into what works (or doesn't work) in their communities that we can share with our elected city officials. Public input leads to better designs, more thoughtful zoning changes, and development that complements rather than conflicts with our neighborhoods.

[redacted]

While many competing voices must be heard in land use decisions, the voice of New York City's communities must always be among them. Community boards offer a vital venue for the public's voice to be heard and shared, ensuring that New Yorkers have a seat at the table. We look forward to working with our council members to maintain and enhance our residential community.

Members of this Charter Revision Commission, we ask that you preserve New Yorker's seat at the table.

Thank you.

NEW YORK HOUSINGCONFERENCE

Testimony of Brendan Cheney, New York Housing Conference

New York City Charter Revision Commission
Manhattan Public Input Session on Housing and Land Use

April 23, 2025

Good afternoon. My name is Brendan Cheney. I am Director of Policy and Operations at the New York Housing Conference (NYHC). I would like to thank the commission for the opportunity to testify about the ways we can amend and improve the City Charter.

NYHC is a nonprofit affordable housing policy and advocacy organization. As a broad-based coalition, our mission is to advance City, State and Federal policies and funding to support the development and preservation of decent and affordable housing for *all* New Yorkers.

NYHC is grateful for the commission's work and your focus on housing. At a previous meeting, we testified about the extent of the housing crisis and how our housing supply and new housing development are unequally spread out throughout the city. Our systems and practices are creating and exacerbating these issues. Our 2025 NYC Housing Tracker report shows that the top 10 out of 51 council districts have produced 53 percent of all affordable housing over the past 11 years. Of course medium and high-density districts will produce more affordable housing than low-density districts but the bottom 10 districts have only added 1% of the affordable housing in this same period.

While we value the role of the legislature and the community in zoning and land use decisions, and we do not propose changes to the system lightly, we do think changes are necessary to fix a system that is often working against citywide interests. One key example is member deference – an informal but well-recognized practice that allows the local Councilmember to decide on local projects and most other members follow their lead and their vote. It gives outsized power to the local Councilmember to reject housing projects.

Because of this practice, projects have been blocked before starting the rezoning process, delayed until after elections or modified to achieve a political "win", without regard to adding to project costs or City subsidies or meeting citywide housing needs. In a recent example, a local Councilmember secured changes to a project that had proposed 60 housing units and 24 parking spaces to instead deliver 27 housing units and 35 parking spaces. We expect the full Council to support this modification resulting in a new construction building with more parking than housing in blind deference to the local member. While we don't think a majority of Councilmembers believe New York City has a parking crisis that is bigger than the housing crisis, local member deference quiets any deliberation by the full council on land use issues to let the local members dictate what is built in their "backyard", without regard to citywide housing needs.

The process we have now was created during the 1989 charter revision. According to Eric Lane, executive director and counsel to the 1989 New York City Charter Revision Commission, they gave the Council a role in the process expecting it would be used infrequently. Other proposals they considered would only have allowed the Council to review projects in certain limited circumstances. We understand institutional arguments about the legislature's role in land use decisions,

but it is clear that there were and are alternative processes that do not give the legislature veto power over every project.

While we want a different process that does not allow local interests to continually block necessary housing, we also recognize the importance of a process that gives a voice to community needs and protects community interests where necessary. A new process should find a better balance between local and citywide needs.

Changes to the NYC Charter can help create a system for land use approvals that will better respond to citywide needs and facilitate the addition of housing supply in every NYC neighborhood.

In order to address the issues of housing affordability and inequitable patterns of development, the city should focus on changes that:

- create an easier approval process for affordable housing
- create a faster process for housing development, and
- make housing and zoning decisions with more of a boroughwide and citywide approach.

As such, NYHC makes the following recommendations for changes to the City Charter to help address our housing crisis.

First, to facilitate the building of more affordable housing throughout the city, HPD-sponsored affordable housing seeking a limited rezoning should have a special fast track approval process through the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA). Under this provision, BSA can grant waivers to zoning regulations for affordable housing. This would be project-based approval like a variance or special permit and would not change the underlying zoning. It would only apply to projects with HPD approval and regulatory agreement. In addition, parameters should be added that put guardrails on the zoning waiver to assure residents that buildings would remain in scale with the neighborhood.

We have heard from partners that build affordable housing that the process is too long and has too many steps. This BSA fast-track would reduce steps and shorten the process of developing affordable housing, treating it like the urgent public policy priority that it is. This kind of option could apply while New York City meets the standard of "housing emergency" with a vacancy rate below 5% or be implemented under NYC's Fair Housing Framework to help achieve affordable housing growth targets.

Second, disposition of City-owned land for affordable housing that conforms to underlying zoning should not have to go through ULURP. The current process slows down development and allows members to block new affordable housing in their district. A simplified public process should be established instead to ensure government transfers are appropriate. NYHC also recommends changes to the ULURP process for all housing development to prevent local concerns, particularly NIMBY and anti-development sentiment, from dominating decisions about zoning and housing development.

We recommend building on the City Council's Fair Housing Framework by truncating ULURP as a consequence for districts that are not meeting their production targets in the framework. ULURP would end at City Planning Commission, preventing the local councilmember from blocking affordable housing after failing to meet district targets. We recommend that a City Council-appointed seat is added to the Planning Commission along with another mayoral

appointee to maintain the mayoral-appointed majority on the Commission. We also recommend that Fair Housing Framework production targets prioritize affordable housing. This could be done by giving greater weight to affordable housing in housing production targets.

We also support delegating review of small or minor projects with strictly local significance to borough presidents as the final step. The current process is so long and expensive that small projects cannot afford to go through it. Few if any small rezoning projects go through ULURP. Smaller projects are important ways to add housing in lower-density neighborhoods. A shorter review process for these projects would make it affordable for them to go through the process and where appropriate get approved.

We also support changes to shorten and improve ULURP. Currently, the process requires 60-day review by the Community Board and 30-day review by the Borough Board. We support merging the two reviews into one review overseen by the Borough President. This would shorten the ULURP timeline. It would allow for local input but give more of a borough-wide focus. And it could allow the Borough Presidents to create a process that includes more voices the community.

Finally, NYHC supports changes that would remove minor items from ULURP. We support requiring only agency approval for certain actions, including special permits, revocable consents, concessions, franchises, housing and urban renewal plans.

It is clear we are in a housing crisis and unfortunately some neighborhoods are blocking the type of housing that would both improve their neighborhood and address the citywide crisis. The current system was not meant to give local members regular veto power over zoning and land use decisions. It's time we changed the charter to make sure we can build more affordable housing in every neighborhood.

THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
250 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

GALE A. BREWER
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 6

[redacted]

Testimony Before the New York City Charter Revision Commission

April 23, 2025

My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the City Council Member for District 6, representing the Upper West Side from W. 54 to W. 96 Streets, parts of Riverside Park, and all of Central Park. I am also chair of the Council's Committee on Oversight and Investigations.

With then Public Advocate Leticia James, I had the experience of passing a law to create a Charter Revision Commission whose members were selected by a range of elected officials including at the time Mayor Bill de Blasio; Corey Johnson, the City Council speaker; Ms. James; Scott M. Stringer, the comptroller; myself as Manhattan Borough President; and the four other borough presidents. Intro 1830-2017 was introduced December 19, became Intro 0241-2018, had a hearing before the Governmental Operations Committee on March 16, 2018, passed the committee on April 10, 2018, was voted on positively by the full Council on April 11, 2018, and the Mayor signed the bill, which became Local Law 11 of 2018.

The Local Law authorized a commission to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the charter, which, as you know, is New York City's equivalent of a constitution. The review was slated to take up issues such as whether or not to increase public participation in land-use decisions, alter the way budget decisions are made, and to question the checks and balances between the mayor and the Council. The last time such a broad review had occurred was in 1989. However, in February 2018, Mayor de Blasio announced in his State of the City address that he would appoint his own Charter Revision Commission for proposals to be included on the November 2018 ballot. The Council-created commission would take more time and its proposals would go to voters in November 2019.

Mayor de Blasio's commission was supposed to have a narrow mandate, limited to charter changes aimed at improving the city's campaign finance system — including lowering the maximum levels of campaign contributions to candidates — and encouraging voter participation in elections. Mayor de Blasio made the announcement of his panel on April 12, 2018, one day after the Council voted for their commission. The Council invited the Mayor to participate fully in the more democratic panel, but he insisted on his own commission. (One outcome was the establishment of the Civic Engagement Commission and Racial Justice Commission, which I think duplicates what other agencies do and is a waste of precious government dollars. Many people in city government agree with me. I tried to keep this referendum off the ballot but was not successful.)

In 2024, Mayor Eric Adams appointed his own commission. I believe, as I testified at the time, that the commission was established as a power grab from the City Council. Similar to Mayor de Blasio's timing in 2018, this Mayor announced the panel two weeks before the City Council passed a bill on June 6, 2024 that would expand its oversight over more mayoral appointments.

Just like last year, this Commission's recommendations will take precedence on the November ballot over proposals by the City Council initiated Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy. Mayor Adams tasked your Commission with "determining how to make New York City's municipal government more transparent and responsive to the needs of city residents." I agree that transparent and responsive government is paramount. In fact, I testified before the 2010 Charter Revision Commission with then City Council Speaker Christine Quinn that government must always strive to do this by meeting these three roles: 1) Providing communities with greater opportunity for input into government decision; 2) Making each branch or office of government more accountable; and 3) increasing transparency in government.

To that end, I hope you will consider the following proposals:

I. Land Use

Strengthen the Franchise and Concession Review Committee. Under the current structure, Franchise and Concession Review Committee (FCRC) vote outcomes are heavily weighted in the mayor's favor, as the mayor has four of the possible six votes for any matter. The Charter also states that when an application relates to more than one borough, the relevant Borough Presidents share a single vote. I first pitched reforming the Franchise and Concession Review Committee to

the 2010 Charter Commission alongside then Speaker Christine Quinn (I testified: "Large concessions such as recreational facilities, large restaurants, and citywide concessions be made explicitly the purview of the Council"). Unfortunately, the reforms were not considered, and the Adams administration is poised to award the expiring contract for operation of Wollman Rink in Central Park to the Trump Organization or other private outfit. The 1989 Charter Commission added a requirement that the City Council approve all "Major Concessions," defined in the Charter as those with significant land use impacts and implications as determined by the City Planning Commission or for which an environmental impact statement is required by law. The term has been interpreted in such a way that only a small handful of concessions have been delivered to the Council for its review since this provision was created. The Charter, not the mayoral administration, should clearly define what matters need to be reviewed by the Council. Additionally, in order to establish a more balanced, transparent and accountable power structure on the FCRC, the Public Advocate should be added as a member, the "additional" Mayoral appointee should be removed, and vote sharing should be eliminated.

ULURP. One simple request: Mandate that the Department of City Planning brief Community Boards on any ULURP application before the process begins.

Establish a New York City Land Bank. Addressing New York City's affordable housing crisis requires using all of the tools at the City's disposal to build and preserve truly affordable housing. The City has left a proven solution out of its toolkit by failing to turn vacant City-owned land and tax delinquent properties into permanently affordable housing. New York City's primary strategy for developing affordable housing on city-owned lots has been to sell the property to a developer in exchange for a percentage of affordable units for a limited duration. While this model has facilitated the creation of thousands of affordable units, the City loses leverage by transferring title, which weakens its ability to hold developers accountable and negotiate for deeper and permanent affordability. The City Charter should be changed to require the creation of a Land Bank with the mission of constructing permanent affordable housing on blighted city and privately-owned vacant properties.

Protect Landmarked Buildings. The Landmarks Law includes an unfortunate loophole which allows the Landmarks Preservation Commission, without any City Council oversight, to let developers destroy seven existing, individually designated landmarks based on alleged financial hardship. This is inconsistent with the intent of the Landmarks Law, and the loophole should be closed.

Revocable Consent Agreements. A revocable consent is the grant of a right to an individual or organization to construct and maintain certain structures on, over, or under the inalienable property of the City. Generally, revocable consents are granted for a term of 10 years, at the end of which time they may be renewed. As the name implies, the City retains the right to revoke a revocable consent at any time. But they become encumbrances. Two current examples are outdoor cafes and battery swapping cabinets.

II. Oversight and Accountability

Budget Independence for Oversight Agencies. It is my opinion that current and historic funding levels are not enough for the Department of Investigation (DOI) and other oversight bodies to adequately maintain integrity in municipal operations and ensure public money is spent lawfully. City Hall's budget decisions have significantly impacted DOI's ability to hire and retain employees. Their OTPS budget primarily pays the rent for outside monitors, so they cover expenses with dwindling forfeiture funds left over from the 2011 CityTime settlement. As DOI Commissioner Jocelyn Strauber testified before my committee on March 14, 2025, "our budgetary needs do not seem to be a key priority for this administration." Oversight agencies need budget independence, but very few have it. Thanks to the 1989 Charter Commission, the Independent Budget Office (IBO) budget is a set percentage of the budget of the Office of Management and Budget (no less than ten percent). The Campaign Finance Board sets its own budget. The 2019 Commission based staffing at the Civilian Complaint Review Board is based on the budgeted headcount of the New York City Police Department. This Commission should grant the same independence to DOI, the Board of Correction, the Special Commissioner of Investigation for the New York City School District, and several Commissions.

III. The City Budget

Enhance Units of Appropriation. This Commission should review the Unit of Appropriation (U/A) structure to make budgetary decisions more transparent and less broad, giving meaning to the 1989 Commission's intent. Each year, the Council has to negotiate with the administration for more clarity, and we always want more than we get. The Department of Education uses a single U/A called "general education instruction and school leadership" that accounts for $8 billion in City money. The Police Department mixes the budgets of all police precincts, boroughwide offices, detectives division, forensic investigation division, narcotics division, and strategic response group in a single U/A called "operations." I

suggest a charter amendment that ensures adherence to the mandate that U/As correspond more closely to the various functions, activities or programs of each agency. Under current law, the Charter states that each Unit of Appropriation represents an amount allocated for a particular activity and that it be for just one purpose. The Council and the public need smaller, programmatic Units of Appropriation to enable oversight of City agencies, to better understand the administration's priorities, and to adjust program funding as a result.

Reform Revenue Estimates. Charter section 1515 requires "accurate estimates of revenues and expenditures" but the estimates are unilaterally determined by the Mayor. There is a serious lack of trust in revenue estimates and no consequences for getting them wrong. The Council has been correct in our higher revenue estimates than those of the Adams administration each year. That is how budget cuts were restored, but they were not needed in the first place. The current revenue estimate structure allows it to be used by City Hall not as a tool for ensuring a balanced budget, but rather as a tool to force the Council to change its budget priorities, or to win public favor by restoring cuts at the 11th hour. I support the Charter revisions proposed to this body by the Citizens Budget Commission on February 28, 2025. Additionally, this Commission should explore joint revenue estimates, also known as consensus estimates, between the City Council and the mayor.

IV. Executive Authority

Expand Advice and Consent. There were many debates throughout the 2018-2019 charter revision process that I initiated with then Public Advocate Leticia James. Members of the Commission had very different viewpoints from one another— from the Republicans representing Staten Island to Sal Albanese, the representative for then-Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams—but they reached an agreement. One of the consensus outcomes was that the mayor's pick for Corporation Counsel should be determined through advice and consent, and it has proven to be valuable. There is no reason other agencies should not go through the same process. Other major cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago have been using advice and consent for many years. When you have extra public scrutiny, you end up with the best people.

Implementation of Local Laws. In all mayoral administrations, laws that are passed by the City Council are sometimes not implemented. For example, the Council passed reforms to CityFHEPS July 2023 that went into effect on January 9, 2024, but have not been implemented. Former Council Member Lou Fidler, may

he rest in peace, said to the 2010 Bloomberg commission that the charter should require all laws passed by the City Council go into effect unless the mayor is sued to stop them. If the mayor thinks a duly enacted law is preempted or otherwise legally infirm, he can sue as well. The mayor should be prohibited from refusing to enforce it in the absence of a court agreeing with him. The mayor should not get a pass from the presumption that a duly enacted law is valid.

Mayoral Appointments. The mayor has too much control over the makeup of boards such as the Rent Guidelines Board, the Board of Correction, and the Advisory Committee on the Judiciary. The City Council, Borough Presidents, and Public Advocate should have more spots to fill so these boards are not simply pass-throughs for the mayor.

Independence at DOI. Commissioner Strauber recently presented several proposals to my committee intended to safeguard DOI's independence and protect the agency from retaliation. I will share two. First, establish a tenure of five or six years for the DOI Commissioner so that their term would span administrations, limiting the risk that a DOI Commissioner would be subject to improper influence by any mayoral administration. Second, expand controls around removal of the DOI Commissioner by adding a requirement that removal be for cause only and require approval of the City Council.

V. Democracy and Elections

Changing Election Cycles. I support the testimony of Citizens Union and others who have proposed moving City elections to even years, which would significantly boost voter turnout, diversify the electorate, and save the City money. In 2022, San Francisco voters passed a proposition moving elections for mayor and other local offices from odd-numbered years to presidential election years. November 5, 2024 was the city's first on-cycle mayoral election, and turnout nearly doubled to 78.5 percent. New York City turnout in off-cycle elections is very low. In 2021, just 23 percent of registered voters cast a ballot for mayor. On November 5, 2024, more than twice as many people turned out to vote for president. Moving city elections to even years would require an amendment to the State constitution, but this Commission could put forward changes at the City level that would be necessary to enact it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.

Proposed Amendments to the New York City Charter to Address Housing Affordability and Economic Development

As part of the New York City Charter Revision Commission hearings, I am proposing amendments that will help address the pressing needs of New Yorkers, particularly minimum wage families struggling to access affordable housing and local hiring concerns in economic development. The following recommendations will ensure that city policies align with the urgent needs of residents while promoting fairness, efficiency, and community empowerment.

1. Affordable Housing for Minimum Wage Families

Current Charter Provisions:

The New York City Charter establishes an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NYC Charter § 1111), which helps finance affordable housing initiatives. However, this fund does not adequately prioritize minimum-wage families who struggle to qualify for many existing programs.

Proposed Amendments:

- Expand Income Eligibility: Adjust affordability requirements to include households earning at or below 40% of the Area Median Income (AMI), ensuring minimum wage families qualify for affordable housing.
- Strengthen Inclusionary Zoning: Mandate that a higher percentage of units in new developments be reserved for low-income families, with clear definitions preventing ambiguity in affordability levels.

2. Economic Development and Local Hiring

Current Charter Provisions:

The Office of Workforce Development is responsible for promoting job creation in economically disadvantaged communities (NYC Charter § 1303). However, there is no requirement that developers receiving city incentives must hire local residents.

Proposed Amendments:

- Implement Local Hiring Mandates: Require developers receiving city tax incentives to hire a certain percentage of their workforce from residents within the community district where the project is located.
- Enhance Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs): Ensure that CBAs are legally binding and include clear provisions for local employment, apprenticeships, and job training programs.

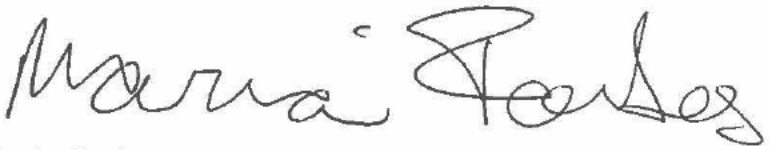
3. Streamlining ULURP and Eliminating Member Deference
Current Charter Provisions:
The Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) is mandated under NYC Charter § 197-c, which establishes a lengthy review process requiring input from multiple stakeholders, including Community Boards and the City Council. Additionally, the practice of member deference gives individual City Council members disproportionate influence in rejecting projects in their districts, even if they address citywide housing needs.
Proposed Amendments:

- Speed Up the ULURP Process: Modify the Charter to reduce redundant review stages, particularly by limiting the review period for Community Boards and Borough Presidents.
- End Member Deference: Prevent individual City Council members from unilaterally blocking housing developments that meet demonstrated community needs.

4. Empowering Community Boards Without Granting Veto Power
Current Charter Provisions:
Community Boards currently have advisory roles in land use decisions under NYC Charter § 2800(d)(12), providing input on zoning changes, permits, and developments. Some proposals have suggested giving Community Boards more decision-making power, which could further slow down housing development.
Proposed Amendments:

- Maintain Advisory Role, Not Decision-Making Power: Community Boards should continue providing recommendations but should not have veto power over projects, ensuring that necessary housing developments are not unnecessarily delayed.
- Increase Transparency and Community Input: While maintaining an advisory role, Community Boards should receive dedicated planning staff and public engagement tools to ensure meaningful community participation.

By adopting these targeted Charter amendments, New York City can:
1. Ensure minimum-wage families have real access to affordable housing.
2. Require developers benefiting from city funds to hire local residents.
3. Speed up the land-use approval process while eliminating unfair political interference.
4. Strengthen community input while ensuring that housing developments are not blocked when there is a clear need.
These changes will help balance economic development, housing policy, and community interests, ensuring that all New Yorkers—not just a privileged few—benefit from the city's growth and resources.



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