

July 16, 2003

Dr. Frank J. Macchiarola

Chair

Charter Revision Commission

2 Lafayette Street

New York, New York 10007

Dear Frank:

Thanks for dropping by my office on such short notice Monday afternoon while you were at City Hall visiting with the Speaker. I enjoyed our talk and appreciate the amount of work you and your fellow commissioners are doing on the Charter Commission.

The Commission, as I understand it, has decided to focus on procurement reform and municipal elections (non-partisan elections). Given the volume of work you have undertaken it is understandable that you've had to narrow the focus to fairly and adequately deal with the issues before the Commission.

Let me just say, on procurement reform that it certainly bears in-depth scrutiny and I concur with the judgment of the commissioners and staff to proceed with a full review of the issues involved. While I anticipate a report that seeks to streamline the current process and save the City millions of dollars, I am aware that there will be conflicting opinions. Hopefully, the commission will be able to reconcile the needs of the City with the businesses and not-for-profits that are most affected. The goal should be to protect the taxpayer's money while saving time and expense for those vendors who seek to work with the City. As importantly, your efforts should seek to achieve the goal of easier access to city contracting opportunities contained in my Executive Order for Minority and Women's Business Enterprise. I await your conclusions.

Regarding elections, I have read numerous reports in the press about this issue. There have been press conferences and statements and it seems to me that many who are opposed to non-partisan elections fail to await the product of the commission's work on this subject. Since a number of Charter Commissions have studied and debated non-partisan elections over many years however, it is now time for voters to have a say.

Let me state my position for you and your colleagues as briefly as I can:

- The vote should be based on the merits of the proposal that the commission develops.

- The vote should take place this November. The manner of election of city officials must be the choice of the voters of New York City and is too important to postpone. I am not afraid of their wisdom and will gladly abide by their decision.
- Personalities should not be the deciding issue. I strongly believe the implementation of nonpartisan elections in New York City should occur in 2009. This will negate any argument that I gain any personal benefit from such a change and it will keep the current system in place through my re-election campaign in 2005 - the system, it should be noted, that allowed both me and Rudy Giuliani to win the mayoralty.
- The candidate selection process should be opened to all voters. This reform would allow candidates from any party, or no party, to gain a spot on the ballot
- There should not be different threshold requirements for different candidates for the same office. Perhaps we can limit the abuse of petition challenges so that NYC will no longer be the nation's capital for denying citizens the fundamental right to run for office.
- Candidates listed on a common ballot should be allowed to list their party membership if they so decide. This will increase the information voters have in the polling booth as they make their all-important selections.

I hope this letter is helpful as to my position. Feel free to share this with your fellow commissioners and those who attend your public meetings.

Let Democracy go forth, and never fear the will of the voters. It's their city. They should decide how to select their representatives and office holders.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Bloomberg

Mayor