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May 21, 2026

Written Testimony of Council Member Phil Wong To the Quadrennial Advisory Commission for the Review of Compensation Levels of Elected Officials

Thank you to the members of the Commission for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding compensation for elected officials in New York City.

I respectfully urge the Commission not to recommend any salary increase for members of the New York City Council at this time.

Recent reports have referenced a proposed increase to approximately $172,500 annually for Council Members, roughly a 16 percent increase over the current base salary of $148,500. At a time when many New Yorkers are struggling with affordability, rising costs, and economic uncertainty, I do not believe any increase is appropriate.

New York City also continues to face serious fiscal challenges, including projected outyear budget gaps exceeding $7 billion and reaching nearly $10 billion in future years. The city's own financial documents acknowledge ongoing structural budget concerns and note that lower-income households continue falling behind inflation.

Public perception matters. Many working families have not seen raises anywhere close to what is being discussed for elected officials. Residents are facing rising rents, grocery bills, utility costs, childcare expenses, and property taxes while increasingly questioning whether government is living within its means.

While I understand the arguments regarding inflation and the growing demands of public office, timing and fiscal reality must also be considered. Public service should not be viewed primarily through the lens of personal compensation, particularly during periods of financial strain for the taxpayers we represent.

Historically, proposals to raise elected officials' salaries during fiscally difficult times have often faced strong public opposition for these same reasons. During the fiscal crisis of the 1970s, similar proposals were withdrawn amid concerns about public trust and government priorities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Commission not to recommend a salary increase for elected officials at this time.