

DISTRICT OFFICE

130 STUYVESANT PLACE, 6TH FLOOR
STATEN ISLAND, NY 10301
TEL: (718) 556-7370
FAX: (718) 556-7389

CITY HALL OFFICE

250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1763
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: (212) 788-6972
FAX: (212) 341-3045

District49@council.nyc.gov



THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

KAMILLAH M. HANKS

MAJORITY WHIP

COUNCIL MEMBER, 49TH DISTRICT, STATEN ISLAND

COMMITTEES

PUBLIC SAFETY
CONSUMER AND WORKER PROTECTION
CONTRACTS
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION &
WATERFRONTS
IMMIGRATION

SUB-COMMITTEE

LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS &
DISPOSITIONS

May 22, 2026

Testimony of Council Member Kamillah M. Hanks Before the 2026 Quadrennial Advisory Commission

Dear Chair Weisbrod, Commissioner Angelo, Commissioner Barrios-Paoli,

My name is Kamillah M. Hanks, and I am proud to serve as Majority Whip of the New York City Council and represent the 49th Council District on the North Shore of Staten Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I come before this Commission with a deep respect for the seriousness of this process and with a clear understanding that any conversation about compensation for public officials must be handled with transparency, humility, and accountability to the people we serve.

For nearly ten years, there has been no formal review of compensation for New York City's elected officials. During that same period, the cost of living in our city has continued to rise. Housing, transportation, groceries, childcare, and the basic costs of maintaining a life in New York have all placed greater pressure on working people across this city. Public servants are not separate from that reality. We live in the same city, raise families in the same neighborhoods, and face the same economic pressures as the people we represent.

This conversation should not be about excess. It should be about fairness, stability, and preserving the ability of everyday New Yorkers to serve. When compensation remains frozen for almost a decade while the cost of living rises around it, the value of that compensation is not standing still. It is going backward.

Serving in the City Council is a full-time responsibility by every measure. The work does not end when the hearing ends or when City Hall closes. It follows us into our evenings, weekends, emergencies, and communities.

That level of responsibility should remain accessible to people from every background. If we want a government that truly reflects New York City, then public service cannot become something only available to those with independent wealth, outside support, or the financial flexibility to absorb years of rising costs.

I also want to be clear that this process must remain grounded in the public interest. Any recommendation from this Commission should be based on data, inflation, economic reality, and the long-term health of our democratic institutions. New Yorkers deserve a process that is open, responsible, and honest about both the work required of public office and the financial realities of living in this city.

Fair compensation is not about making public service comfortable. It is about making sure public service remains possible. It is about ensuring that talented, committed, community-rooted people can step forward, run for office, serve honorably, and continue doing the work without being pushed out by economic barriers.

I respectfully urge this Commission to consider the impact of nearly a decade without review, the rising cost of living in New York City, and the importance of keeping public service open to all New Yorkers. Our democracy is strongest when the people making decisions reflect the people affected by them.

Thank you for your time, your work, and your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kamillah M. Hanks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "H".

Kamillah M. Hanks
Majority Whip, New York City
49th District, Staten Island