

1                   **New York City Charter Review Commission**

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6                   **Moderated by Carlo Scissura**

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7                   **Monday, July 22, 2024**

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8                   **5:07 p.m.**

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11                   **Queens Public Library Central Library**

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12                   **89-11 Merrick Boulevard**

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**Reported by:       Thea Popko**

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

2   List of Attendees:

3   Carlo Scissura, Chair

4   Edward Kiernan, General Counsel

5   Lorraine Grillo, Commissioner

6   Jackie Rowe-Adams, Commissioner

7   Christopher Lynch, Commissioner

8   Kyle Bragg, Commissioner

9   Stephanie McGraw, Commissioner

10   Ruben Diaz Jr., Commissioner

11   Hazel Dukes, Commissioner

12   Diane Savino, Executive Director

13   Crystal Hudson, NYC Council Member, District 35

14   Joann Ariola, NYC Council Member, District 32

15   Pierina Sanchez, NYC Council Member, District 14

16   Julie Won, NYC Council Member, District 26

17   Chi Osse, NYC Council Member, District 36

18   Jennifer Gutierrez, NYC Council Member, District 34

19   Sandy Nurse, NYC Council Member, District 37

20   Shaun Abreu, NYC Council Member, District 7

21   Ruben Diaz, Jr., Borough President, The Bronx

22   Shekar Krishnan, NYC Council Member, District 25

23   Shahana Hanif, NYC Council Member, District 39

24   Alexa Aviles, NYC Council Member, District 38

25   Chris Banks, NYC Council Member, District 42

1                   A P P E A R A N C E S (Cont'd)

2   List of Attendees (Cont'd):

3   Jeff Baker

4   Ariel Amaja

5   Christopher Leon Johnson

6   Phil Wong

7   Yanling Zhang

8   John Song

9   Albin Lepiz

10   Airenakhue Omoragban, New York Policy Manager at

11   African Communities Together

12   Dorothea Willis

13   Theresa Racine

14   Mary Ruane

15   Thomas Willis

16   Obi Affriyie, NAACP Legal Defense Fund

17   Vienna Levitan

18   Sam Esposito

19   Ying Tan

20   Tammi Zorros

21   Paula Zorros

22   Jeremy Woodruff, Victorian Society in New York

23   Linda Lam, Board Member, Newtown Senior Center in

24   Elmhurst

25   John Schaffer

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A P P E A R A N C E S (Cont'd)

List of Attendees (Cont'd):

- Sarita Daftary, Co-Director, Freedom Agenda
- Phyllis Inzerillo, Co-President, Howard Beach Newman Civic Association
- Sally Wong
- Sally Ann Sinisgalli
- Mona Davids, New York City School Safety Coalition, New York City Parents Union
- Candace Prince Modeste, President, NAACP Jamaica
- Barbara McNamara, Co-President, Howard Beach Lydon with Civic Association
- Aracelia Cook, President, 149th South Ozone Park Civic Association
- Melissa Inniss, St. Ann's Church for the Deaf
- Electra Holmes, Steer Excellence Initiative
- Michael Sisitzky, Assistant Policy Director NYCU

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. SCISSURA: Good evening. We are  
3 going to get started because we have a bunch of folks  
4 on Zoom and some people here. Let me just say, it's  
5 wonderful to be in Queens for -- how many times have  
6 we been in Queens?

7 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Too many.

8 MR. SCISSURA: Our third time?

9 MR. BRAGG: This will be the third  
10 time.

11 MR. SCISSURA: It's a great borough,  
12 and good afternoon and welcome to our 12th hearing of  
13 the New York City Charter Review Commission. This  
14 will be our final hearing before the commission votes  
15 on our final report and ballot proposals on Thursday  
16 in Brooklyn.

17 Again, it's really a pleasure to be  
18 here and thank you all for coming out. My name is  
19 Carlo Scissura and I'm the chair of the Charter Review  
20 Commission. Let me welcome several of our members who  
21 are with us. Commissioner Kyle Bragg, Commissioner  
22 Lorraine Grillo, Commissioner Jackie Rowe-Adams.

23 And let's see, who am I missing?  
24 Commissioner Chris Lynch. Thank you very much for  
25 being here. And Rabbi Chiam Steinmetz is on Zoom, so

1 thank you for being here.

2 Let me ask the commissioners to give us  
3 a welcome before we begin. And I'm going to start  
4 with Kyle, which is my left.

5 MR. BRAGG: Thank you. This is good  
6 evening, everyone. Thank you for attending this final  
7 commission revision hearing.

8 I am Kyle Bragg. I grew up in this  
9 borough, Queens, not more than three miles from this  
10 very location, going to elementary school, high school  
11 here in Queens.

12 I appreciate that so many have turned  
13 out here tonight, but also on Zoom to give their  
14 thoughts and opinion about what is needed to make this  
15 city government work for all of its citizens. So  
16 thank you.

17 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Commissioner  
18 Adams.

19 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Hello, Queens. Could  
20 you hear me? Hello? Hello? Hello?

21 MR. SCISSURA: Now we can hear you.

22 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Now you can hear me.  
23 Hello, Queens.

24 MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Hello.

25 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: So welcome. Welcome

1 to our commission, to your commission to give you a  
2 opportunity to know what's going on in your city. And  
3 I am very proud of Queens and of all the other  
4 boroughs that we went to because people have come out  
5 just to say they want a voice.

6 And thank the mayor for giving them a  
7 voice to make the choices that we should have been  
8 making a long time ago. So kudos to you.

9 I want you to make sure that you spread  
10 the word that we are absolutely trying to make the  
11 city a better city by educating the people in the  
12 communities and in the cities.

13 So again, welcome and I've learned a  
14 lot being on the commission about what's going on in  
15 our cities. So thank you.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

17 Commissioner Lorraine Grillo.

18 MS. GRILLO: Thank you. And again, I'm  
19 going to repeat what Kyle Bragg said, Commissioner  
20 Bragg, I'm a Queens girl, grew up a few miles away  
21 from here, went to high school, went to grammar school  
22 in Queens.

23 So I love this borough and I love the  
24 fact that all of you turned out tonight. And we'll do  
25 our very best to give you all an opportunity to tell

1 us what you think is necessary for this city. Thank  
2 you.

3 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Commissioner  
4 Lynch.

5 MR. LYNCH: Good evening, Queens.  
6 Happy to be here this evening. As you said, this is  
7 our final commission.

8 This is our final hearing, so looking  
9 forward to hearing what you have to present to us,  
10 your testimonies this evening, and looking forward to  
11 learning what the needs and expectations are from our  
12 Queen's residents.

13 As you know, we're five boroughs, so we  
14 want to hear from everyone. Everyone's opinion  
15 counts. Thank you.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Let me also  
17 thank Dennis Walcott, President and CEO of the Queen's  
18 Public Library and the entire staff. I think we can  
19 all agree Dennis is one of New York's best public  
20 servants and we thank him for all he has done. Thank  
21 you.

22 So today we are concluding our five-  
23 borough listening tour. It's been really exciting to  
24 hear from so many people, both in person and on Zoom.  
25 We held our first hearing in Queens on June 5th.



1           We have held ten additional public  
2 hearings in all five boroughs. Over 650 New Yorkers  
3 have attended, and almost 200 presenting testimony on  
4 a variety of topics in person or via Zoom.

5           Today will be the last time the  
6 commission hears from the public before we release our  
7 final report and our ballot proposals.

8           The final report will elaborate on many  
9 of the proposals outlined in the preliminary staff  
10 report and discussed at our public hearings, including  
11 fiscal responsibility measures, capital, asset  
12 tracking, public safety, and MWBE contracting process  
13 and oversight; and efforts to make city government  
14 more efficient by eliminating unneeded bureaucratic  
15 hurdles.

16           On Thursday, the commission will vote  
17 on the proposed ballot questions and the final report.  
18 The final report, the proposed ballot questions, and  
19 the proposed charter amendments will be on available  
20 to the public on the commission's website at  
21 [www.nyc.gov/charter](http://www.nyc.gov/charter). And that will be on the website  
22 prior to the vote on Thursday.

23           I really want to say a couple of words.  
24 So first of all, thank you to my colleagues here. You  
25 know, it's easier said than done to commit to

1 traveling the boroughs, to spending time like this, to  
2 leaving our families and other commitments and really  
3 taking this and focusing on it.

4 So I think I applaud you all because  
5 you really have done enormous job.

6 You've come to meetings, you've  
7 listened, you've read things, you've followed up. Let  
8 me thank the staff, particularly our executive  
9 director, our chief of staff, our press folks, and of  
10 course, our general counsel who is always seated to my  
11 left. I appreciate, please give the staff a big round  
12 of applause.

13 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Yes. Yes.

14 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you, thank you.  
15 And all of you, policy and legal, and I can go on and  
16 on and on. It's been quite an experience. We've  
17 enjoyed hearing from people I've enjoyed getting  
18 beaten up a little bit by some folks. And that's okay  
19 because when you decide to work in public service and  
20 do things, that's what happens.

21 And before I start calling our folks  
22 who are going to testify, let me reiterate something  
23 very clearly. We are not employees of the mayor. We  
24 are not employees of the city council or any elected  
25 officials. We are independent New Yorkers with very

1 different backgrounds, with very different life  
2 experiences.

3 This is my third charter commission.  
4 So I've, as they said in a famous movie, this ain't my  
5 first rodeo. So anyone out there who claims that we  
6 are hacks, we are this, we are that, I'm proud to say  
7 that we are independent New Yorkers who decided to  
8 spend a little time this summer and travel the  
9 boroughs and hear what's out there.

10 So before we go on, let me just welcome  
11 Commissioner Stephanie McGraw.

12 Do you want to give us a quick welcome?

13 MS. MCGRAW: Yes. Hi. Good evening,  
14 Queens. I'm so honored to be here with you. We are  
15 excited to be in this borough to hear your concerns  
16 and we are here to be the voice for the people.

17 As the Chair said, mentioned, we are  
18 ordinary people that have had different experiences  
19 through our lives. And we have lived in this city.

20 I've lived in this city all my life. I  
21 love New York. I love this city. I like to thank  
22 Mayor Eric Adams for putting this commission together.  
23 And I am very concerned about the wellbeing and the  
24 safety of our citizens and New York City. So I'm  
25 happy to be here and thank you very much.

1 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you, Commissioner,  
2 and condolences on your loss also. Thank you.

3 MS. MCGRAW: Oh, thank you.

4 MR. SCISSURA: We have a lot of --  
5 Dennis Walcott, I just said such  
6 wonderful things about you. You'll have to read the  
7 transcript of it, but let's give Dennis Walcott a  
8 round of applause. President and CEO of the Queens  
9 Public Library.

10 And Ruben Diaz, Jr., one of our  
11 commissioners is on Zoom. Ruben, would you like to  
12 give us a quick hello?

13 He's trying to get on. Okay. But he  
14 is on. All right. So again, thank you all for coming  
15 out, over 600 New Yorkers, five boroughs meetings in  
16 every borough. We're excited to be here. We have a  
17 lot of elected officials here tonight, which we are  
18 excited about.

19 We are going to really try and limit at  
20 a three-minute rule because we've got a lot of  
21 testimony. So let me start with council member first.  
22 Council member Crystal Hudson from my home borough of  
23 Brooklyn.

24 Now, you know, generally people that  
25 know me know I would just say Brooklyn is the best,

1 but we are on a five-borough listening tour, so we  
2 treat all boroughs equally. Councilman, thank you for  
3 being here tonight.

4 MS. HUDSON: Thank you so much.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Council Member, thank  
6 you for being here.

7 MS. HUDSON: Thank you so much for  
8 having me. And we do treat all boroughs equally, but  
9 Brooklyn is the best borough. If you won't say it, I  
10 will.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is.

13 MR. SCISSURA: I'll say it after  
14 Thursday.

15 MS. HUDSON: Okay. I hear that. But  
16 good evening, everyone. My name is Crystal Hudson.

17 I'm the council member for the 35th  
18 Councilman District, which includes the neighborhoods  
19 of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights, and  
20 Crown Heights. I'd like to thank Chair Scissura and  
21 the entire Charter Revision Commission for the  
22 opportunity to testify today.

23 Last year more than four and a half  
24 million New Yorkers went to the polls to cast their  
25 vote and decide who should represent them in

1 government, including their city council member.

2           Once elected, we were tasked with  
3 passing legislation to address major issues facing our  
4 communities, ensuring the city has a budget that  
5 prioritizes the needs of our most marginalized and  
6 using the full powers of the council to make our city  
7 a fair and just place for everyone.

8           To date, we've done just that. In  
9 every step of the way we've been held accountable. We  
10 hold public hearings on legislation and the budget.  
11 We host town halls and field phone calls, emails,  
12 social media, DMs, and office visits from  
13 constituents.

14           Our constituents then go to the ballot  
15 box every few years to decide whether we get another  
16 chance at doing the job we love. That's true  
17 accountability and transparency.

18           Yet, city agency commissioners, the  
19 individuals who run the complex bureaucracy that  
20 supports all eight and a half million New Yorkers get  
21 to just walk in the door and stay as long as they're  
22 able. The only one who gets to decide on their  
23 credentials is one person and that's the mayor.

24           If only one person picks who runs an  
25 agency, there can be no accountability. That's why

1 Advice and Consent is so important. Nearly every  
2 other jurisdiction does this already, including  
3 smaller cities like Los Angeles and Chicago; and even  
4 here in New York City, we do this for about a dozen  
5 positions already.

6 This proposal just expands it to  
7 another 20. This isn't about one mayor, and this  
8 isn't the first time the council has pushed to expand  
9 Advice and Consent. Simply there's no reason the  
10 people who run our city agencies shouldn't be held  
11 accountable to the public they serve.

12 Now attempts to rush revisions to the  
13 city charter undermine this effort to expand  
14 accountability and transparency. Our city's charter  
15 is the foundation of our government, effectively our  
16 constitution, adding potential items on the ballot  
17 that have been raised during a handful of sparsely  
18 attended meetings without robust input from the  
19 public, undermines the good governance foundation of  
20 the Charter Revision Commission's mission.

21 There's no need to rush. This  
22 commission has the authorization to operate until  
23 election day 2025 when notably voters who are  
24 currently focused on a history making presidential  
25 election, not the nuts and bolts of New York City

1 government.

2 Voters are already widely aware of  
3 Advice and Consent because my colleagues and I have  
4 spent months discussing it and fielding concerns. But  
5 any new proposal is one proposal too many.

6 Next year voters will be in a better  
7 position to decide on a number of new charter revision  
8 suggestions as they'll be focused on selecting who is  
9 best to run the city they call home.

10 More time means more community input,  
11 better ideas, and more support. Again, I urge you to  
12 allow the placement of the council's Advice and  
13 Consent law on the November ballot and step back from  
14 interfering with the will of the people. Thank you.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much. We  
16 have Council Member Ariola on Zoom.

17 Council Member?

18 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: She's on mute, I  
19 think. There we go.

20 MS. ARIOLA: Thank you so much and it's  
21 good to see all of you and thank you for all your hard  
22 work. It is truly appreciated.

23 Tonight I'd like to talk about the  
24 \$1.98 billion annually that is spent. That is how  
25 much money we New York workers estimate to be spending



1 on housing for the flood of illegal migrants pouring  
2 into our city day after day.

3 This isn't accounting for other  
4 services, transportation, or anything else. This is  
5 simply the cost of providing shelter for hundreds of  
6 thousands of people who are here due to the failures  
7 of the federal immigration system.

8 New York City is spending more than  
9 twice the entire budget of Albany County just to  
10 provide housing for those seeking to exploit loopholes  
11 in our system.

12 We are pouring taxpayer dollars into  
13 this endeavor while the rest of our city falls apart.  
14 Valuable city services are cut, and expansions to the  
15 budget that would have benefited New Yorkers across  
16 the board were pushed to the wayside so all funding  
17 can be provided for the masses coming up from our  
18 southern border.

19 Enough is enough. The courts have  
20 failed us. The State has failed us, the federal  
21 government has abandoned us. The Charter Revision  
22 Commission is our last hope to return this city to  
23 fiscal solvency, public safety, and allow the people  
24 of this city to have a say in how their hard-earned  
25 dollars, our tax dollars are spent.

1           That is why I signed onto our Common  
2 Sense Caucus Letter, asking the Charter Revision  
3 Commission to allow our citizens the right to choose  
4 whether or not they want the sanctuary status of our  
5 city to continue or to end via a referendum on  
6 November's ballot.

7           So many New Yorkers have left this  
8 great city because of the changes we have seen since  
9 April of 2022 when the migrant crisis first began. It  
10 is time that New Yorkers can say once and for all  
11 whether they agree or disagree with the city's  
12 sanctuary status.

13           Since it is the average citizen footing  
14 the bill, don't you think it's time to let the voice  
15 of the average citizen finally be heard? I implore  
16 this commission to consider this referendum and let  
17 the voters decide. Thank you for your time.

18           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
19 Let me just ask for the members of the commission,  
20 obviously feel free to ask questions after people  
21 speak. I don't need to say it all the time.

22           Council Member Pierina Sanchez.

23           MS. SANCHEZ: Thank you and good  
24 afternoon.

25           MR. SCISSURA: Good afternoon.

1 MS. SANCHEZ: My name is Pierina  
2 Sanchez and I'm the New York City council member  
3 representing District 14. That's Kingsbridge,  
4 Fordham, University Heights, and Mount Hope, all the  
5 way from the Bronx came to hang out with you. Thank  
6 you for having --

7 MR. SCISSURA: Good to see you again.

8 MS. SANCHEZ: Likewise. I'm testifying  
9 tonight to express significant concerns with the  
10 review process, but the commission has undertaken.  
11 I'm going to say briefly before I expound, but please  
12 don't rush the process. Let voters decide on Advice  
13 and Consent and take your time to edit, to amend the  
14 city's constitution. You have until next November and  
15 you can take that time.

16 Revising our charter is a serious task,  
17 an immense task. But this process has not yet taken  
18 our communities seriously. In just two months, the  
19 mayor has pushed forward this charter revision that  
20 disregards basic democratic principles of  
21 collaboration and co-creation.

22 The intent it seems was never to revise  
23 our constitution in good faith, but instead the  
24 process has been worked to change the balance of power  
25 between city government agencies without -- with city

1 government branches -- without sufficient input from  
2 the public.

3 To that end, I ask that the commission  
4 take two steps in the immediate. First, slow your  
5 process and commit to a robust engagement timeline  
6 over the next year to give our communities ample time  
7 to make their voices heard. There are serious  
8 measures before you for consideration, and it deserves  
9 the discussion of the public.

10 And second, allow New Yorkers to vote  
11 on the council's proposal to expand Advice and Consent  
12 this fall. I shared earlier with some colleagues and  
13 the public -- members of the public -- that when I'm  
14 on the street and I'm talking to constituents, I often  
15 get the question, why are the streets so dirty?  
16 What's happening with this -- the buses not coming on  
17 time? MTA example.

18 Who's running our schools? And the  
19 answer to that is that we provide oversight. We have  
20 hearings, we have budgetary hearings. But that first  
21 step in the process of choosing a commissioner, of  
22 choosing a leader of an agency that is going to so  
23 closely impact the life of New Yorkers. That stage  
24 does not have public review. And that is what Advice  
25 and Consent is about, giving power back to the public.

1           And just to touch on some of the topics  
2           that you are considering, fiscal responsibility and  
3           budgetary efficiency, the report is proposing that the  
4           charter revision assess the administration's influence  
5           over how the council passes the impact -- assesses the  
6           impact of legislation on city finances. That is  
7           a -- is a worthwhile discussion that two months is not  
8           enough time for.

9           Second, there -- I'm very partial and  
10          close to my heart is street bending reform. And  
11          there's a idea in there to expand the power of the  
12          Department of Sanitation in vending enforcement.  
13          Let's have a holistic conversation about these things  
14          and let's see how we can change the way that the city  
15          functions so that we can have order on our streets.

16          And lastly, on sanctuary city laws. We  
17          shouldn't rush to make decisions without having ample  
18          consideration. In my community, a largely immigrant  
19          community, depends on many sanctuary city policies  
20          that we have to feel safe, to feel protected. Thank  
21          you to today for your time and consideration. Good  
22          evening.

23                   MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
24           Great seeing you.

25                   MS. SANCHEZ: Likewise.

1 MR. SCISSURA: Council Member Julie  
2 Won.

3 Oh, I'm sorry. You have a question?

4 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Yes.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Hold on. We have one.  
6 Sorry.

7 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you so much for  
8 your testimony.

9 MS. SANCHEZ: Thank you.

10 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: But my question  
11 is -- I thought about it -- do you think the council  
12 act too quickly on some of the hearings that they held  
13 for their selves and not the public?

14 MS. SANCHEZ: I -- that's an excellent  
15 question. And we actually stepped back and did an  
16 analysis. So for every piece of legislation that the  
17 New York City Council is passing, on average, it's not  
18 the minimum, but on average we are seeing, we're  
19 debating legislation for 270 plus days, the six months  
20 or more. And that is during the course of hearings,  
21 During the course of individual meetings, people are  
22 reaching out to our councils. People are submitting  
23 testimony.

24 When it comes to public safety  
25 measures, that average is actually closer to 570 days.

1 That means two years plus is the amount of time that  
2 we are spending debating public safety legislation.  
3 And that's not just us. We're not just whispering to  
4 each other; right? We're talking in the media.

5 We are making sure that there are  
6 public hearings. We are listening for hours and hours  
7 and hours of public testimony and taking that all into  
8 consideration. And we're 51 people; we're 51 people  
9 who -- we're New Yorkers.

10 New Yorkers can't even agree that the  
11 sky is blue all the time. It's 51 council members  
12 representing 170,000 people each are similar. So that  
13 robust process that we undertake is really a lengthy  
14 one. And it's one that enables public participation.

15 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: So if I may?

16 MR. SCISSURA: Please, please.

17 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: So I go back to the  
18 public hearings. You have not had public hearings.  
19 And let me say this when you just talked about public  
20 safety.

21 When you did that measure on public  
22 safety for the Stop Act, I came down as a taxpayer, as  
23 a community person, as a person who care about the  
24 city to testify. I was turned away. I was told only  
25 the city council could testify, not the public.

1           So that is my concern. So when you  
2 raise these questions, you know, it's like, oh, you  
3 are opening the door for the public, but you're not.  
4 You are opening the door for the media and others that  
5 you said.

6           So that's what I, you know, that's my  
7 concern. And I was so sad because that's why I be  
8 going around every borough. So the communities for  
9 the city to know what's going on and whatever  
10 decisions that the city council make and vote on them  
11 real quick. When do we have a chance to speak? And  
12 so that's my concern.

13           MS. SANCHEZ: Do -- I -- I hear you.  
14 And I'm going to step to the side and just show my  
15 belly the way that here we have a council member who's  
16 just had a child. I am with child. There are two of  
17 us that are with child. And I will tell you that I  
18 have been hungry on that day is listening to  
19 testimony.

20           We do listen. Now, if someone told you  
21 erroneously that you couldn't testify, that's an issue  
22 and we should talk about it. Okay. So yes. And that  
23 was my next point is that if you were told during a  
24 public hearing that you couldn't speak, that's a  
25 problem.



1           However, there are different kinds of  
2 council proceedings, not all of them are hearings;  
3 right? Some of them are votes and those are  
4 procedural; right?

5           And some of them, in the previous  
6 years, the budget process used to be bifurcated so  
7 that the agencies did one day, and the public did the  
8 other.

9           So I don't know what happened in your  
10 situation, I won't presume to, but I can tell you and  
11 I can look at all of my colleagues in the eyes that we  
12 have spent, and we do spend hours and hours and hours,  
13 sometimes with no food, just to listen to folks, just  
14 as you are doing here today. Thank you for your  
15 service and we need to do more of it.

16           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

17           MS. SANCHEZ: Thank you.

18           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

19           Council Member Won.

20           MS. WON: Good evening. Thank you.

21           MR. SCISSURA: And baby, tell us about  
22 the baby.

23           MS. WON: This is my five-month-old  
24 baby.

25           MR. SCISSURA: That's more exciting

1 than anything else.

2 MS. WON: Hi, everybody.

3 MR. SCISSURA: Five months. Hi there.

4 MS. WON: I just want to address your  
5 concern, Ms. Jackie, because I really feel for that.  
6 I know that as a former community board member, I  
7 spent hours just waiting to testify.

8 And now I have the privilege as my  
9 colleague, and I did because we're either pregnant or  
10 recently postpartum that we're able to go in the  
11 beginning.

12 But from what I understand from our  
13 legislative central staff, when you had come and it  
14 wasn't a hearing, but it was during the vote. And  
15 procedurally, we don't allow people to speak when  
16 we're actually voting.

17 But we would love to have you come back  
18 'cause we're going to have many, many hearings on  
19 public safety, especially of your concerns. And I  
20 would love to get your phone number or your contact so  
21 that I could hear from you directly and bring that  
22 feedback back directly to my colleagues because that's  
23 really important to us.

24 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

25 MS. WON: Because just to introduce

1 myself, good evening, everyone. My name is Julie Won.  
2 I'm the current council member for the 26th District.  
3 I represent Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and  
4 Astoria. And right now we are here as you heard from  
5 my colleagues, and you will hear from at least 11 more  
6 some who are online.

7 That's almost more than two -- that's  
8 about 2 million people that we collectively represent  
9 who are here, who have taken time to make sure that  
10 you hear from us because we care about our democracy,  
11 and we care about the democratic process and making  
12 sure that procedurally we are inclusive and inviting  
13 and engaging with the public.

14 So currently this past June, the city  
15 council overwhelmingly voted to place some measure  
16 before voters that would require the Advice and  
17 Consent of the council as part of appointment process  
18 for 20 additional city commissioners.

19 And this would add new roles that more  
20 than one dozen to the council currently have Advice  
21 and Consent power for, such as the Department of  
22 Investigation, TLC commissioner, and so forth.

23 And the Charter Revision Commission, we  
24 ask you to choose either to -- will you undermine the  
25 will of the people and block their vote this fall, or

1 will you uphold the tenants of representative  
2 democracy oversight and our system of checks and  
3 balances?

4 We ask you that Advice and Consent is  
5 crucial for safeguarding our democracy. Without it,  
6 the power of a government goes unchecked in the hands  
7 of the person or entity. And city agency  
8 commissioners play a critical role in ensuring New  
9 Yorkers receive their study services as efficiently as  
10 possible.

11 Advice and Consent ensures  
12 commissioners are scrutinized in the public eye and  
13 approved based solely on their qualifications on  
14 merit, dedication to serving the public.

15 Following this bill's passage, council  
16 members, myself included, shared information about the  
17 proposal with their constituency and informed that it  
18 would be on their ballot this fall.

19 Rushed revisions of the city charter  
20 undermine this, adding potential items to the ballot  
21 that have been raised during a handful of sparsely  
22 attended public meetings that lacked outreach and the  
23 input with elected officials and community groups  
24 undermined good governance foundation of a Charter  
25 Revision Commission's mission.

1           So language inclusive, culturally  
2 competent outreach must be done in communities like  
3 mine where I represent mostly 60 percent foreign born,  
4 many foreign languages, especially those that are not  
5 typically translated like Tibetan, Nepali, and  
6 Bhutanese. And we simply ask you to not rush this.

7           And we have -- you have the  
8 authorization to operate until election day 2025 when  
9 voters will be laser focused on New York City  
10 government and decided on their pick of a number of  
11 city officials, including mayor, comp controller,  
12 public advocate, myself, the council members who have  
13 been elected the same way; and more time means real  
14 community input, better ideas, and more education for  
15 New Yorkers.

16           So I urge you to honor the will of the  
17 people and hold off adding any new items to the ballot  
18 until November 2025. Thank you so much everyone.

19           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
20 And we're thrilled to be in your home borough, by the  
21 way.

22           Council Member Chi Osse from Brooklyn.

23           MR. OSSE: Good evening, everyone. My  
24 name is -- nice to see you, Carlos.

25           MR. SCISSURA: Good seeing you.

1 MR. OSSE: How are you?

2 My name is Council Member Chi Osse and  
3 I represent Bed Stuy in Crown Heights in the best  
4 borough in New York City. I know that we are in  
5 Queens today, the second best borough in New York  
6 City.

7 MR. SCISSURA: Some people would argue  
8 that your district is the heart of New York City.

9 MR. OSSE: Exactly.

10 MR. SCISSURA: No offense to any of my  
11 other --

12 MR. OSSE: Thank you so much. Thank  
13 you. Listen to that. Yeah, I like that comment up  
14 here. Thank you.

15 And I'm here today to say that we  
16 should be questioning the necessity and legitimacy of  
17 this entire process right now, but not the legitimacy  
18 of Bed Stuy being the heart of Brooklyn or New York  
19 City.

20 But the city council passed the Advice  
21 and Consent bill to expand oversight of the city's  
22 executive branch. And we are a body and filled with  
23 council members that represent over 170,000 people.  
24 And we voted overwhelmingly to pass this bill.

25 We represent our constituents. We

1 represent them well and we carry out their wishes to  
2 uphold our democracy. As you know, immediately  
3 thereafter, the mayor initiated this Charter Revision  
4 Commission clearly as a chance to force the council's  
5 measure off of our November ballots.

6           Whatever proposals ultimately come from  
7 this commission, we know that they are secondary to  
8 the commission's purpose of existence. And I presume  
9 that is to be, to undercut the democratic process and  
10 the New York City Council, which is unfair and why so  
11 many of us are coming out of our boroughs to testify  
12 here today.

13           We have an obligation call this out;  
14 right? I think currently in this country we're seeing  
15 a threat of authoritarianism, especially from the  
16 right, especially from individuals like Donald Trump,  
17 and New York City should not be a city that replicates  
18 what that man is doing.

19           You know, I think we're not reinventing  
20 the wheel here. These hearings, Advice and Consent  
21 happens from the federal level when we hear from  
22 Supreme Court justices, when we hear from appointments  
23 to cabinets within presidential administrations. And  
24 we would like to see that happen here in the New York  
25 City Council in the best city in the world.

1           So we are requesting that we take some  
2 time here that we reevaluate and give more time to the  
3 people of New York City to be part of this process.

4           Definitely heard your concerns in terms  
5 of, you know -- you know, wanting to testify at  
6 various different city council hearings. But, you  
7 know, we are very diligent of getting the word out to  
8 the public in New York on how to testify at those  
9 hearings. And we would just like that same process to  
10 take place here.

11           And even when there are mistakes and  
12 you know, people do, they flag those for us, we try to  
13 do better and make sure that we can create access for  
14 other people to testify. And I hope that we can do  
15 the same here with this charter revision. Thank you.

16           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank You.

17           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

18 Just I want to clarify just a couple of things. One  
19 is that we were actually created before the bill. So  
20 that was one. And I personally was spoken to about  
21 this commission months before about the opportunity  
22 and the possibility of this happening. So that's one.

23           And then I think I speak for all of us  
24 when we are very clear, we are not here, we were not  
25 asked to be on this to thwart anything. We were not



1 spoken to about any bills that may be out there. It  
2 has not come up.

3 So -- and I think I speak for all of us  
4 when I say that very clearly; and I think that's  
5 important because we are independent people who do not  
6 work for the mayor. I said that earlier and I just  
7 want that to be clear, but I understand your concern.

8 MR. OSSE: Thank you very much.

9 MR. SCISSURA: No, thank you.

10 MR. OSSE: Cheers.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Council Member Jennifer  
12 Gutierrez.

13 MS. GUTIERREZ: Five one. Guys, good  
14 afternoon.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Good afternoon.

16 MS. GUTIERREZ: Thank you all so much.  
17 My name is Jennifer Gutierrez. I have the privilege  
18 of representing Williamsburg, Bushwick, and Ridgewood  
19 and Queens. So the two best boroughs, Brooklyn, and  
20 Queens.

21 MR. SCISSURA: Then you really got it  
22 all; right?

23 MS. GUTIERREZ: Thank you. That's what  
24 I say. But I'm here to -- I've already submitted my  
25 testimony, but also here to echo what a lot of my

1 colleagues have said, which is just a genuine concern  
2 for what feels like a rushed process.

3 And I'm not going to speak on  
4 particular bills necessarily, but just on the fact  
5 that why I came to -- why I ran for city council and  
6 why I'm so proud to be a part of the first Women  
7 Majority Council and the first council with a majority  
8 of people of color is because we were so committed to  
9 democratic values.

10 We were so committed to more  
11 transparency, to wanting to open government up. For a  
12 lot of us, participatory budgeting was one of those  
13 avenues. And running for office, serving on community  
14 boards was another way for us to do that. Government  
15 historically was not meant for marginalized  
16 communities. And with this, the election of this  
17 mayor and the city council, we felt very empowered.

18 And part of that process is being  
19 thoughtful and taking time with outreach. Many of us  
20 for individual pieces of legislation spent months, if  
21 not close to over a year, on particular pieces of  
22 legislation. And we wholeheartedly believe that the  
23 city's constitution is serious.

24 What you all are doing involved and how  
25 you are volunteering your time is serious. But what

1 we know is that not enough -- not enough New Yorkers  
2 are plugged into this process. And we hope that we  
3 can work together to ensure that more and more New  
4 Yorkers know the value of the commission, know,  
5 understand the value of the constitution and what the  
6 city council and the mayor are here to do.

7           So what feels like to us like a very  
8 brushed and truncated process also feels undemocratic.  
9 And what I'm here to say is that we want to ensure  
10 that this is a thoughtful review, and this is a  
11 thoughtful process in the same way that we saw  
12 outreach being done for redistricting, in the same way  
13 that we do outreach for particular initiatives, we  
14 want that to be done here.

15           And it hasn't felt that way up until  
16 today. So I'm here to express my concern, but at the  
17 same town and time, willingness to expand and work  
18 together so that more of our neighbors know the value  
19 of what you're doing, understand the value of the  
20 constitution.

21           And again, the reason why we ran is to  
22 open government up, to open democracy up. And when  
23 you rush that, it doesn't feel like that. And we want  
24 you all to take your time and do it as thoughtfully as  
25 you can.

1           So I want to just echo a lot of what my  
2 colleagues here have said; and once again, I've  
3 submitted my testimony and thank you all for your  
4 time.

5           MR. SCISSURA: Great. Thank you very  
6 much.

7           Council Member Sandy Nurse.

8           MS. NURSE: Good evening, Chair, and  
9 commission members.

10          MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

11          MS. NURSE: Yeah, this is crazy. Good  
12 evening, everyone.

13          MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

14          MS. NURSE: So my name is Sandy Nurse.  
15 I represent the 37th District in Brooklyn, just not  
16 too far from here. And I'm here today to express my  
17 deep concern with the pace and the rushing of  
18 proposals of new proposals when there is an existing  
19 proposal already for the ballot in November.

20                 And Advice and Consent should be on the  
21 ballot in November. This is a measure and a piece of  
22 legislation that is meant to have qualified and  
23 competent and effective and collaborative people  
24 running the heads of our agencies.

25                 And I think that any effort to do that

1 is going to have better outcomes from -- for New  
2 Yorkers. When the council, when us as elected  
3 officials are working closely with our commissioners,  
4 that's when things actually get done. And that's what  
5 we have wanted the most in the time that we've been  
6 here.

7 I've been here two and a half years.  
8 I've had great commissioners I've worked with. I've  
9 had folks I've had to nag, and we have had agencies  
10 that really don't show up and give the data and  
11 information in our oversight hearings where we're  
12 entitled to that; we're obligated to have that  
13 information for the public.

14 And so having the opportunity to input  
15 on who will run these agencies, who will run these  
16 critical departments, who is running agencies for food  
17 stamps and making sure homeless people get off the  
18 street, making sure our trash gets picked up. Those  
19 are the things that are on the ground that we are  
20 trying to get done.

21 And we want to make sure we have heads  
22 of agencies that are ready, willing, and able to get  
23 that work done. And I think that this legislation is  
24 meant to facilitate that in a way that produces  
25 positive, productive working relationships. And so we

1 really want to see that on the ballot this November.

2 We are 51 people, we voted for this, we  
3 represent the will of New Yorkers. They elected us  
4 here, and this is what has come out of that -- their  
5 election. And so the taking this or delaying this  
6 from being on the ballot is really robbing them of  
7 what is already their right to vote on this. So we  
8 really want to see this happen in November.

9 And additionally, I think it's really  
10 important that this commission takes its time. I  
11 represent the 37th District that has some of the  
12 lowest voter turnout in Brooklyn. It takes every,  
13 everything to get people to understand what's going  
14 on, to get people to know about hearings.

15 We would love more people to come to  
16 hearings. I love when people show up, and it takes a  
17 lot of work to get them there because there's so much  
18 information coming at us at all times.

19 So in order to make sure this  
20 commission does due justice and due diligence for New  
21 Yorkers, you really need to take your time. We need  
22 to slow it down. We need to hear from more people.  
23 Let's have deep conversations about what should be on  
24 the ballot, but that shouldn't get in the way for what  
25 is already due to be on the ballot this November.

1                   So thank you all. I appreciate your  
2 work.

3                   MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

4                   MS. NURSE: And you know, we just hope  
5 you all do the right thing. Thank you.

6                   MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

7                   MS. ROWE-ADAMS: I have a question.

8                   MR. SCISSURA: Yes, ma'am?

9                   MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you so much.

10                  MS. NURSE: Thank you, Ms. Jackie.

11                  MS. ROWE-ADAMS: So now how many  
12 millions elected the mayor?

13                  MS. NURSE: I don't know. You probably  
14 have more math than me, but let me tell you --

15                  MS. ROWE-ADAMS: No, no, I'm asking the  
16 question. I'm asking the question.

17                  MS. NURSE: I don't know.

18                  MS. ROWE-ADAMS: So how many? Right.  
19 So the mayor was elected by millions of people to do  
20 just what you said. And I think that, and quite a few  
21 millions of people still think he's doing a good job.  
22 I don't -- so as the mayor, you're saying that you  
23 feel that someone else sees.

24                  So I need to be clear what you're  
25 saying because we do have a mayor of New York City

1 that was elected by millions, millions of people.

2 And I don't feel as being on the  
3 charter and being a community leader and being a  
4 community person, I don't feel that this is too fast.  
5 I feel that we are going to do the right thing. And  
6 that's the purpose of the testimonies because we are  
7 going to do the right thing because you all are  
8 testifying.

9 But I just had to ask the question of  
10 how many people voted for the mayor because the mayor  
11 is running the city. And I think that the mayor and  
12 the commissions now is -- I see you got the answer.

13 MS. NURSE: I do have the answer.

14 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: That's so important.

15 MS. NURSE: Would you like to know it?  
16 Would you want to know it?

17 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: That is so important.  
18 So I just wanted to say that.

19 MS. NURSE: It's 753,000 people, so not  
20 millions.

21 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: How many?

22 MS. NURSE: 753,000, so not millions.  
23 And the mayor is the executive of this city, and he  
24 has sweeping powers. But we are also elected, and we  
25 are the co-equal branch. We are the co-equal branch.



1           We don't have to be friends with the  
2 mayor. My job is not to be friends with the mayor.  
3 My job is to provide transparency, oversight, and  
4 legislation.

5           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Okay.

6           MS. NURSE: And that's my job.

7           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you so much.

8           MS. NURSE: And we want as many people  
9 a part of that process. And by the way, rank choice  
10 voting I think was a -- a ballot initiative and that  
11 took a lot of process. So these are big changes.  
12 They mean a lot. They are very significant. And we  
13 want to make sure everybody, everybody is aware of  
14 them.

15           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: And I want to make  
16 sure with you as being our commission, I want to make  
17 sure with you, but I had to ask that question.

18           MS. NURSE: No, I appreciate that.

19           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: That's 700,000,  
20 whatever. But how many people is the mayor seeing  
21 now? So maybe that was the question that lives here  
22 in the city, citywide. That's the question.

23           MS. NURSE: I'm not sure what you mean  
24 on the last part, but --

25           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: So the mayor, you

1 know, it's a lot of us. So the thing is, he is the  
2 mayor and that's the bottom line.

3 MS. NURSE: He is the mayor.

4 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: He is the mayor.

5 MS. NURSE: And we are the council.

6 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: And you're the  
7 council.

8 MS. NURSE: And that is in the charter.  
9 And we have strong democratic institutions. And it is  
10 important --

11 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Let the people decide.

12 MS. NURSE: It is important that we  
13 preserve this commission.

14 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Let the people decide.  
15 Thank you.

16 MS. NURSE: I want to underscore that  
17 any charter review commission, it is your duty to  
18 ensure that we have a strong local government. It is  
19 your duty to protect the democratic process here in  
20 this city.

21 And in November we are already working  
22 to protect and preserve that. That is the real  
23 mission at hand in November.

24 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Yes.

25 MS. NURSE: We don't have time to be

1 fighting back and forth about this. What we have done  
2 as a council has put forth a very fair, a very simple  
3 solution.

4 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you so much.

5 MS. NURSE: That is something that has  
6 been happening across different levels of government.

7 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you so much.

8 MS. NURSE: All right. Thank you.

9 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Hold on.  
10 Hold on. We have a few more questions. Sorry.

11 MS. NURSE: Getting myself in trouble.

12 MR. SCISSURA: No, you're not. This is  
13 why we here by the way.

14 MS. NURSE: Okay. Great.

15 MR. SCISSURA: We're here to listen.

16 MS. NURSE: I appreciate Ms. Jackie.

17 MR. LYNCH: -- any of the council  
18 members. How many public hearings and responses that  
19 you have had in regards to Advice and Consent? And  
20 the push because I hear from all the councilmen that  
21 everyone's have this heavy push for it. What was the  
22 responses from the constituents for Advice and  
23 Consent?

24 MS. NURSE: So all these --

25 MR. LYNCH: And I am also a former

1 civil servant and work for city agency.

2 MS. NURSE: Thank you for your service.

3 MR. LYNCH: So I get it, I understand  
4 it.

5 MS. NURSE: Yes.

6 MR. LYNCH: But I'm just understand how  
7 many meetings and how much input have you had from the  
8 constituents?

9 MS. NURSE: Yeah, so like all  
10 legislation, like all legislation, when a bill is  
11 introduced, it's up to a chair to hear it. Okay. And  
12 that can take some time. A chair hears it, we wait,  
13 you know, the members of that committee sit, they ask  
14 the administration questions and then the public has  
15 an opportunity to testify in person.

16 They can testify digitally on Zoom.  
17 They can also submit written testimony for three days  
18 after. Then it can -- then it goes to a vote. If it  
19 has the support, if it has the -- if the powers that  
20 be in the council move it forward, it moves forward.  
21 That is the legislative process.

22 If the mayor wills it, he can do a veto  
23 and then the council can override a veto if they  
24 choose. So that is the legislative process that  
25 happens for all policy in the city.

1 MR. SCISSURA: So I just want to  
2 clarify. I just want to clarify, just so now that I  
3 understand this. So there was one public hearing on  
4 Advice and Consent or the hearing of the chair.

5 MS. NURSE: All bills, all bills are  
6 entitled to a hearing.

7 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: A hearing?

8 MS. NURSE: Yes.

9 MR. SCISSURA: Got it.

10 MS. NURSE: Now some bills get multiple  
11 hearings. So for example, there were bills from last  
12 session that are being heard again. So there'll be  
13 two opportunities. I, as -- I've sat in chair  
14 hearings that I've listened to testimony for five,  
15 six, seven, eight hours.

16 Our education chair, I'm like, oh my  
17 God, her hearings go for, you know, forever. We send  
18 her food so that she can, you know, eat through her  
19 hearings. So to say that there is not public input is  
20 just simply inaccurate. And --

21 MR. SCISSURA: But it's one hearing,  
22 just to clarify?

23 MS. NURSE: Like the charter mandates.  
24 Yes. This is a known legislative process. I  
25 understand that it's hard for everybody to know all

1 this stuff. It's -- there's a lot going on with city  
2 government, but I really encourage New Yorkers to  
3 learn about the legislative process. Please contact  
4 us.

5 We want you to be involved. There is  
6 no -- I don't think any other constellation of members  
7 that I've seen who want people as much as we do to  
8 participate in the legislative process. We want to  
9 hear from New Yorkers. That is the process that  
10 exists. And we encourage anyone to learn about it.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

12 MS. MCGRAW: Yeah. Excuse me. I have  
13 one question.

14 MR. SCISSURA: Yes?

15 MS. MCGRAW: So Jackie mentioned  
16 something about how many people voted for the mayor;  
17 right? So this is one of my concerns with city  
18 council because we looked at the numbers and there was  
19 a very low voters that came out and voted a lot of  
20 city council in; right?

21 So when we talk about the city council  
22 and the districts, there's not -- the city council is  
23 representing a, not a large amount of people that came  
24 out and voted some of these city council members in.

25 And recently, I think you just said

1 something or we'd like to hear from the community.  
2 There was a father who lost his mother, two children,  
3 and his wife to a homicide in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. I  
4 couldn't even get in touch with the city council.  
5 This man had to send four bodies back to Asia, his  
6 country.

7           And the disconnect that I had with  
8 getting in touch with the city council, the council  
9 person out there, and not one public official came  
10 forth to help this family. We are, 'cause I have a  
11 domestic violence organization. So I'm here to speak  
12 for the everyday people because we have experienced  
13 some of the "horrificicness" in our city.

14           That's why I'm here to help make a  
15 difference for our people to bring some kind of like,  
16 how are we going to, instead of fighting this one and  
17 fighting this one and this one is voted, how are we  
18 going to come together and really be about the people?  
19 Because when it comes down, when someone is murdered  
20 in the city, I can call NYPD and get them there with  
21 me expeditiously.

22           I can call someone from the mayor's  
23 office. But when it comes -- I right here, we  
24 research everybody in Bay Ridge and not one city  
25 council came forth to help this family. And he's --

1 those bodies are being flown to his country in Asia  
2 with no help from city council or the council members.

3 MS. NURSE: I'm very sorry to hear  
4 about -- I'm very sorry to hear you weren't able to  
5 get a response.

6 MS. MCGRAW: And I'm pretty sure  
7 everybody heard about this horrific murder in Bay  
8 Ridge, Brooklyn.

9 MS. NURSE: And that's awful that  
10 people had their lives taken from them. And I'm sorry  
11 to hear that you weren't able to connect. You know,  
12 our offices, we have district teams, people who work  
13 in our offices that are some of the hardest working  
14 people in New York City. They are public servants  
15 just like many of you have been.

16 And they are often overwhelmed by the  
17 volume of calls and people coming in the door who are  
18 constantly trying to put out fires for people. And we  
19 are constantly at the mercy of agencies to solve these  
20 issues.

21 We are elected officials. Our job is  
22 to do the city budget and to do legislation and to  
23 help people navigate city agencies. Which goes right  
24 back to the point that Advice and Consent is about,  
25 which is that we -- when somebody comes in, they say,



1 "I got \$5 on my food stamps," I can't give them extra  
2 money.

3 I got to call ahead of an agency and  
4 make sure their food stamps are recertified. When  
5 there's a fire and people are out on the street, I  
6 can't give them a place to go. I got to call agencies  
7 to get them there. So this is at the heart of what  
8 we're talking about is our offices are often at the  
9 mercy.

10 So I'm sorry that that happened to you.  
11 That's disappointing and I hope that doesn't happen to  
12 anyone else. But we do have a lot of incoming and we  
13 are only so many people in an office, whereas agencies  
14 represent tens of thousands of employees and have way  
15 more resources at their disposal.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Now I just want to say  
17 this. You've been bombarded with questions, and I  
18 appreciate it.

19 MS. NURSE: That's fine. Happy to be  
20 in the hot seat.

21 MR. SCISSURA: If any of your  
22 colleagues obviously want to jump in as part of the  
23 answers. I think the question is not just to you,  
24 it's for all of you.

25 MS. NURSE: Yeah. No, I understand

1 that.

2 MR. SCISSURA: But Commissioner Grillo.

3 MS. GRILLO: I would like very much  
4 like to comment on some of the things that we  
5 talked -- we've been talking about because it really  
6 resonates with me.

7 My background, as many of you know, was  
8 about 40 years in city government as commissioner, as  
9 president of School Construction Authority, and as  
10 first deputy mayor. And I can say this, and I'm going  
11 to say this from my heart.

12 The agency heads under this  
13 administration are some of the finest people that I've  
14 ever worked with. Okay. And I really feel that it is  
15 improper, maybe unconscionable, maybe, to be  
16 criticizing these people who work so darn hard. Thank  
17 you.

18 MS. NURSE: Well, I don't believe that  
19 I have said anything that is personally -- that's  
20 great. We should clap it up for the heads of these  
21 agencies. But I have not said anything that is a  
22 personal attack on anybody. This is about the  
23 long-term process. This is about the long haul.

24 We could have a lot of different mayors  
25 and they could appoint a lot of different people. We

1 had a commissioner who had to resign because of  
2 corruption under this administration. And I didn't  
3 want to name that, but I'm naming it.

4 So I'm not saying this person is a bad  
5 person, but we need to have the checks and balances in  
6 place. So I'm going to stop now and I've never -- I  
7 have not in this forum attacked anybody. And I agree.  
8 I was raised by a public servant.

9 My -- both my parents were veterans.  
10 My mother has been a civil servant for over 30 years.  
11 I grew up with government servants. So I have the  
12 utmost appreciation for people who work for the people  
13 and work to make city government or any government  
14 better. We all deserve that. But I'm going to turn  
15 it over to my colleague.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

17 And then Council Member Shaun Abreu,  
18 you're up. So come up.

19 MS. HUDSON: Thank you. I just wanted  
20 to address this and say this isn't about this council  
21 or this mayor. Advice and Consent is something that  
22 has been talked about for a very, very long time. Not  
23 just in this city, across the state, but across the  
24 country.

25 The speaker of the city council, our

1 speaker, Adrienne Adams, has been talking about and  
2 advocating for Advice and Consent since before this  
3 mayor was in office. So I just want to be clear, this  
4 isn't an attack on this mayor. This is about  
5 accountability, transparency, and democracy, as we  
6 mentioned.

7 And regardless of who the mayor is,  
8 regardless of who the council members are, Advice and  
9 Consent is something that would be law should the  
10 people of New York choose to make it. So beyond our  
11 terms, right, we're term limited. The mayor is term  
12 limited. This is something that we're trying to  
13 create as a measure of furthering democracy and  
14 accountability and transparency.

15 I also want to mention there are close  
16 to 100 commissioners. Currently, we provide Advice  
17 and Consent for about a dozen of them. This is simply  
18 asking for roughly 20 more. This is not asking for  
19 Advice and Consent or proposing Advice and Consent for  
20 every single commissioner that exists.

21 It's not proposing Advice and Consent,  
22 for example, for emergency responders. This is a very  
23 select group of commissioners that we have identified  
24 as a -- as a body to say, these are the folks that we  
25 believe the city should have more of a say in who is

1 running some of these agencies.

2 And I also want to mention that this  
3 council has approved every commissioner that has come  
4 before us. There's actually been no commissioner that  
5 we've turned away that has been proposed and presented  
6 to us by this mayor. So this isn't an opportunity for  
7 us to just decline or reject anybody. It is truly  
8 opening the democratic process. Thank you.

9 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

10 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Ruben Diaz, Jr., I think  
12 you had a comment? Ruben Diaz, Jr.?

13 MR. DIAZ: Hello, everyone. Good  
14 evening. Can you hear me?

15 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Yes.

16 MR. DIAZ: Forgive me. First of all,  
17 Mr. Chairman, I'm in route there, just stuck in  
18 traffic coming from Long Island. I just want to thank  
19 everybody for coming out tonight.

20 To the council members, Council Member  
21 Nurse, just yesterday I was in Brooklyn, came from the  
22 Bronx, I had passed through your district. We were  
23 celebrating the 90th birthday of former Congressman Ed  
24 Towns. And so I just want to commend you and all the  
25 council members for the work that you do day in and

1 day out.

2 My political career started as a  
3 messenger for the New York City Council way back when,  
4 only in America; right? And so I take everyone's  
5 points for what they are. I think that the council  
6 members make excellent points and I think that I never  
7 heard the councilwoman attack anyone specifically at  
8 all. So she's right about that.

9 And number two, we know that yes,  
10 the -- this council and the mayor at some point will  
11 be term limited.

12 So we are having a philosophical  
13 conversation here and we've had been having that over  
14 the dozen hearings that we've had on the balance and  
15 the -- of powers or the checks and balances of power;  
16 right?

17 So the thing becomes that if the  
18 charter allows for the mayor to appoint his cabinet  
19 and his commissioners, you know, a lot of people feel  
20 that this would be an imbalance of power by the city  
21 council and the way, like with the city council.

22 My -- I got a couple of questions here  
23 is like, if the city council would like, you know,  
24 Advice and Consent on the mayor's executive team of  
25 commissioners, you know, I know that the council also

1 has essential staff, and they have an executive team.

2 Would it be fair if the mayor then had  
3 Advice and Consent on that? On who is appointed by  
4 the speaker and/or the council members for their  
5 committees?

6 MR. ABREU: So -- Mr. President, this  
7 is Council Member Shaun Abreu. Since I'm here, I'll  
8 respond to that.

9 MR. DIAZ: Yep.

10 MR. ABREU: We're not asking for an  
11 appointment process on the mayor's executive team,  
12 like her chief of staff or anything like that. We're  
13 asking about appointments to commissioners, which are  
14 traditionally subject to the Advice and Consent of the  
15 city council.

16 Let me tell you, I actually campaigned  
17 on Advice and Consent, and sometimes I think we didn't  
18 go far enough. I campaigned on Advice and Consent to  
19 have the police commissioner subject to Advice and  
20 Consent, because as we have seen in the past, when the  
21 CCRB puts forward its disciplinary process, the  
22 commissioner can just notify it and the status quo  
23 remains.

24 So I just want you to know that this is  
25 not something that was thought about in the past few

1 months. It's something that the council has stood for  
2 since I ran in 2020.

3 MR. DIAZ: No, no. I know. I get  
4 that, Councilman. But then now, okay, so if the mayor  
5 then is where the buck stops when something goes  
6 unfortunately, you know, wrong with an agency or a  
7 commissioner. On the Advice and Consent, should it go  
8 in the form that the council wanted? Does that mean  
9 that the council will share in -- in the  
10 responsibility if something goes left, something goes  
11 wrong?

12 MR. ABREU: The council's power is  
13 simply open --

14 MR. DIAZ: The city, because -- no, no,  
15 because going back to Ms. Jackie Rowe-Adams's thing  
16 about the mayor being elected. You know, the people  
17 of the city see the mayor. So when something goes  
18 wrong with the police department or the Department of  
19 Education or Transportation, they blame the mayor.  
20 You know, that's why many of us champion mayoral  
21 control.

22 MR. ABREU: Can I respond to that?

23 MR. DIAZ: So that we can know  
24 somebody -- yeah, sure. You got to take  
25 responsibility as well.



1 MR. ABREU: As I learned in Political  
2 Science, the buck stops with the president. The buck  
3 stops with the executive, and the council has  
4 oversight power. The appointment power still is  
5 retained by the mayor.

6 All we're saying is let's have a  
7 conversation. Put your best foot forward. And you  
8 know what? I'm sure that the vast majority of the  
9 commissioners, it would pass muster through this body.  
10 We have not rejected one single commissioner as long  
11 as I can remember.

12 And so my response to that is, the  
13 council has his job, its oversight. And the mayor  
14 job, the buck stops with him, and he does have his  
15 executives, but it is not a foreign idea to have  
16 Advice and Consent for his top commissioners.

17 MR. DIAZ: No. No. Not at all. Not  
18 at all. Not at all. And it's not, Council Member.  
19 And you know why? Because we see it now currently for  
20 instance, in the state senate.

21 MR. ABREU: Right.

22 MR. DIAZ: And you and I as  
23 Latinos -- and we can, you know -- I know that we  
24 agree on some issues, and we disagree on some issues.

25 MR. ABREU: That's right.

1 MR. DIAZ: But for me as a Puerto  
2 Rican, as a proud Puerto Rican of Puerto Rican  
3 parents, what my concern is and what other people's  
4 concerns are when you speak about Advice and Consent  
5 or confirmation, is that, forget this, I'm not talking  
6 about this council, and let's not talk about this  
7 mayor.

8 Let's talk about prospective. Let's  
9 say the council, for whatever reason, does not like  
10 what the mayor is doing on any particular issue or any  
11 budgetary item. What the concern is, is number one,  
12 when the mayor, when he or she gets elected, they have  
13 that period of time to get ready to go into day one  
14 straight off the bat.

15 So a lot of them are already making  
16 sure that they have their commissioners, that they  
17 have their deputy mayors, so that between November of  
18 the election to January 1st, they're ready to go. But  
19 if you have all these people in the queue now January  
20 1st, by the time you get to confirm, you know, a  
21 dozen, two dozen commissioners, that could take  
22 several months before the administration is up and  
23 going.

24 Number two, if we've -- we've seen, for  
25 instance, I just saw about a year and a half ago in

1 the Senate when they did not like what, you know, the  
2 governor, for whatever reason on something that was  
3 not germane to a judicial appointment in -- in Justice  
4 Hector LaSalle.

5 And Hector LaSalle is, I believe,  
6 whether you agree or disagree with some of his  
7 rulings, he was the cream of the -- cream of the crop  
8 when it comes to Latinos, when it comes to -- forget  
9 Latinos -- to the judiciary.

10 And for -- and so he was not confirmed.  
11 I don't believe it was really on his merits or his  
12 past decisions that the Senate one can argue, made a  
13 point against the governor for something that was not  
14 germane.

15 MR. ABREU: Can I respond to that?

16 MR. DIAZ: If this were to go -- yes,  
17 but let me ask my question.

18 MR. ABREU: Okay.

19 MR. DIAZ: How do you -- how do we  
20 avoid that from happening in the future where if the  
21 council doesn't like that where the mayor, he or she's  
22 doing on, say, education holds up a police  
23 commissioner's appointment?

24 MR. ABREU: Well, with respect to  
25 LaSalle, I mean, I -- I'm not -- I mean, whether that

1 process was politically, you know, motivated or not, I  
2 mean, that's beyond me.

3 MR. DIAZ: It was. It was.

4 MR. ABREU: So with --

5 MR. DIAZ: It was.

6 MR. ABREU: Okay. That's not the  
7 subject of subject matter of this hearing. With  
8 respect to the first question, however, it takes 30  
9 days for the --

10 MR. DIAZ: That's an analysis.

11 MR. ABREU: It takes 30 days for the  
12 mayor to make an appointment. And I can guarantee you  
13 that the council will move as quickly as possible to  
14 get the hearings done in a timely manner. That's what  
15 I would say. I'm going to leave it at that.

16 Any other questions?

17 MR. DIAZ: Okay. Okay. So -- happens  
18 to my last point, what happens, how do we avoid when a  
19 council body does not appreciate what the mayor or he  
20 or she is doing on Issue A and then wants to hold up  
21 an appointment that has nothing to do with Issue A,  
22 and it's over here to try to bring the mayor -- that  
23 creates an imbalance of power.

24 MR. ABREU: I --

25 MR. DIAZ: That's the concern of many

1 New Yorkers who've testified before this hearing.

2 MR. ABREU: So we either go --

3 MR. DIAZ: Who has studied that? Yes.

4 MR. ABREU: So we either make an  
5 appointment -- either we make an appointment without  
6 Advice and Consent, which is denying the public the  
7 right to be, to be heard, or we have a process that  
8 allows the public to be heard. It's that simple. And  
9 that's the way that we see it.

10 MR. DIAZ: No. Don't -- do it.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Okay. I want to -- I  
12 want to -- I really want to move forward because we  
13 have we had a lot of --

14 MR. DIAZ: One last point though on  
15 that, just on that.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Very quickly,  
17 Commissioner Diaz.

18 MR. DIAZ: Yes.

19 MR. SCISSURA: Very quickly.

20 MR. DIAZ: Okay. You can't say that  
21 the public cannot be heard when the public voted for  
22 the mayor. They were and they entrusting that their  
23 mayor is making the appointments.

24 MR. ABREU: So is your argument then  
25 that if we have a mayor, then therefore council

1 hearings are not significant or legally important?  
2 That's basically your argument. That makes no sense.

3 MR. DIAZ: They are.

4 MR. ABREU: I'm going to leave it  
5 there. Thank you.

6 MR. DIAZ: No, no. They are.

7 MR. ABREU: Any questions?

8 MR. SCISSURA: No. Did you want to --  
9 I feel like you didn't get --

10 MR. ABREU: At this point this is my  
11 testimony.

12 MR. SCISSURA: All right. Okay. Thank  
13 you. Good seeing you.

14 MR. ABREU: Good to see you, too.

15 MR. SCISSURA: All right.

16 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

17 MR. SCISSURA: We have Council Member  
18 Krishnan, who's been patiently waiting also on Zoom.

19 Council Member?

20 MR. KRISHNAN: Good evening, everyone.  
21 Thank you, Chair. Thank you commissioners, and thank  
22 you for including all of us in your participation  
23 today for the hearing. My phone is actually dying, so  
24 I'm going to try to go through this quickly.

25 But good evening, Chairman Scissura,

1 members of the Charter Review Commission, Charter  
2 Revision Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to  
3 provide testimony at today's hearing. My name is  
4 Shekar Krishnan. I proudly represent District 25,  
5 which includes the neighborhoods of Jackson Heights,  
6 Elmhurst, and Woodside and Queens.

7 I'm proud to be the first Indian  
8 American ever elected to New York City government.  
9 And every day I strive to ensure the diverse  
10 communities in my district are heard and represented  
11 in reviewing legislation or negotiating the budget.

12 That is why I, like my colleagues, am  
13 also troubled by the process here, which I believe  
14 this effort by the commission will undermine the will  
15 of the communities I represent because it will  
16 hastily -- it will involve hastily submitting ballot  
17 proposals and delaying voters from deciding whether  
18 they want to expand the Advice and Consent process for  
19 commissioners of mayoral agencies.

20 I initially became troubled after  
21 learning that the commission's preliminary proposals  
22 seem to be premised upon a misunderstanding of the  
23 council's legislative process. The council provides  
24 robust opportunities for public input, typically  
25 taking over 280 days to consider legislation before

1 adopting it.

2           This time allows the public to organize  
3 and turn out to weigh in on legislation. Before I was  
4 elected to the city council, for a number of years, I  
5 myself came to council hearings as a civil rights  
6 lawyer numerous times and testified on bills that  
7 would impact the low-income tenants I represented,  
8 often bringing my clients with me as they spoke to the  
9 realities of predatory landlords and illegal  
10 harassment happening in our city.

11           The experience led me to prioritize  
12 public testimony in my role as chair of the Committee  
13 on Parks and Recreation, allowing a panel of the  
14 public, for example, to testify before the Parks  
15 Department so the highest levels of the agency are  
16 aware of the realities faced by those who frequent our  
17 city's parks, pools, and beaches, which as we see in  
18 this moment, is incredibly important.

19           In stark contrast, I do think that  
20 while agencies have always the best of intentions,  
21 oftentimes the public can feel like their voices have  
22 not been heard or considered when making impactful  
23 policy decisions.

24           I know this because I've represented  
25 extraordinary large coalitions in lawsuits and fair



1 housing mitigation over exactly these kinds of issues  
2 when it comes to our land use and review process.  
3 I've had to hastily make calls and organize community  
4 members when agencies make impactful decisions, but  
5 that are not considering the voices of community  
6 members or not in lines of the needs of communities  
7 that are impacted by these decisions.

8           Based on my experiences, there is no  
9 need to question the level of transparency of the  
10 council's legislative process. Our city should  
11 instead expand -- instead expand accountability  
12 measures for agency heads by providing an opportunity  
13 for democratically elected council members and our  
14 constituents to ensure that their needs are met in the  
15 highest levels of government.

16           The council passed its legislation to  
17 ensure this fundamental measure of representative  
18 democracy is enacted in New York City. Our city has  
19 lagged behind states and other municipalities as well  
20 as the federal government. We've had this measure in  
21 place for years.

22           Now with the rush process to adopt  
23 proposals on the ballot of this year's general  
24 election, it would delay a vote on expanded Advice and  
25 Consent. And as we previously mentioned, the

1 preliminary proposals were based on incorrect  
2 statements about the council's legislative processes.

3 We should not, as a city, stand in  
4 their way of this measure being presented to the  
5 voters. The commission should instead take its time  
6 to develop and introduce law constructed and  
7 thoughtful charter amendments to be considered by  
8 voters in 2025 as allowed by the charter.

9 As we see democratic backsliding and  
10 attempts to undermine the will of the public  
11 throughout our country, it is my sincere hope that the  
12 Charter of Youth Commission will instead decide to do  
13 right by New Yorkers. Our city deserves nothing less  
14 and it deserves transparency. Thank you again for the  
15 opportunity to provide my testimony.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you, Councilman.  
17 Council Member Shahana Hanif.

18 MS. HANIF: Good evening.

19 MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

20 MS. HANIF: I'm Council Member Shahana  
21 Hanif. I represent the 39th District in Brooklyn and  
22 serve as co-chair of the Council's Progressive caucus.  
23 I regret delivering testimony today and legitimizing  
24 the proceedings of this commission, which speaker  
25 Adrian Adams has correctly described as wholly

1 unserious.

2           The commission should not place any  
3 measures on the ballot this November, and the mayor  
4 should stop obstructing the council's measures on  
5 Advice and Consent. But having sat here over the last  
6 hour or so and hearing your questions and comments in  
7 response to Advice and Consent makes me think that  
8 this commission is not interested in putting Advice  
9 and Consent on the ballot.

10           However, I feel compelled to register  
11 my opposition to two particularly harmful proposals,  
12 which I urge the commission to reject. First, the  
13 commission must reject efforts to undermine the city  
14 council's ability to legislate on public safety  
15 matters.

16           While the mayor may be dissatisfied  
17 with the outcome of his failed campaigns to veto the  
18 bills, banning solitary confinement, and increasing  
19 police reporting on stops, any misgivings he has  
20 around the legislative process and timeline are undo.  
21 These bills went through a lengthy and robust public  
22 input process.

23           Analysis from the Citizen's Union  
24 demonstrates that this is true of all bills that the  
25 council has passed concerning public safety. The

1 staff recommendation on this issue in the commission's  
2 preliminary report is rooted solely in the desire to  
3 prohibit the council from passing bills that run  
4 counter to this mayor's personal agenda, not in any  
5 principles of good governance.

6 Second, the commission must reject  
7 proposals made by the council's most conservative  
8 members to repeal or weaken the city's sanctuary laws,  
9 which broadly prohibits city agencies from being used  
10 as federal immigration enforcement resources.

11 These policies have enabled immigrant  
12 New Yorkers to perform critical functions such as  
13 contacting first responders, reporting unsafe working  
14 conditions, and accessing city services without the  
15 fear of deportation.

16 As we confront the possibility of a  
17 second Trump presidency -- I, of course, feel  
18 differently after yesterday -- the possibility of a  
19 second Trump presidency, the commission should be  
20 looking at how to continue our legacy as a bastion for  
21 immigrant rights, not how to assist the Republican  
22 Party's xenophobic goals of breaking up the immigrant  
23 families that make New York City's -- New York City a  
24 vibrant economic and cultural hub. I thank you for  
25 the opportunity to testify.

1           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much. I  
2 would just like to comment on something. I personally  
3 have -- this is my third charter commission. I've  
4 served on community boards and school boards. I've  
5 worked as chief of staff to a borough president where  
6 I interacted with council members all the time.

7           I consider many council members  
8 friends; we've all served in different capacity. It  
9 is striking to me that the speaker would call us not  
10 serious because we are serious minded New Yorkers. We  
11 may disagree on issues, we may -- you may not like  
12 what comes out of this commission, but we are serious  
13 New Yorkers who take this seriously. And I would like  
14 that stated for the record.

15           MS. HANIF: I appreciate that comment.  
16 The speaker's comments are not individual attacks, and  
17 I -- and I know that you know that.

18           MR. SCISSURA: I don't know if I know  
19 that anymore, I have to tell you.

20           MS. HANIF: We're commenting -- well,  
21 let me just be clear that the Charter Revision  
22 Commission and it's swift two-month process to get in  
23 recommendations before the August 5th deadline is  
24 exactly what we're commenting on.

25           And so I think the commission needs to

1 take into consideration the lack of due diligence  
2 given to this particular Charter Revision Commission  
3 as in comparison to the other ones that you may have  
4 been a part of.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Yes.

6 MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Councilman.  
7 Thank you for coming and giving testimony. I too have  
8 served on a prior council Charter Revision Commission  
9 in 2018 with you, Carlo.

10 MR. SCISSURA: I think it was 20.

11 MR. BRAGG: Yeah. So one, I just want  
12 to be clear that this should not devolve into a issue  
13 about the council or the mayor. We are not here to  
14 either, you know, lift up the mayor or destroy the  
15 council. That's not what this commission is composed  
16 to do.

17 What we have done, though, is to all  
18 five boroughs, heard testimony, various testimony  
19 ranging from all different types of issues and matters  
20 that are of concern to the population of the city.  
21 And we've taken that, and we'll continue to take that  
22 testimony as we've heard from the council as well and  
23 other professionals and other elected leaders about  
24 what they believe this charter needs to be, what  
25 revisions this charter really needs.

1           And there's been a wide scope of  
2 testimony. We've heard about Sanctuary City. We've  
3 heard about the safety issues. People have come very  
4 passionate.

5           Citizens have come very passionate  
6 before this commission and given testimony about  
7 issues that they're very concerned about, particularly  
8 safety. Safety is being really one of the major  
9 issues that we've heard from on many, many citizens of  
10 the city.

11           And so our job as a commission is to  
12 take their testimony, listen to it, and as does the  
13 council when they do hearings and take testimony, I'm  
14 sure from citizens and hear what the citizens have to  
15 say about whether or not they like the proposals  
16 that's being presented or not. And that's what we're  
17 here to do and that's what we will do. I --

18           MS. HANIF: I don't disagree with that.  
19 Nothing I said --

20           MR. BRAGG: But let me finish. Let me  
21 finish.

22           MS. HANIF: Go, go for it.

23           MR. BRAGG: I, with the other  
24 commissioners, are volunteers. I did not want to  
25 spend my summer coming to hearings to debate whether

1 or not the council's right or the mayor's right.

2 That's not what we're here to do.

3 We're here to hear from the citizens  
4 about issues of their concern. That's what we've  
5 heard, and we'll continue to hear it tonight once  
6 we're done with our elected officials. We'll hear  
7 from citizens as well about issues that are of concern  
8 to them as you will hear.

9 MS. HANIF: Absolutely. I appreciate  
10 that comment. Nothing I said, nor my colleagues have  
11 said, has pointed to reject the Charter Revision  
12 Commission or to dissolve the Charter Revision  
13 Commission.

14 All we are asking for is a much more  
15 open version of this charter revision so that it's  
16 not, it's not rushed. What's happening right now is  
17 expedited, which does not need to happen. We should  
18 wait for the November 2025 deadline so that we are  
19 able to take even more contributions from our  
20 community so that more of our people of New York have  
21 the opportunity because it's the summertime.

22 We know that people are in flux during  
23 these months in particular. So we should think about  
24 what would happen actually if we did this on a much  
25 longer stretch so that communities across New York



1 City had the opportunity to provide testimony because  
2 we're both on the same page. We want to make sure  
3 that New Yorkers' voices are heard.

4 MR. BRAGG: And I guess the last thing  
5 I would say is even through this rush process has been  
6 a robust, a robust dialogue at these, at the meetings  
7 that we've held. And we've had many, many testimonies  
8 on many different issues. So I hear your point.  
9 Thank you.

10 MS. HANIF: Thank you.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Great. Thank you.  
12 Council Member Alexa Aviles.

13 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Yeah. I want to say  
14 something.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Oh, sorry. We have one  
16 more of our -- sorry -- one of our commission members  
17 and then, Council Member, you go.

18 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you for your  
19 testimony. I'm really -- I'm taken back because you  
20 had said our speaker alluded to, or maybe I have it  
21 wrong, I don't think so, alluded to, in other words,  
22 they don't think they're serious about what we are  
23 doing.

24 Well, I think, and I know that we are  
25 serious, and I know because I would not be sitting

1 here wasting time. I am sitting here because I want  
2 the city and the communities to know that we are  
3 serious. Because when you talk about the Public  
4 Safety Act, that's why I really came on because I lost  
5 two kids to gun violence.

6 And I'm not just sitting here to waste  
7 time. I'm sitting here for public safety and every,  
8 every issue that we need to deal with that the Charter  
9 Commission get it to happen with the community. So I  
10 want to say to our speaker, I want to say we are  
11 serious.

12 And I know it's not a personal attack,  
13 but it is an attack from different people. I'm just  
14 tired of hearing a lot of negativity about this  
15 commission. And we are all on it. I'm definitely on  
16 it. And I'm tired.

17 Unity is definitely needed. Let's fix  
18 this city and let's do the right thing. And our  
19 speaker, we are serious. And like I said, it's not  
20 personal. It was said to me earlier, it's not  
21 personal. It's about saving our young people, saving  
22 our kids, and saving our community, taking back our  
23 community, and taking back our seat. And that's what  
24 it's about. Thank you.

25 MS. HANIF: Again, no one is

1 disagreeing. Absolutely no one is disagreeing. And I  
2 don't want on the record responses that are now  
3 attacking our speaker. I just want to be clear that  
4 the public hearings that you all have had been  
5 sparsely attended and specific, specific constituents  
6 have attended those hearings.

7           So we need to be clear about what's  
8 coming up and who's coming to these hearings to, as  
9 we've been following, as the city council. We all  
10 want greater safety for New Yorkers. We're committed  
11 to that. We're committed to that.

12           And this has been a mayor who has spent  
13 much more to ensure that we've got police enforcement  
14 across the city. And so no one is disagreeing with  
15 this commission that public safety isn't an issue.

16           We are saying to put it again for maybe  
17 the third time that we want a longer process. So  
18 there's richer conversation and dialogue and discourse  
19 about what public safety in New York City means.

20 Thank you.

21           MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

22           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Council  
23 Member.

24           And then Council Member Banks, you're  
25 up next.

1 MS. AVILES: Okay. So good evening.

2 MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

3 MS. AVILES: Good to see you, Chair  
4 Scissura.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Yes. Great seeing you  
6 as always.

7 MS. AVILES: And to members of the  
8 commission -- and thank you for the opportunity to  
9 testify. I did submit written testimony, but I would  
10 like to underscore a couple of points.

11 My name is Alexa Aviles. I represent  
12 District 38 in South Brooklyn. Happy to be here. I  
13 think I'd like to touch very quickly on this theme of  
14 safety in two particular proposals. And I guess  
15 before I get into those, I would just like to say in  
16 terms of the Advice and Consent, looking at you,  
17 Commissioner Grillo, I was so deeply saddened to see  
18 you go.

19 And you certainly would have as an  
20 incredible public servant with an incredible track  
21 record, have been someone that we would've absolutely  
22 been happy to say yes to 'cause we did, and we enjoyed  
23 working with you and your team as we do with many,  
24 many commissioners.

25 So the Advice and Consent is certainly

1 not a testament to the quality of New York City  
2 commissioners. They are incredible public servants  
3 also working under quite difficult circumstances.  
4 What we are asking for is a partnership in process.

5 A partnership that says we get to also  
6 engage with these commissioners so that because we do  
7 work for -- we do work for them and with them because  
8 that's the best way to govern; right? Collaboratively  
9 in partnership.

10 No one of us can get this done alone.  
11 So our proposal around Advice and Consent is around  
12 collaboration and it is one that obviously is attested  
13 approach in governments around the world as in local  
14 and city and state governments more locally.

15 Now I'm going to take it back very  
16 quickly 'cause I know you have a full room to the  
17 other proposal. Now, I serve as the chair of the New  
18 York City Committee on Immigration. And as chair, you  
19 know, I do feel responsible to speak on a manner of  
20 proposals regarding New York City's beloved immigrant  
21 community, of which is nearly 40 percent of this city  
22 finds its roots in other countries around the world.

23 So this diverse and most important  
24 community, and certainly that includes new arrivals,  
25 as it does, includes folks that have been here for 40

1 years and are still finding their footing with  
2 a -- with a structure that is so difficult to  
3 navigate.

4 And so I have been deeply disturbed to  
5 hear comments before this commission around rolling  
6 back sanctuary policy. And it is important to note  
7 that these policies, sanctuary laws, have been around  
8 since Mayor Koch.

9 And every administration since Koch,  
10 Republican, Independent, Democratic, has reinforced  
11 and continued to improve these policies over -- it  
12 feels like generations -- but certainly over a very  
13 long period of time. And what we have seen in the  
14 fact, not the fiction and not the hyperbole, and  
15 certainly not the fearmongering, is that sanctuary  
16 keeps us safe.

17 It keeps immigrants being able to work  
18 with public agencies, being able to claim wage labor,  
19 being able to get help when you are in a domestic  
20 violence, being able to work with enforcement when  
21 you've been witness to a crime without the fear of  
22 deportation.

23 And this fear mongering that suddenly  
24 sanctuary, there is a loophole in accountability is  
25 simply untrue. Folks can be held accountable if they

1 commit a crime. What we are saying is we are a city  
2 of due process and laws, and everyone has their right  
3 to due process and certainly accountability.

4 And that is happening with sanctuary  
5 city laws because accountability is part of the law.  
6 And so I would just encourage this commission to stand  
7 right by New York City and immigrants, new and old,  
8 and lean into what we know is a fact-based sound  
9 policy, which is the grouping of policies known as  
10 sanctuary.

11 It has kept New York City safe. It  
12 allows for accountability, and in fact it is the  
13 humane and dignified thing to do. Now the last thing  
14 I --

15 Just one more minute.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Please, please.

17 MS. AVILES: My testimony is so long,  
18 but I know y'all don't have all day.

19 The last thing I wanted to note is in  
20 this conversation, again, under the guise of safety,  
21 what we seem to be debating here is whether the  
22 legislative process as -- as is written and as is  
23 practiced, is in fact sufficient.

24 Now as someone who is currently and  
25 probably perpetually disturbed by the legislative

1 process, frustrated, not disturbed, frustrated because  
2 it can be so long and so arduous. It was written in  
3 that way, and it's been practiced in that way for good  
4 or for bad because it allows public engagement, it  
5 allows deliberation, it allows space for air when  
6 things are not making sense.

7 It allows for interrogation and time.  
8 So as frustrated as we may be with that process, many  
9 councils before us have practiced a very deliberate  
10 process of legislating.

11 And this notion that the How Many Stops  
12 Act or any public safety legislation did not receive  
13 ample public process is quite frankly just not true.  
14 As one of the prime co-sponsors, I can tell you  
15 certainly Ms. Jackie, the fact that you were at a  
16 hearing that wasn't allowing a public testimony is  
17 definitely an unfortunate communication that I would  
18 be screaming about, too.

19 But there is a wraparound process, and  
20 unfortunately you missed the other hearing process.  
21 But the truth of the matter is all legislation goes  
22 through such long days of deliberation, both with the  
23 administration.

24 And in this legislation, the  
25 administration engaged with us over months, if not



1 years. Community conversations that is forming the  
2 legislation, pre-hearing, post-hearing, community  
3 engagement, the legislative process is sound, it's  
4 robust.

5 And I would just please just really  
6 encourage the commission to, as we are in this serious  
7 process of engaging in deliberation around our city's  
8 constitution, that we seriously take out the noise and  
9 look at the facts and the merits of the arguments.

10 Because the truth of the matter is we  
11 are not here to debate -- just because you didn't get  
12 what you wanted doesn't mean that we have to get rid  
13 of the process; right? And this is a give and take  
14 process. This is a deliberative process.

15 So I just really want to encourage the  
16 commission to be fact-based, to base to take your time  
17 and interrogate this because we are all defenders of  
18 democracy, and we take our job very seriously for New  
19 York City residents.

20 We shouldn't rush. Let's take our time  
21 to ensure that we have looked at that the policies  
22 that we are going to put forward and the questions to  
23 the public are well thought through, are fact-base and  
24 really have full merit behind them.

25 Not opinions and not petty fights, none

1 of that. But really that it represents the serious  
2 work that we are all doing for our people in every way  
3 that we are doing it. And so I thank you for your  
4 time and thank you for your service.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

6 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

7 MR. SCISSURA: Appreciate you being  
8 here.

9 Council Member Chris Banks.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mr. Chair, are  
11 you getting to the public anytime soon?

12 MR. SCISSURA: We are. We're trying  
13 to.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's a public  
15 hearing but not public to speak.

16 MR. BANKS: Thank you. Good evening.

17 MR. SCISSURA: We will get to everyone  
18 who has signed up.

19 MR. BANKS: Thank you. Good evening.

20 My name is Chris Banks. I'm the council member for  
21 the 42nd Council District, and I'm here today to  
22 discuss the critical importance of the proposed  
23 Charter Revision.

24 The city council firmly believes that  
25 Advice and Consent are essential. And when the

1 appointing leaders to some of the most influential  
2 roles in the New York City government, it's important.  
3 It is imperative that these key roles receive approval  
4 from the council.

5 For far too long we've relied on a  
6 single person to make these appointments, which can  
7 lead to the concentration of power and decisions that  
8 may not always benefit all New Yorkers.

9 This past June, the city council and a  
10 strong show of unity voted overwhelmingly to pass a  
11 measure that would place before the voters a proposal  
12 requiring the Advice and Consent of the council in the  
13 appointment process for 20 additional city agency  
14 commissioners.

15 The council is a co-equal branch of  
16 government, and its authority should not be undermined  
17 by any individual or agency. It's our democratic  
18 right and the right of all New Yorkers to have a say  
19 in who we appoint to lead the key agencies and help  
20 shape the future of our city.

21 We must ensure accountability and  
22 transparency in this process. I strongly support the  
23 principles of checks and balances, which is why I  
24 believe we should move forward with placing the  
25 Charter Revision on the ballot. Let us respect the

1 will of the voters.

2 The residents of the 42nd Council  
3 Madock District sent me here to fight for them. And  
4 I'm committed to upholding that promise I've made to  
5 them. So I thank you so much for the opportunity and  
6 please slow down the process. Let's be more  
7 deliberative.

8 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
9 Okay. I do want to acknowledge that our vice chair,  
10 Dr. Hazel Dukes is on Zoom as well. I'm going to call  
11 people up three, four at a time so we can have people  
12 lined up. I know everyone's been waiting patiently  
13 and I thank you.

14 Jeff Baker, Ariel Amaja, Phil Wong, and  
15 then Christopher Leon Johnson.

16 MR. BAKER: Good evening, Chairperson  
17 Mr. Scissura, and Vice Chair Dukes, and the members of  
18 the commission. I'm Jeffrey Baker. I serve as the  
19 Deputy Chief of staff for legislation and policy for  
20 the New York City Council, a position I've held since  
21 2022.

22 Prior to my current position, I was the  
23 director of the legislative division at the council  
24 for five years and I've served at the council for over  
25 18 years. My comments today were going to be focused

1 on the city council's process. I do believe that the  
2 council members have already gone over most of that  
3 process that I was going to cover.

4 So I'm not going to read those in my  
5 remarks. I do just want to reiterate some statements  
6 and I will submit my -- my entire comments --

7 MR. SCISSURA: Appreciate that. Thank  
8 you.

9 MR. BAKER: -- for the council or for  
10 the -- for the Charter Commission. I just want to  
11 reiterate that any -- once a bill has been introduced,  
12 any person may correspond with or ask to meet a  
13 sponsor.

14 Any member of the council, the  
15 legislative staff, including myself, to discuss  
16 legislation at any time after it's been introduced,  
17 does not have to have a hearing. We're happy to meet  
18 with you to discuss the legislation.

19 Any person may testify remotely or in  
20 person at any initial public hearing on legislation.  
21 Any person may submit testimony in writing for  
22 inclusion on the record at that hearing.

23 Any person may send letters of support  
24 or opposition on any legislation at any time, and they  
25 all get tracked. The council also actively engages

1 with the administration and city agencies on all bills  
2 and actively solicits feedback from stakeholders and  
3 experts that are known to us on the bills.

4 So I just wanted to reiterate all that  
5 and then I'll just skip to my final comments, which  
6 were to contrast the council's legislative process  
7 with that of the administration.

8 So part of the reason that the  
9 council's legislative process has drawn any attention  
10 is because it is open and transparent. That fact  
11 invites criticism. But most of the decisions that the  
12 mayor and the city agencies make daily affecting  
13 operations and policy require no public process at  
14 all.

15 No fiscal impact statements are  
16 required, no public input is solicited, and no  
17 explanations are given. And because there is no  
18 public process for these decisions, our attention is  
19 focused on fine tuning the public process of the one  
20 branch of city government that actually has one.

21 Frequently, the only meaningful debate  
22 on the mayor's public policy decisions occurs at the  
23 council at oversight hearings or while considering  
24 legislation. Weakening the council's ability to  
25 impact policy through legislation only empowers the

1 office of the mayor to set policy with no input  
2 whatsoever.

3           Furthermore, when the city council is  
4 considering a bill that affects the operation of city  
5 government, we always engage with the agencies or  
6 entities that we are regulating. We welcome the  
7 expression of legal, fiscal, logistical, and  
8 operational concerns. And we will make amendments  
9 where we can without sacrificing the policy vision of  
10 the council.

11           As I testified today, we are three days  
12 away from what will likely be your final vote to  
13 approve ballot measures that may directly impact the  
14 operations of the New York City Council, and which may  
15 have serious implications on how public policy is  
16 formed in New York City.

17           And as of today, no one knows what  
18 those measures will be. No one has been given an  
19 opportunity to meaningfully comment on them. No one  
20 will have an opportunity to improve them through  
21 debate and public discourse, leased a law, the entity  
22 that you are seeking to regulate.

23           If this Charter Commission is  
24 legitimately concerned about the ability of  
25 stakeholders to provide input during the legislative

1 process, then it must recognize that it is currently  
2 engaged in a legislative process and it is failing to  
3 meet even the most basic requirements of openness and  
4 transparency.

5 MR. SCISSURA: I just want to be clear  
6 about openness and transparency. So we've had 15  
7 hearings, over 700 people have participated, over 200  
8 individuals or entities have submitted testimony.  
9 We've been on Zoom, we've publicized our hearings,  
10 we've sat at hearings as long as it's taken. We've  
11 done morning and evenings, five boroughs. Why is that  
12 not transparent?

13 MR. BAKER: What are you going to be  
14 voting on?

15 MR. SCISSURA: There's a preliminary  
16 report out. People have had an opportunity to come  
17 out and speak about it. Some have, some haven't. And  
18 then we will vote on a report that will be made  
19 public, and then people will have several months to  
20 decide if they want to support these questions or not.

21 MR. BAKER: Well, at no point during  
22 this process were questions asked of the city council  
23 of how the -- its process actually works. There  
24 wasn't any back and forth. That's completely separate  
25 from how the city council would approach regulating



1 agencies. We always engage with the agencies because  
2 we don't know what we don't know, and we want to know  
3 because that's how you get good policy.

4 And in that back and forth, we make  
5 amendments and the bills become better. We don't know  
6 what will be proposed or what won't be proposed.

7 MR. SCISSURA: Great. I just want to  
8 acknowledge our executive director, Diane Savino.

9 Did you want to --

10 MS. SAVINO: I invited every member of  
11 council, and I had a conversation with the Speaker's  
12 office about the process. So they were certainly  
13 allowed to participate and engage. They chose not to  
14 until tonight. This is the first time in any  
15 meaningful way.

16 MR. BAKER: We still don't know as of  
17 today what the proposals will be. We have not had an  
18 opportunity. No person, counsel, or any member of the  
19 public has an opportunity to discuss the language that  
20 is being considered.

21 MR. SCISSURA: This has been the way  
22 all charter commissions have been done. I've been on  
23 three, it's standard operating practice. But I want  
24 to make sure people heard what our executive director  
25 said that she invited the Speaker. You spoke to

1 someone in the Speaker's office?

2 MS. SAVINO: Yeah. I spoke to the  
3 Speaker directly.

4 MR. SCISSURA: Okay.

5 MR. BAKER: I do believe that the  
6 charter commission that was created by the city  
7 council did have proposals that impacted the operation  
8 of certain city agencies. And there were  
9 conversations with those agencies throughout the  
10 entire process of that charter commission.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Great. Thank you. I'm  
12 going to move on to the next speaker.

13 Ariel Amaja. Did I say that right?  
14 I'm sorry.

15 By the way, I'm going to make an  
16 apology about butchering people's names at the outset.

17 MR. AMAJA: Hi. First time doing this.  
18 But yeah, Ariel.

19 MR. SCISSURA: Awesome.

20 MR. AMAJA: Yeah. So I -- I'm in  
21 Tremont under Pierina Sanchez. So opening remark,  
22 basically. Sorry if this is a little ignorant. So I  
23 have seven questions and about six relatively novel  
24 ideas generally for New York City. So --

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm sorry, can I

1 ask you to just pull the mic a little closer to you?

2 MR. AMAJA: Sure, sure.

3 You guys hear me now?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Yeah.

6 MR. AMAJA: Cool.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

8 MR. AMAJA: Yeah, so first question.

9 I'm, you know, I've been in New York City for four  
10 years now, basically. How much potential ad revenue  
11 is lost due to the behavioral nudges on the subway? I  
12 see this all the time and it gets a little boring.  
13 That's one. Efforts being made.

14 Question 2, efforts being made in New  
15 York City. Two and four, cybersecurity issues in  
16 regards to Link NYC. My experience it has it that  
17 someone -- some people on the subway have been cyber  
18 hacked.

19 Question 3, discrepancies between ideas  
20 I see on the news. So recently, I saw weapon  
21 detection being implemented by, in Times Square. And  
22 you know, I've -- I have a family member of mine who  
23 lives near there and I went maybe like two days after,  
24 and I didn't see it.

25 So that -- that's -- yeah, that's a

1 discrepancy there. That's question three.

2 Question 4, who updates the Link NYC  
3 terminals? My experience with literal has it that  
4 some work and some don't.

5 Question 5, what is currently being  
6 planned/done for the issue of Link NYC not working  
7 between stations? So for instance, you know, the  
8 Wi-Fi. I mean, between the stations, obviously it  
9 doesn't work 'cause you need to be still and then the  
10 Wi-Fi can answer the phone. But, you know, sometimes  
11 I like watch films on my iPad, stuff like that between  
12 the stations. That would help a lot.

13 Question 6, what strategies are  
14 currently in place for NYPD to identify deep fakes, AI  
15 generated lies, in regards to like Citizen app or  
16 yeah, public uploads, information on crime, tech news,  
17 et cetera. Speaking directly for New York City.

18 Question 7, efforts being made to raise  
19 technological savviness in New York City. I can count  
20 on many hands how many times the situation could have  
21 been, you know, dealt with sooner, perhaps avoided  
22 should the citizen community member, whoever have been  
23 more tech savvy, for instance, on Citizen app.

24 I realized it just the other day. Just  
25 I use it and I can speak to someone in almost in

1 seconds. Okay. So now those are the questions. Now  
2 I'll go with the easier ideas. So, guys, please keep  
3 an open mind. These are kind of fun.

4 MR. SCISSURA: So you're --

5 MR. AMAJA: Can I --

6 MR. SCISSURA: You want to wrap up and  
7 then just please submit your testimony?

8 MR. AMAJA: Sure. So I'll go easy  
9 first. So bulletproof. So bullet --

10 MR. SCISSURA: But we're going to  
11 really keep it at three minutes because we have a lot  
12 of people that want to speak.

13 MR. AMAJA: Sure, sure.

14 MR. SCISSURA: So if you want to submit  
15 the rest of it, I think that would be best.

16 MR. AMAJA: Sure. Yeah. So -- so fun.  
17 Yeah. Fun idea. Yeah. So currently, so for three on  
18 one on the app, it doesn't have an option to send a  
19 photo. You have to file a complaint. That's one  
20 idea.

21 Second idea for NYC parks, basically  
22 for the -- like, we play basketball, have rental  
23 basketballs perhaps for the big parks,  
24 book -- and -- park or where we play basketball. Idea  
25 3 basically is --

1 MR. SCISSURA: I'm going to ask you to  
2 end it now.

3 MR. AMAJA: Sure. Sure.

4 MR. SCISSURA: But just make sure you  
5 send it to us so that we have it in writing.

6 MR. AMAJA: Send it? Yeah.

7 MR. SCISSURA: You could send it to the  
8 charter email so we have all of your ideas.

9 MR. AMAJA: Sure. Okay.

10 MR. SCISSURA: Great. Thank you. I'm  
11 going to call it Phil Wong next.

12 MR. WONG: Oh no, he was ahead of me.  
13 So he --

14 MR. SCISSURA: Christopher Leon  
15 Johnson, however you guys want to do it.

16 MR. AMAJA: All right.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. Hello, my name is  
18 Christopher Leon Johnson and I'm from Brooklyn, New  
19 York. And I want to know -- I know I've been hearing  
20 in an hour worth of crappy speeches from every city  
21 council member, including Christopher Banks.

22 All your speeches were trash, and  
23 everybody knows it. Let me ask the city council this  
24 question. I know you have Crystal Hudson here, the  
25 chair of the agent committee. Thank you for staying.

1           Why do you let every nonprofit, corrupt  
2 nonprofit speak before the people? There's a --

3           MR. SCISSURA: We're not -- let me just  
4 interrupt. No, no. No. Let me interrupt. So first  
5 of all, we are not going to listen to attacks on  
6 anyone.

7           MR. JOHNSON: Okay. I understand.

8           MR. SCISSURA: So let me finish.

9           MR. JOHNSON: Okay.

10          MR. SCISSURA: We're not going to  
11 listen to attacks on members of the council or on  
12 individuals. We are not here for that.

13          MR. JOHNSON: Okay. I understand.

14          MR. SCISSURA: And we are not here for  
15 people to debate amongst themselves. If you want to  
16 make a statement to us, please do so.

17          MR. JOHNSON: Okay. I make a  
18 statement. So all right. Let me ask that question.  
19 So let me go forward. Okay? We need to repeal the  
20 sanctuary city laws in New York City. These laws are  
21 destroying the city of New York -- in New York.

22                 I know that majority of us here are not  
23 against the migrants. Let's make that clear. I know  
24 there's a lot of people that's on that's watching on  
25 social media. They like to say that people, anybody's

1 against the sanctuary city laws are anti-migrant.  
2 That is beyond, beyond the truth 'cause we're all here  
3 are immigrants. We are all immigrants.

4 And what the problem is that these  
5 migrants, they're all -- they -- a lot of them -- a  
6 majority of them are criminals and they're destroying  
7 the fabric of the city. And the city council, they're  
8 hell bent on protecting these migrants because these  
9 corrupt nonprofits like Make the World New York, the  
10 NYIC, Local New York, and Envision Freedom Fund, the  
11 Worker JUSTICE Project, and Local MENA and NICE  
12 Workers.

13 They're trying to protect these  
14 nonprofits. This is all it's about. And another  
15 thing they need to repeal is the gang database. We  
16 need to -- not the -- we need to repeat it. We need  
17 to keep the gang database. The problem is we got a  
18 couple city council members like Alexa -- not  
19 Alexa -- Thea Stevens, who introduced a bill,  
20 reintroduced a bill that Antonio Reynoso introduced to  
21 repeal the gang database.

22 That gang database is needed now  
23 because of this crisis with the migrants. We have a  
24 lot of migrant gangs in the City of New York. And a  
25 lot of them, MS-13, they're -- they're Nortenos,



1 Surenos. And they -- we need to know who these guys  
2 and gals are.

3 Those guys are really dangerous.  
4 People talking about, okay, we have the African  
5 American gangs like the Bloods and Crips, but the  
6 Latino gang, that's as -- they're just as dangerous as  
7 the Black gangs. So we need to keep this database in.

8 And one more thing that we need to  
9 repeal in the city council is that How Many Stops Act.  
10 That How Many Stops Act, I could -- there's a lot of  
11 leak -- there's a lot of unethical things that the  
12 Speaker, the city council did to threaten every  
13 council member saying that, well, if you --

14 MR. SCISSURA: The three minutes are  
15 up.

16 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. One more. Let me,  
17 if you don't vote for this bill, we're going to remove  
18 you from the committee. We're going to tank your  
19 budget. That could cost your job. And we're going to  
20 put you in the RE Kagan room if you don't vote for How  
21 Many Stops Act. So it's a lot of ethical things that  
22 was happening. So I'm going to end it here.

23 Thank you, Mr. Scissura.

24 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

25 MR. JOHNSON: And thank you. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

3 Phil Wong. The next three speakers  
4 will be Frederick Singh, Paul King, and Yanling Zhang.

5 Okay. Mr. Wong?

6 MR. WONG: Yes. Hi. Good evening,  
7 fellow commissioners. My name is Phil Wong. Thank  
8 you for giving me this opportunity to speak tonight.  
9 I've been a long-time resident of Elmhurst, Queens  
10 since 1976. I'm watching my time.

11 I -- I'll tell you two stories and then  
12 I'll make my quick speech. Story number one is on my  
13 way here, due to the traffic jam in Long Island  
14 Expressway, I have to take local streets. From along  
15 the Long Island Expressway in every single  
16 intersection we have -- we have like a councilwoman,  
17 Julie Won, you know, a woman with a baby coming out.

18 Wait, wait, wait, wait. Okay? Either  
19 selling fruits, selling chocolates, or they have their  
20 kits coming out in the middle of the street selling  
21 fruits and selling chocolates. And what I've seen  
22 another intersection, they leave the kids there and  
23 they go run out over there, over there to sell  
24 whatever they're selling.

25 Now, they weren't there two years ago.

1 They weren't there a year ago, two years ago; right?  
2 Suddenly there's more and more of them in, like, every  
3 single intersection. They're in Roosevelt Avenue,  
4 they're in Queens Boulevard, they're in front of  
5 Queens Center. It is a fact. Okay? Story number  
6 one.

7 Story number two. I live near a  
8 synagogue on Grand Avenue and 69th Street. About four  
9 months ago, the rabbi of the synagogue decide to close  
10 down the pre-K program and send away the kids, about  
11 20 kids, 30 kids.

12 Now where they are now, I lost track.  
13 Either they don't have the service or they travel to  
14 very far places to have their pre-K. And instead, the  
15 synagogue is closed to house migrants. All right? So  
16 what happens? Well, here's what happens, all right?

17 When they're not allowed to work, when  
18 there's nothing to do, they end up taking over school  
19 yards, taking over playgrounds. They break into cars,  
20 and they steal the neighboring supermarkets. That is  
21 a fact.

22 And unfortunately, I have to say it's  
23 not just Maspeth is suffering. When they start  
24 wandering around, all the neighborhoods suffer. All  
25 right?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The upper west  
2 side.

3 MR. WONG: Yeah. Yeah, one second.  
4 One second. Okay. Now these are my two stories.  
5 Okay?

6 MR. SCISSURA: You have 30 seconds.

7 MR. WONG: Okay. Sorry. Let me wrap  
8 up. Let me wrap up. Okay? Yes, we have migrants  
9 coming in. Yes, sanctuary laws have been in since  
10 Mayor Koch. Back then we have closed borders. Now we  
11 don't.

12 The more hotels you open, the more  
13 tents you build, the more they come. So the -- the  
14 more you accommodate them, once they hear it, "Hey,  
15 let's come to New York." This is what we are dealing  
16 right now, and therefore I support to have the  
17 sanctuary law, Sanctuary City law to have another look  
18 to get it revised to face this crisis right now that's  
19 affecting every one of us, not just the migrants,  
20 every one of us. Thank you.

21 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

22 So before I call the next speaker, I'm  
23 going to take a poll. How many of you are here to say  
24 you oppose sanctuary cities and want it repealed?  
25 Okay. So I had a feeling just from the applause

1 lines.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think we want  
3 it on the ballot.

4 MR. WONG: On the ballot. On the  
5 ballot.

6 MR. SCISSURA: So my understanding is  
7 that put your hands up. You want us to put on the  
8 ballot the repeal of sanctuary cities?

9 MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes.

10 MR. SCISSURA: We -- okay. So I  
11 understand it. We have you all registered. I'm still  
12 going to call people. You can all come up and say  
13 that. But I just want you to know the people here  
14 know why you're here and understand that your  
15 testimony is to put on the ballot the repeal of  
16 Sanctuary City.

17 You are still welcome to come up and  
18 say that, but we understand it. So it's up to you if  
19 you -- we get it, you could all repeat it, but we get  
20 it.

21 Frederick Singh, Paul King, Yanling  
22 Zhang? No? Okay.

23 MS. ZHANG: No, no. I'm Yanling.

24 MR. SCISSURA: Yanling, come on up.

25 MS. ZHANG: Yes.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Pardon me. One  
2 second. Paul King had to leave. Would I be able to  
3 read his testimony for him, or no?

4 MR. SCISSURA: You could submit it.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right. I'm  
6 signed up as well.

7 MR. SCISSURA: Yeah. Good.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

9 MR. SCISSURA: Again, just on the  
10 Sanctuary law, we get it. We understand your  
11 position. You don't have to speak about it if you  
12 don't want to. If you do, you can come up. Yes,  
13 ma'am.

14 MS. ZHANG: Yeah. Hi, my name is  
15 Yanling and I'm very lucky I met Kyle in the elevator,  
16 and I want to thank you all the commissioners for  
17 taking your time and so many weeks to hear people's  
18 voices. And I think you take your job so, so  
19 seriously. I appreciate it.

20 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

21 MS. ZHANG: I've never heard of this  
22 commission. This is my first time. This is what I  
23 want to say. And another thing is that I noticed that  
24 all the council members are actually against the  
25 repeal of the Sanctuary City. They want to postpone

1 it to next year or the year after. This is really a  
2 way of to avoid solving this problem in the city.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's right.

4 MS. ZHANG: Our city obviously has  
5 tremendous problems and for quite a while. And safety  
6 is the biggest concern for New York City. I have  
7 worked in New York City for 20 years and I had no  
8 problem taking subways.

9 And I work in the Empire State Building  
10 on Friday night. I would go to Times Square, have a  
11 drink, and then take ice cream on my way home. I had  
12 no problem. It was a beautiful city.

13 I went to see all the Broadway shows  
14 that now we can't do it. I haven't been to the city  
15 to see my doctor for two years 'cause I'm afraid, I'm  
16 afraid of the subway ride.

17 And I'm not saying all the immigrants  
18 are the bad people, but with this Sanctuary problem  
19 that we're having, we are -- we're attracting all the  
20 immigrants coming to here, illegal, or not illegal.  
21 We're not vetting them.

22 We don't know who they are. And years  
23 ago we were all vetted. We had to apply; my family  
24 had to apply with all the documentation. So this is  
25 really the current situation. I don't think we need

1 to postpone anything.

2 We should really just put this on the  
3 ballot. Let the citizens of New York and New Yorkers  
4 need to decide, you know, what kind of rules they want  
5 to have. Keep their family nice and safe environment.  
6 This is what I wanted to say.

7 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

8 MS. ZHANG: Thank you very much.

9 MR. SCISSURA: Albin Lepiz, John Song,  
10 and Airenakhue Omoragban. I said that right.

11 Is Albin here?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He just went to  
13 the restroom.

14 MR. SCISSURA: Okay. We'll hold it.

15 Is John Song here? Come on up.

16 If I could ask, as I call your name, if  
17 you could come up so we can move it quickly? After  
18 this, it's Airenakhue Omoragban, Dorothea Willis, and  
19 Theresa Racine.

20 MR. SONG: All right. Good evening.

21 Before I get started, I'd like to read something very  
22 important. It's called The Preamble.

23 "We, the people of the United States,  
24 in order to form a more perfect union, establish  
25 justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the



1 common defense, promote the general welfare and secure  
2 the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our  
3 posterity do ordain and establish this constitution  
4 for the United States of America."

5 And so the reason why I decided to  
6 start with The Preamble is because New York City,  
7 I -- like -- sorry. I want to say that when it comes  
8 to the topic of general welfare, our literacy rates  
9 are incredibly low.

10 So all the representatives that have  
11 spoke, they're all gone; right? And when it comes  
12 to --

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm here.

14 MR. SONG: Oh. My apologies, sorry.  
15 And when it comes to feeding the children, I believe I  
16 read a statistic from the City that's one in every  
17 four children, they wrestle with hunger.

18 So why are we prioritizing migrants  
19 over our own citizens, our own future? Why are we  
20 hemorrhaging? Thank you. Why do we decide to triage  
21 billions of dollars, reallocate, and to divest all  
22 these funds into setting up tents on Randall Island  
23 versus our schools and reinvesting all these things in  
24 roads, right, again, infrastructure back to the public  
25 schools? Why is that?

1                   Additionally, this is a comment and  
2 I've -- and I'd like to I guess clear the air, if you  
3 will. One gentleman stated that the buck stops with  
4 the president, and that is completely erroneous.  
5 The -- the buck does -- the buck does not stop with  
6 the president.

7                   We have a system of checks and balances  
8 per the Constitution for a reason. Therefore,  
9 if -- if members like that, elected officials cannot  
10 even get that right, how can I trust them to give  
11 counsel and advice; right? If members --

12                   MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. I'm going to  
13 be very, very -- unfortunately, very close on the  
14 timer.

15                   MR. SONG: That's okay.

16                   MR. SCISSURA: Because this building is  
17 going to close on us.

18                   MR. SONG: No problem.

19                   MR. SCISSURA: So again, I want to  
20 reiterate, if you are here to say you oppose and you  
21 want us to put on the ballot, the repeal of sanctuary  
22 cities, we get it. You don't all have to come up and  
23 say that. We get it.

24                   MR. SONG: Sorry. Sorry. One --

25                   MR. SCISSURA: But I'm going to move up

1 to the next person.

2 MR. SONG: All right. Thank you for  
3 your time. I appreciate it.

4 MR. SCISSURA: Albin Lepiz.

5 MR. LEPIZ: Yes. Hello. Good evening.  
6 My name is Albin Lepiz, and I just wanted to really  
7 thank each and every one of you that are taking the  
8 time in this summer, nice summer day to really hear us  
9 out and to thank the mayor as well for assembling this  
10 commission.

11 I do want to really reiterate what  
12 we've heard so far about the Sanctuary City status of  
13 our city. We really need to repeal this law. I've  
14 heard from council members say, let's just wait.  
15 Let's just wait till 2025.

16 There quite honestly is no time to  
17 wait. There is no time. People's lives are at risk.  
18 People have lost their lives. People, children have  
19 had tremendously devastating experiences that we  
20 really need to be cognizant of.

21 We really need to understand that if we  
22 can't protect our most vulnerable, what are we doing  
23 as a city? It is time that the games stop. We don't  
24 live in fairytale land anymore. We don't live up in  
25 the clouds anymore. We live on reality. We have good

1 intentions.

2 I'm a -- I myself am a proponent of an  
3 immigrant family, born and raised in New York City. I  
4 want immigration here, legal immigration. I want  
5 people whose value will be the same as American New  
6 Yorkers here. This is what we want. We want more New  
7 Yorkers. This is how we become a great city.

8 So let's go ahead and have a real  
9 discussion. Those people that have come up through  
10 the border with no sense of, no sense of anything  
11 really. It's a shame. It's a shame. We should  
12 really be mindful that this is a place that we've  
13 helped build.

14 We want to open -- welcome people who  
15 want to be part of our community. But don't come in  
16 here and start messing with us like this.

17 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

18 MR. LEPIZ: I really want to say thank  
19 you to all of you.

20 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

21 MR. LEPIZ: Let's go. Let's get it.  
22 Let's get it.

23 MR. SCISSURA: Again, I want to be  
24 mindful of everyone's time. You don't all have to  
25 come up and tell us that; we understand your position.

1 So if you want to skip your time and we could hear  
2 from people that want to talk about it other than  
3 sanctuary, that would be lovely.

4 Ma'am, you're up and just pronounce  
5 your name because I'm sure I killed it.

6 MS. OMORAGBAN: And also could you tell  
7 me how to pronounce yours, too?

8 MR. SCISSURA: It's Scissura.

9 MS. OMORAGBAN: Scissura. Great to  
10 meet you.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

12 MS. OMORAGBAN: So good evening,  
13 everyone. I know I'm a little shorter than everyone  
14 else.

15 MR. SCISSURA: No, just put the mic  
16 down.

17 MS. OMORAGBAN: Let's bring that down.  
18 You are -- you going to start my time again; right?

19 MR. SCISSURA: Go ahead.

20 MS. OMORAGBAN: All right. So good  
21 evening, everyone. I would like to thank Chair  
22 Scissura and all members of the Charter Remission  
23 Commission for convening this hearing and giving us  
24 the opportunity to testify today.

25 My name is Airenakhue Omoragban and I'm

1 the New York Policy Manager at African Communities  
2 Together, which is a national organization of African  
3 immigrants dedicated to fighting for civil rights,  
4 opportunity, and a better life for immigrants in the  
5 United States.

6 It has kind of come to our attention  
7 that the commission plans to include questions on  
8 November 2024 ballot asking New York residents to vote  
9 on the repeal of New York City sanctuary laws. This  
10 is outside of the purview of the commission's  
11 jurisdiction, and we are urging you to refrain from  
12 doing so.

13 Earlier this year, you were charged  
14 with reviewing the city charter in its entirety and  
15 evaluating ways to promote public safety and fiscal  
16 responsibility.

17 You were also asked to enhance the  
18 deliberation process, strengthen the opportunities for  
19 input by the public, and revise the charter to promote  
20 public safety. We all know that everyone in city  
21 council, they have this passed. They have this  
22 authority to pass legislation. There are processes  
23 that they have to go through.

24 And if what we're hearing is true, how  
25 can your commission put something like this in front

1 of the voters without giving the public the  
2 opportunity to provide their feedback?

3 Earlier this year, you know, you also  
4 mentioned that you were working because people were  
5 frustrated with limited opportunities for public to  
6 provide input. How -- that's why I was completely  
7 shocked that you're interested in putting a vote like  
8 this in front of the people when written testimony  
9 closed last week.

10 This is the last public hearing  
11 scheduled before your final meeting on July 25th. So  
12 long story short, we believe that it would be unjust  
13 and completely go against the commission's tireless  
14 efforts. I ask you to reconsider. And thank you  
15 again for the opportunity to testify.

16 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

17 Dorothea Willis.

18 MS. WILLIS: Good evening.

19 MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

20 MS. WILLIS: It was a pleasant surprise  
21 to see so many faces I've seen represent New York City  
22 and to be welcomed here. Unfortunately, I am going to  
23 stand here and talk about sanctuary cities because,  
24 I'm sorry, some of our city council members who stood  
25 up only told half the story.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's right.

2 MS. WILLIS: Nobody, nobody would want  
3 somebody to be deported 'cause they went to an  
4 emergency room or because they reported a crime to  
5 NYPD. But that's not what we're talking about. The  
6 term "sanctuary city," we hear all too often and  
7 sanctuary means safe place, Sanctuary City. Who  
8 wouldn't want a sanctuary city?

9 If we hear it, we believe that it's a  
10 safe city, safe for our citizens and safe for who  
11 visit, who all who visit the city of New York. Who  
12 are we protecting and exactly what are we protecting  
13 by not working with ICE regarding people who are here  
14 illegally committing crimes?

15 We, the citizens of New York City  
16 should have the right to vote on whether or not we are  
17 interested in having this sanctuary city status. At  
18 the very least, the name is quite misleading. When  
19 our vets are not being given proper resources to  
20 function as in such areas as proper housing or mental  
21 health services.

22 And our mayor, Mayor Adams, stated that  
23 this sanctuary city status would bankrupt the city.  
24 We should have the right to vote on whether or not New  
25 York City should be a sanctuary city.



1           Fentanyl is being pumped into our city  
2 streets by the drug cartels and by a border being wide  
3 open. Drugs pour into the country at many points of  
4 entry.

5           We are losing our most valuable  
6 commodity, our youth. Thousands of people are dying  
7 in this state every year because of what is allowed to  
8 flow freely through our streets. It's time for that  
9 to stop.

10           Our streets are not safe for people to  
11 walk down. We have seen elderly people be attacked on  
12 their way to church. We've seen a young girl be raped  
13 in Kissena Park. Our NYPD has been assaulted by  
14 illegal aliens.

15           When is enough enough? When do the  
16 citizens get to decide that they do not wish to have  
17 this sanctuary city status as it is a misnomer?

18           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

19           MS. WILLIS: It has made no one safe.  
20 Not the young, not the old, not the law enforcers, not  
21 the new immigrants --

22           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

23           MS. WILLIS: -- who have come here  
24 legally, who wish no harm on anybody. We are not in a  
25 position to take care of everyone as our resources are

1 at the breaking point. We are asking that the  
2 commission add this as a ballot proposal on the next  
3 election.

4 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

5 MS. WILLIS: I thank you for your time.

6 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. I -- again,  
7 I'm asking again if -- we know that. We get it. You  
8 don't all have to come up and say that. It's up to  
9 you. But we understand your positions.

10 Theresa Racine.

11 MS. RACINE: How y'all doing? Please  
12 be good to me because this is my first time ever.

13 MR. SCISSURA: I love it.

14 MS. RACINE: And this is the first time  
15 that I ever, ever stepped in here and found out about  
16 this. So I could have a book written by now. So I'm  
17 not going to write the book, but I am going to tell  
18 you what I am going to say. It has to do with  
19 sanctuary, but it also has to do with a lot of other  
20 stuff since I sat here and listened.

21 I believe that sanctuary city should be  
22 on the ballot. Okay. Let's go there. But I am an  
23 ambassador of the U.S. I am also an advocate for  
24 human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual  
25 assault. I do it on a local level. I also do it in

1 the UN.

2 I want to just share this with you  
3 guys. My daughter was trafficked here in NYC, which  
4 makes me want to come up to this thing and be able to  
5 be the voice for a voiceless.

6 So I can imagine how many others that  
7 are being deported over here or being brought in here  
8 that are being sexually exploited, which I hear; and  
9 this is in the Rockaways, which we never had before.  
10 Okay? Sexual exploitation through migrant shelters.

11 So I'm saying this to say to you guys,  
12 please, please consider and please let the voice of  
13 the voiceless have some type of voice. Even me as a  
14 mother of a sexually exploited child who almost died  
15 ten years -- I mean last year, ten times off of  
16 fentanyl.

17 So when we -- I don't want my voice  
18 shut up within three seconds. I want to be able to be  
19 heard so that way you guys could really make a, you  
20 know, a good decision on how you're going to do this.  
21 Because it hurts as a mother to have someone like my  
22 daughter fighting for her life.

23 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

24 MS. RACINE: Okay. And repeal  
25 sanctuary laws.

1 MR. SCISSURA: We get it.

2 MS. RACINE: I know you get it, but I  
3 want you to really get it by a heart of a mother and a  
4 heart of a person who is an advocate for these people  
5 who go through this every day.

6 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

7 MS. RACINE: Okay. Thank you. Thank  
8 you.

9 MR. SCISSURA: And we're sorry your  
10 daughter had to deal with that.

11 MS. RACINE: It's okay.

12 MR. SCISSURA: Mary Ruane, Thomas  
13 Willis, Brenda Lee, Maria Vagoni.

14 MS. RUANE: Hello.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Hi.

16 MS. RUANE: How are you? I'm Mary  
17 Ruane. I live in Howard Beach, sort of. I'm actually  
18 in Lindenwood, but I -- I'm in the co-ops there. I  
19 wanted to talk about Proposal 1. I did come here to  
20 talk about sanctuary cities, but you've got that  
21 message, I think.

22 MR. SCISSURA: We got the message loud  
23 and clear.

24 MS. RUANE: And I'm definitely in favor  
25 of what they were saying. But what about Proposal 1?

1 I'm hoping with Proposal 1, which says it's protection  
2 to the state Bill of Rights, but the ACLU is telling  
3 people to vote Yes with scaring the people that it's  
4 going to go against your abortion rights and all this  
5 baloney.

6 The point is, yeah, I have the whole  
7 thing from the ACLU. So my point is, can you guys see  
8 that when they put a proposal on the ballot that it  
9 makes sense when you read it?

10 MR. SCISSURA: That one has nothing to  
11 do with us. That's a separate ballot.

12 MS. RUANE: Oh. I thought --

13 MR. SCISSURA: Sorry.

14 MS. RUANE: I put a --

15 MR. SCISSURA: That's the Equal Rights  
16 Amendment.

17 MS. RUANE: Oh, but it says it's on the  
18 ballot for the election.

19 MR. SCISSURA: Yes. So there could be  
20 other things on the ballot, but we have nothing to do  
21 with that.

22 MS. RUANE: Okay. Well, but can you  
23 see that anything that goes on the ballot is explained  
24 that you can understand it, and it isn't twisted?

25 MR. SCISSURA: Yes.

1 MS. RUANE: So if you vote yes, you're  
2 really voting no? Or if you vote no, you're really --  
3 it's very confusing.

4 MR. SCISSURA: Yeah, I get it.

5 MS. RUANE: I like to say that. And  
6 the lady who's afraid of protection, let me tell you,  
7 I had four vans block my car across the street from my  
8 house in Howard Beach for two hours. I couldn't get  
9 into my car and get out. I never went near it.

10 MR. SCISSURA: I want to move on to the  
11 next speaker so that we can get as many as we can.  
12 Thank you.

13 MS. RUANE: Okay. But danger is all  
14 over. We have to protect that.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Thomas Willis.

16 MS. RUANE: Thank you.

17 MR. WILLIS: Good evening.

18 MR. SCISSURA: Hello there.

19 MR. WILLIS: So I was going to talk  
20 about Sanctuary City policy. I'm going to mention it  
21 real briefly. A point to the commission, all due  
22 respect to your appointments. The city council  
23 members have been gone for quite some time. The first  
24 citizen to speak was 90 minutes after this started.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. WILLIS: I think next time you let  
3 the people speak first and make the council members  
4 wait. That's -- you know what the council members'  
5 positions are. I'm sure you can check their Twitter,  
6 their Facebook, their website, you know where they  
7 stand, you know how they feel about Eric Adams as  
8 mayor and his -- and his commission.

9 But we've been waiting for quite some  
10 time. I understand they're busy people, but we pay  
11 their salaries and we're busy people as well. But  
12 that being said, I agree with everything Councilwoman  
13 Joann Ariola said two hours ago about Sanctuary City.  
14 It should go on the ballot in the next election.

15 The council members who are no longer  
16 here like to talk about democracy, democratic rights,  
17 and the democratic process. There's nothing more  
18 democratic than letting the people decide what should  
19 and what shouldn't happen. That is a direct democracy  
20 in action. So put it on the ballot. Let us decide,  
21 let us have our say. And that's it. Thank you. You  
22 understand the position. Thank you.

23 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. We get it.

24 Brenda Lee. Nope.

25 Maria Vagoni. No? Okay.

1                   Obi Affriyie, come on up. Then Vienna  
2 Levitan. Sam Esposito, Ying Tan, Tammi Zorros.

3                   MR. AFFRIYIE: Good evening, everybody.

4                   MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

5                   MR. AFFRIYIE: I'm a big believer in  
6 accessibility, so I also have printouts if that's  
7 easier.

8                   MR. SCISSURA: Great.

9                   MR. AFFRIYIE: I was blessed to be a  
10 speed talker, so I want to help y'all out.

11                  MR. SCISSURA: Love it. Help us out.

12                  MR. AFFRIYIE: Thank y'all.

13                  MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

14                  UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Bring that mic  
15 up a little bit.

16                  MR. AFFRIYIE: Got you. Good evening,  
17 everybody. My name is Obi Affriyie. I'm an organizer  
18 with the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund. First and  
19 foremost, I'm a Black man who grew up in this  
20 community, who grew up in Brooklyn. I'm a lifelong  
21 educator, organizer, and I'm somebody who's been  
22 personally targeted by Broken Windows policing.

23                               And I'm somebody who gets to be at the  
24 stage right now because my family came to this country  
25 seeking asylum. So I just want to throw that out



1 there. And I -- I cannot acknowledge, and I could not  
2 stand with anybody else who does not understand that  
3 we live in such a privileged safe space, being able to  
4 be here.

5 And the thought that other people come  
6 to this place to have those same experiences. So just  
7 acknowledging that. LDF is a member of Communities  
8 United for Police Reform. I am here providing a  
9 testimony to express our deep concerns over the  
10 current Charter Revision Commission.

11 Slowly due unduly to the time limited  
12 truncated period for public input, Charter Revision  
13 Commissions are a vital part of maintaining and  
14 improving New York City. And we are all invested in  
15 an NYC charter and a city government that serves all  
16 engagement, not only just from expert opinions and  
17 from organizer, city council members, for both from  
18 the general public.

19 So thank you to everybody who came out  
20 here and who stayed here until 8 p.m. Your voices  
21 matter and are important. This commission was  
22 announced on May 21st, two months ago. There's been,  
23 you said 15 or so hearings of this, and you mentioned  
24 that 700 -- 700 individuals came out to testify.

25 700 in a city of 8.2 million. You

1 know? Even in Queens, there are 2.6 million Queens  
2 residents. This -- this auditorium has seen more  
3 people here for screenings of the Lion King, you know?  
4 Like, and thinking about how empty this room is right  
5 now, so that's not really of the accomplishment, 700  
6 individuals in those ways. Even comparing this  
7 timeline to the 2019 --

8 MR. SCISSURA: Your time is up.

9 MR. AFFRIYIE: No problem. You have  
10 the rest of our testimony there --

11 MR. SCISSURA: We got it.

12 MR. AFFRIYIE: -- and we submitted  
13 written testimony as well. Thank you.

14 MR. SCISSURA: Vienna Levitan.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Never said that  
16 to the city council.

17 MS. LEVITAN: Good evening. I would  
18 like to make a short statement, please. Dear New York  
19 City Charter Revision Commission, my name is Vienna  
20 Levitan and I'm here to testify on behalf of myself as  
21 a U.S. immigrant and as a board member of Ridgewood  
22 Property Owners Civic Association.

23 I came to United States legally in  
24 1989, the same year New York City gained sanctuary  
25 city status. And this city has been my home ever

1 since. We left my country to escape my brutally  
2 violent biological father and an impressive socialist  
3 regime.

4 It took my mother and I over ten years  
5 to receive our citizenship. Without social safety net  
6 programs that exist today, we spent four years  
7 impoverished tutoring on the brink of hunger and  
8 homelessness. Perseverance, hard work, and will to  
9 survive in this tough city eventually prevailed and  
10 our lives improved. This was my immigrant experience.  
11 I have never felt less safe than I do now.

12 Most of my neighbors and friends share  
13 this sentiment. The quality of life in my  
14 neighborhood of Jackson Heights and Ridgewood has  
15 deteriorated significantly. Trash, feces, urine,  
16 litter the streets. Intoxicated individuals, gangs,  
17 and criminals operate with impunity.

18 Sanctuary City laws severely limit the  
19 NYPD's ability to cooperate with federal authorities  
20 on immigration matters, posing a clear threat to  
21 public safety and our quality of life. Bias  
22 protection should not be -- should be unconstitutional  
23 for any law-breaking individual, whether in U.S. or  
24 elsewhere.

25 Not cooperating with U.S. Immigration

1 and Customs Enforcement is a logical, callous, and  
2 most importantly, in dangerous communities. While  
3 sanctuary status is meant to protect undocumented  
4 immigrants, it does nothing to protect residents and  
5 citizens who are sacrificing their own safety and  
6 paying for their protection and services.

7           Given significant crime spike that  
8 we're experiencing, what is the logic to these  
9 policies? Knowing that a crime is committed, the  
10 perpetrator will go free, subversive of every facet of  
11 civilized life.

12           On behalf of myself and my civic  
13 organization, I urge the commission to include the  
14 repeal of sanctuary city laws on the ballot and let  
15 people decide. Thank you.

16           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
17 Sam Esposito.

18           MR. ESPOSITO: Good evening, and thank  
19 you. I'm not going to waste your time so much on  
20 Sanctuary City, but I am going to say this. We are  
21 residents and taxpayers. I have a feeling I know how  
22 this is going to go in November, and I appreciate it.  
23 I see it moving in that direction.

24           But for the city council people that  
25 are listening and the city council people, employees

1 that are listening, we are the voters. We're the  
2 people that vote people in and vote people out.

3 And at the end of the day, Sanctuary  
4 City was created at a time under Koch when things were  
5 a lot different. Life was a lot different. Migration  
6 was a lot -- a lot different.

7 Immigration and the way the Feds  
8 handled immigration was a lot different. And that's  
9 why we went with Sanctuary City. And I -- and for all  
10 to be transparent, I am not anti-migrant.

11 I am not anti-homeless. We do a lot  
12 for the migrants and the homeless, but it's gotten out  
13 of hand. And all we want is a say. We want a say as  
14 residents and taxpayers to have a vote to say yay or  
15 nay. That's all we want.

16 And we're asking the commission to  
17 listen to what the people, and I know you've heard it,  
18 but you have to understand, we are frustrated because  
19 we are paying the price for something we did not ask  
20 for.

21 And we did not want this to happen.  
22 And nobody in city government's listening to us  
23 anymore. This is our only chance to voice how we feel  
24 because nobody cares at City Hall to listen to us. So  
25 we appreciate you taking the time to listen.

1           And I know I'm being redundant, but you  
2 have to understand, we are frustrated. Frustrated as  
3 residents, taxpayers, and people who just want to live  
4 in the city safe, legally, and let them come legally.

5           And lastly, Sanctuary City gives them  
6 the -- the premonition they could do what they want.  
7 That's the problem. It's perception. The perception  
8 is real.

9           The law is different than what the  
10 people are perceiving perception. They feel they can  
11 go and commit crimes because they're not going to get  
12 deported. Half of that's not true, but that's how  
13 they feel. And crime is going up because of it.

14           So it's the perception of the  
15 misleading statements that are out there. And this is  
16 important to us to be on the ballot in November.  
17 Thank you very much.

18           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

19           Ying Tan.

20           MS. TAN: Good evening and thank you  
21 for the opportunity to speak up tonight. My name is  
22 Ying Tan. I'm from South Brooklyn. I'm here tonight  
23 to request the commission include ballot proposal for  
24 the upcoming election, asking New Yorkers if they  
25 support repealing Sanctuary City law.

1           There have been reports about asylum  
2 seekers, how many of NYPD officers, and civilians and  
3 impacting our city budget to support asylum seekers?  
4 You may disagree or agree, but I would like to share  
5 my personal experience that occurred last week.

6           I went to Costco for grocery around  
7 2 p.m. As I walked out of the store with my shopping  
8 cart, a young man followed me to my car. While I was  
9 loading my grocery into my car, he stood right in  
10 front of my car and didn't let me to leave until I  
11 gave him the money.

12           As I was leaving the parking lot, I  
13 noticed a group of young men doing the same thing to  
14 other shoppers, mostly targeting women and seniors.  
15 This raised significant concern about public safety.

16           I'm the first-generation immigrant. I  
17 support legal immigrant who have the background check.  
18 I've lived in the city for so many years. I never  
19 seen these things happen in our neighborhood just like  
20 now.

21           We should put our New Yorker first, not  
22 the migrants. I believe it is time for New Yorkers to  
23 decide whether we should remain Sanctuary City or not.  
24 That's why, please include a proposal, which is like  
25 repair the Sanctuary City law on upcoming election

1 ballot. Thank you.

2 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

3 Tammi Zorros, then Paula Zorros and  
4 then Jeremy Woodruff on Zoom.

5 MS. T. ZORROS: Okay. I'm very short,  
6 so is he's going to hear me? Yes? Can you hear me?

7 MR. SCISSURA: He'll fix it for you.

8 MS. T. ZORROS: Okay. Let me say thank  
9 you -- very much.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you --

11 MS. T. ZORROS: I'm good. I think you  
12 can hear me; right?

13 MR. SCISSURA: Yes.

14 MS. T. ZORROS: Okay. I will make this  
15 very, very brief. I thought we were coming here  
16 solely for the purpose of voting or letting you know  
17 how we stand on Sanctuary City laws.

18 My suggestion, my inclination is to say  
19 it should be abolished. We should not be a sanctuary  
20 city. And just to give you a little brief background,  
21 I'm a 92-year-old, multiple cancer survivor, married  
22 childhood sweetheart, 62 years. He died after the  
23 Korean War. He was a vet.

24 We survived the Great Depression, the  
25 horrible World War II disaster, the Korean War. And



1 now our next war is the inclusion or the invasion of  
2 thousands of illegal immigrants who are dropped into  
3 our communities, hands out -- with handouts, demanding  
4 to be accommodated, often angry and hostile.

5 I grew up an Italian American in this  
6 city during the Great Depression. We struggled, we  
7 survived, but we were a community and we stuck  
8 together. And most of them were immigrants.

9 I was fortunate that my parents were  
10 not, and they made an effort to improve our life  
11 situation. But we knew what it was to be without and  
12 to struggle. And we didn't go -- ever go around  
13 begging for food or whatever. We worked and ate when  
14 we got food. And we were able to do that.

15 And I'm sharing this with you to let  
16 you know that not everybody who opposes this situation  
17 comes from a negative compromise background. So we  
18 implore you to do the right thing and let us vote for  
19 what's legitimately good for this city. I'm tired of  
20 being afraid to go out at night.

21 I'm tired of being afraid to leave as  
22 to leave a laundromat because there are people coming  
23 in who are angry and don't want to be there. And they  
24 accus the -- the people who are waiting.

25 A lot of things are not good. And if

1 you have the opportunity to correct it, please do it.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

4 MS. T. ZORROS: Thank you.

5 MR. SCISSURA: I appreciate you coming  
6 out.

7 MS. T. ZORROS: It's okay.

8 MR. SCISSURA: Paula Zorros.

9 MS. T. ZORROS: That's me. That's my  
10 daughter coming.

11 MS. P. ZORROS: I'm her daughter.

12 MR. SCISSURA: Okay. good. Same  
13 testimony.

14 MS. P. ZORROS: Same and testimony.

15 MR. SCISSURA: All right. Thank you.

16 MS. P. ZORROS: Thank you.

17 MR. SCISSURA: Okay. Jeremy Woodruff,  
18 then Linda Lam and Dan Coats. Okay. Jeremy Woodruff?  
19 Jeremy Woodruff?

20 MS. WOODRUFF: Okay.

21 MR. SCISSURA: Okay. There you are.

22 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you very  
23 much. My name is Jeremy Woodruff. I'm speaking for  
24 the Victorian Society in New York on a very different  
25 topic.

1           The Victorian Society is a  
2 not-for-profit around since 1966. Its purpose is the  
3 preservation of and appreciation of the 19th and early  
4 20th Century heritage. And we promote the  
5 preservation of historic districts, individual and  
6 scenic landmarks, interiors, and civic art.

7           The proposal that we're making for the  
8 charter is involves government efficiency and is in  
9 particular the way that the City regulates scenic  
10 landmarks. Scenic landmarks are designated by the  
11 Landmarks Commission.

12           There are only 12 of them, but there's  
13 some of the city's most treasured spaces such as  
14 Central Park, Prospect Park, or Tryon Park and the  
15 Coney Island Boardwalk. Those are some of the 12.

16           The way that they're regulated  
17 currently is that any proposed alteration to those  
18 parts needs to be reviewed by both the Landmarks  
19 Commission and the Public Design Commissioner.

20           This is a very inefficient process,  
21 very confusing, and no one knows really who has the  
22 final word. So we are proposing that a very small  
23 change be made to the charter that I would give the  
24 Landmarks Commission sole review authority over for  
25 alterations to scenic landmarks.

1 Which makes sense to us because the  
2 Landmarks Commission designates them to begin with and  
3 has the expertise to regulate them.

4 The precedent for this is very clear  
5 because prior to 1997, any designated landmark in the  
6 city was regulated by that was owned by the city, was  
7 regulated jointly by both the Landmarks Commission and  
8 the Public Design Commission.

9 A charter revision in 1997 in almost  
10 all cases, put that authority with the Landmarks  
11 Commission only.

12 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
13 Thank you.

14 MR. WOODRUFF: That's only two minutes.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Three minutes.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: It's two; isn't it? I'm  
17 sorry.

18 MR. SCISSURA: Three minutes.

19 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Well we sent  
20 written testimony.

21 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

22 Linda Lam.

23 MS. LAM: Honorable chairperson and the  
24 members of the commission, thank you for the  
25 opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Linda Lam

1 and I'm a board member of the Newtown Senior Center in  
2 Elmhurst.

3 The Sanctuary City law by the intention  
4 behind the law, were rooted in compassion and  
5 inclusivity. The current situation in New York City  
6 demands of the assessment of its relevancy and  
7 practicality.

8 First and foremost, the sanctuary city  
9 laws are no longer suitable for our city  
10 circumstances. With thousands of migrants arriving in  
11 New York City continuously, we face an unprecedented  
12 challenge that our current policy are ill-equipped to  
13 handle.

14 The scale of migration has overwhelmed  
15 our city's capacity to provide adequate support and  
16 services. New York City simply does not have the  
17 financial resources or support structure necessary to  
18 accommodate the unchecked influx of migrants.

19 Our city budget is already stretched  
20 thin, and the added pressure of supporting a large  
21 number of new arrival is unsustainable.

22 The diversion of existing funds to  
23 provide services for migrants come at a significant  
24 cost. The reallocation of resources means that  
25 critical services for our most vulnerable populations.

1 Our seniors and the poor are being compromised.

2 It is a poor policy to divert funds  
3 from those who have contributed to our city for  
4 decades, who have built their lives here and who now  
5 rely on City support to survive.

6 This diversion is not just a financial  
7 issue but a moral one. Moreover, the financial strain  
8 caused by this influx has increased the financial  
9 burden and led to a reduction in services for our  
10 existing residents.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
12 Thank you very much.

13 Dan Coats?

14 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: No.

15 MR. SCISSURA: No? Okay. John  
16 Schaffer.

17 MR. SCHAFFER: Yes. Thank you for this  
18 opportunity. I just wanted to say that -- can you  
19 hear me okay?

20 MR. SCISSURA: Yes.

21 MR. SCHAFFER: Okay. And I wanted to  
22 say that through two different marriages I've had  
23 about ten illegal immigrants living in my home.

24 And I want to say that they were all  
25 abided by the law. And when I first moved to New York

1 and I found out about this sanctuary city stuff going  
2 on, but that doesn't make any common sense.

3 Why would we avoid reporting anybody to  
4 the federal government? Because I do believe in my  
5 safety. And even back then when I knew about this is  
6 like this little question. So I just want to let you  
7 know that I do have -- I do want the sanctuary  
8 receipts city law repealed and eliminated. Thank you.

9 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

10 Sarita Daftary.

11 MS. DAFTARY: Good evening. Thank you.  
12 My name is Sarita Daftary. I'm co-director of Freedom  
13 Agenda.

14 We are an organization led by our  
15 members who are survivors of Rikers and impacted  
16 family members. We are among these people, among our  
17 members are people whose family members have died in  
18 the custody of New York City.

19 People whose family members are  
20 suffering at Rikers now and unable to get the mental  
21 and physical healthcare they need. And people who've  
22 returned to our communities from Rikers having been  
23 subject to abuse that they will never forget.

24 They are among the people who most  
25 desperately need city government to work better for

1 them. And this, unfortunately, does not seem like a  
2 process that will lead to that.

3 The current Charter Revision Commission  
4 feels rushed and could result in changes to New York  
5 City government that actually cause more harm to some  
6 of the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

7 There's been discussion of the  
8 shortened process for this commission. I'll just  
9 compare that to the commission in 2019, which held 20  
10 public meetings between July 2018 and July 2019 to  
11 consider potential changes to the charter. That  
12 process really stands in stark contrast to a two-month  
13 process.

14 The preliminary report confirmed our  
15 fears about this process, that it was a targeted  
16 effort to further erode the city council's authority  
17 to carry out proper oversight of police and jails.  
18 Certainly, our jail system needs more oversight, not  
19 less.

20 The suggestion that the city council  
21 should not be able to public -- should have extra  
22 layers of -- of hurdles to jump through and red tape  
23 and bureaucracy to legislate around public safety  
24 matters is a dangerous proposal that would give the  
25 NYPD and DOC a privileged position among all other



1 agencies by insulating them from legislative oversight  
2 and discouraging the council from pursuing necessary  
3 legislative reforms.

4 Agencies like NYPD and DOC are already  
5 among the most abusive and least transparent agency as  
6 to the public. And certainly we see that among our  
7 memberships.

8 We've talked, spoken with dozens of  
9 distraught family members whose loved ones died or  
10 suffered serious injuries behind bars again in the  
11 custody of this city, and then had their pain deepened  
12 by being unable to get clear information about the  
13 circumstances of those -- of those injuries  
14 or -- death.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Thank you  
16 very much.

17 Phyllis Inzerillo.

18 MS. DAFTARY: I urge you not to put any  
19 measures on the back.

20 MR. SCISSURA: Thanks.

21 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Phyllis.

22 MR. SCISSURA: Phyllis.

23 MS. INZERILLO: Good evening. Thank  
24 you. My name is Phyllis Inzerillo and I'm the  
25 co-president of the Howard Beach Newman Civic

1 Association. We represent over 28,000 people living  
2 in the community of Howard Beach in the borough of  
3 Queens.

4 I'm a lifelong resident of Howard Beach  
5 and I'm here today to urge the commission to include a  
6 ballot proposal for the upcoming election asking New  
7 Yorkers if they support repealing sanctuary city laws.

8 Our taxes are being used to pay for  
9 over 200,000 individuals who have entered our city  
10 without any form of vetting being performed. We are  
11 paying \$4 billion a year for their schooling, medical  
12 needs, transportation, food, shelter, and more.

13 Many are committing crimes and U.S.  
14 Immigration and Customs Enforcement cannot be involved  
15 because of the current laws. A ballot proposal would  
16 allow U.S. citizens and taxpayers to decide if we want  
17 to continue this. The Department of Homeland Security  
18 has revealed that 400 individuals with terrorist  
19 affiliations have entered the country.

20 Disturbing incidents such as the rape  
21 of young girl in Kissena Park and the shooting of two  
22 NYPD officers by an illegal migrant involved in gang  
23 activities, highlights the dangers.

24 Additionally, federal law enforcement  
25 recently arrested eight individuals with ISIS

1 affiliations who were allegedly planning terrorist  
2 attacks in New York City, LA, and Philadelphia.

3 Our city experienced a horrific attack  
4 on our own soil almost 23 years ago on a September 11,  
5 2001. The Department of Homeland Security and ICE  
6 were established to address the lack of communication  
7 across different levels of government law enforcement.

8 It is dangerous that the NYPD and  
9 Department of Corrections cannot collaborate with ICE  
10 to locate dangerous criminals that have come here  
11 illegally.

12 They say that freedom is not free, and  
13 now it has come to the point that our safety is not  
14 free. It is coming at the cost of injuries to the  
15 NYPD officers, terror of a 13-year-old girl, and many  
16 others who have suffered imp paid the costs because of  
17 irresponsibility of allowing anyone to enter our  
18 country.

19 I urge you to add this ballot proposal  
20 to the November ballot so that every day tax paying  
21 New Yorkers can decide how our money is spent and so  
22 that we can once again live in the safest, largest  
23 city and greatest city in the world. Thank you.

24 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

25 Jackie Wong? Is Jackie Wong gone?

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No. No Jackie  
2 Wong.

3 MR. SCISSURA: Sally Wong?

4 MR. WONG: Hi, can you hear me?

5 MR. SCISSURA: Yes.

6 MS. WONG: Oh, okay. Thank you. Good  
7 evening. My name is Sally Wong and I'm here to  
8 respectfully request a referendum to repeal our  
9 sanctuary laws. When these laws were at first  
10 enacted, we did not face the migrant crisis we have  
11 now.

12 The influx has impacted New Yorkers  
13 from a financial, educational, and job perspective.  
14 But the most detrimental is a dangerous criminal  
15 aspect it has more our state.

16 As we speak today, there is a caravan  
17 of over 300 migrants who are looking to cross the U.S.  
18 southern border. This is on top of the millions who  
19 have already entered the country.

20 Most migrants are seeking a better  
21 life, but there are many unchecked individuals who  
22 have crossed over with the intent to join or form  
23 gangs, rob, burglarize, shoplift, and rape  
24 unsuspecting residents.

25 Unfortunately, it only takes a small

1 percentage of illicit felons who have crossed the  
2 border to devastate the communities and neighborhoods.  
3 Nearly every week we hear reports of illegal migrants  
4 violently assaulting, shoplifting, and burglarizing  
5 our citizens.

6 Organized gangs have claimed territory  
7 in each borough and promote addictive drugs,  
8 prostitution, and sex trafficking. These ruthless  
9 gangs are relentless and do not fear law enforcement.  
10 They know the authority's hands have been tightly  
11 bound and it would be very difficult to detain and  
12 deport them. This has to change.

13 We must repeal our sanctuary laws to  
14 permit law enforcement at the federal, state, and city  
15 levels to efficiently and effectively expel these  
16 violent offenders.

17 We need to set a message that if you  
18 are -- if you have a criminal history or have  
19 victimized New Yorkers, you will be jailed and  
20 deported.

21 New York has lost countless families  
22 who have exited the state as well as many businesses  
23 that have closed --

24 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.  
25 Thank you.

1                   Milly Wong. Is Milly Wong gone? Yep.  
2                   Again, I just want to say what I said a few times  
3                   earlier. We get the sanctuary city discussion.

4                   And I think all of the commissioners  
5                   understand the request, so if you don't want to repeat  
6                   the testimony, you don't have to. We understand it.

7                   Milly Wong, you're up.

8                   Okay. Let's go to Queamy Yuhu [ph].  
9                   No?

10                  Sally Ann?

11                  MS. SINISGALLI: Hello.

12                  MR. SCISSURA: Hi.

13                  MS. SINISGALLI: Hi. My name is Sally  
14                  Ann Sinisgalli. I'm a registered voter and taxpayer  
15                  of New York City. I'm here to testify to ask the  
16                  commission to add a referendum to this year's -- this  
17                  year's member ballot asking New Yorkers to vote  
18                  whether to remain a sanctuary city or not.

19                  It true is not about democracy. It's  
20                  about democracy and the right of people. We don't  
21                  need time to read and impose to decide what's right  
22                  for our families. Please leave that New Yorkers have  
23                  a vote and decide for ourselves what's right.

24                  Federal law requires that you legally  
25                  immigrate to this country. By this reason alone, it

1 should be on the ballot 'cause allowing immigrants,  
2 illegal immigrants to remain in the city is an act of  
3 harboring federal criminals. I appreciate your time.

4 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

5 Mona Davids?

6 MS. DAVIDS: Hello. Can you hear me?

7 MR. SCISSURA: Yes.

8 MS. DAVIDS: Okay. Great. Okay. I'm  
9 going to be quick. My name is Mona Davids. I am the  
10 founder of the New York City School Safety Coalition  
11 and the New York City Parents Union. I'm here to  
12 speak about two things.

13 The first thing is, you know, the  
14 authority of the city council to dictate police policy  
15 and police procedures. The city council continues to  
16 pass laws that endanger the safety of our families and  
17 our communities. They did this with the How Many  
18 Stops Act, and now they're getting ready to do this  
19 with the elimination of the gang database.

20 Considering that just last night alone,  
21 we had illegal migrants shooting and attacking each  
22 other, we had illegal migrants, all gang members,  
23 shooting at police officers, assaulting police  
24 officers.

25 We also have the illegal migrants

1 assaulting and we even raping the child. The gang  
2 database is really critically important because for  
3 many of these illegal migrants, mostly male, many of  
4 them are gang members, and that gang database will  
5 help identify them when we do not know their proper  
6 identification.

7 So I would like it on the ballot, put  
8 it to New Yorkers the question of whether the city  
9 council should have the authority to dictate police  
10 policy and police procedures.

11 Our position as the Parents Union and  
12 the School Safety Coalition is that it should be asked  
13 that whether or not the mayor and his police  
14 commissioner should be the only ones that dictate  
15 police procedure and police policy because they are  
16 the law enforcement experts.

17 Second and very quickly, with regards  
18 to New York City sanctuary laws, New York City  
19 sanctuary laws, even though they've been around since  
20 Koch, recently under the DeBlasio administration, they  
21 were radically changed.

22 And it's because of these radical  
23 changes right now that the police department,  
24 Department of Corrections and Probation --

25 MR. SCISSURA: I just want to interrupt



1 because the time is up. I assume you are asking us to  
2 put it on the ballot?

3 MS. DAVIDS: I'm asking that you indeed  
4 put it on the ballot. Put both -- on the ballot.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Thank you.

6 Milly Wong. Milly Wong, are you there?

7 No. Okay.

8 Candace Prince-Modeste.

9 MS. PRINCE-MODESTE: Good evening,  
10 everyone.

11 MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

12 MS. PRINCE-MODESTE: My name is Candace  
13 Prince-Modeste, and I proudly greet you as the  
14 president of the NAACP Jamaica branch. For over 115  
15 years, the NAACP has utilized legislative advocacy  
16 among other successful tactics to bring about  
17 significant social change in this country.

18 Locally, our units are encouraged to  
19 keep an open line of communication to lawmakers to  
20 ensure they're informed of our positions on various  
21 bills and procedures.

22 However, let me be clear, we have no  
23 permanent friends or enemies, only permanent  
24 interests. Most pertinent to today's business is our  
25 practice of providing oral and written testimony,

1 releasing press statements, and writing op-eds and  
2 letters to the editor on issues that require the  
3 attention of the masses.

4 Obviously, there are lots of ways for a  
5 member of the public and organizations to offer input  
6 into the legislative process that our organization  
7 takes advantage of, but we found that the power of the  
8 press to be the most highly effective tool.

9 We were particularly proud of our  
10 advocacy around the How Many Stops Act because it shed  
11 light on procedures that have and would continue to  
12 disproportionately impact Black communities and other  
13 communities of color.

14 We talked about the continued need for  
15 transparency in policing, and that any absence of it  
16 would further hinder police community relations and  
17 sew additional feelings of mistrust within our  
18 communities.

19 So to close as this round of public  
20 hearings winds down, it's important that the public's  
21 ability to engage in the legislative process not be  
22 misunderstood or mischaracterized.

23 I implore all New Yorkers to take the  
24 opportunity to engage in a thorough and welcoming  
25 process, to provide input on proposed laws such as

1 letter writing campaigns, phone banking, social media  
2 campaigns, or in-person lobbying efforts.

3 Ultimately, decisions about your  
4 quality of life will be made with or without your  
5 input, and I'd imagine that you prefer the former.  
6 Our vocal and active participation is critical in  
7 ensuring a fair, transparent, and effective process.  
8 Thank you all for your time.

9 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

10 Barbara McNamara.

11 MS. MCNAMARA: Good evening. My name  
12 is Barbara McNamara. I'm the co-president of Howard  
13 Beach Lydon with Civic Association. I'm here today to  
14 ask you to put a referendum on this November's ballot  
15 to allow the voters to decide if they want New York  
16 City to remain a sanctuary city.

17 The city of New York does not have the  
18 infrastructure to continue to sustain the large number  
19 of migrants being bused to our city as we currently  
20 are a sanctuary city.

21 We the taxpayers cannot sustain the  
22 economic impact this designation has imposed on all of  
23 us. Additionally, we do not have enough housing,  
24 doctors, nurses, social workers, schools, teachers,  
25 firemen, or police to keep up with the amount of

1 people we have living here already, as well as the  
2 hundred thousands of migrants already sent here over  
3 the past few years.

4 Let us let the voters and the taxpayers  
5 supporting these migrants make that decision. Please  
6 put this on the referendum ballot on November.

7 On another note, I've listened all  
8 evening to their testimony. As for waiting another  
9 year to put anything on the ballot, that's absurd.  
10 Many of the city council members that testified here  
11 tonight in Queens are from Brooklyn. Why did they  
12 wait until the 11th hour to testify?

13 They had the opportunity to speak  
14 before this. It goes to show that no matter how long  
15 you give people, they will not do anything until the  
16 last minute. Thank you and have a great evening.

17 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

18 Aracelia Cook.

19 MS. COOK: Thank you for giving me this  
20 opportunity to speak. I am the president of the 149th  
21 South Ozone Park Civic Association.

22 We have the largest numbers of shelters  
23 and sanctuary facilities here in Queens. We have the  
24 Crown Plaza facility that housed over a thousand  
25 individuals.

1           The problem that we are having, we,  
2     like I said, like everyone has stated, we are not  
3     against the migrants. What we are against is the  
4     effect that this is having on the quality of life of  
5     Southeast Queens.

6           I have been doing Facebook Live on my  
7     page from the residents of what's going on over there,  
8     how individuals are sleeping on their grass, how they  
9     are cooking over there with propane tanks, selling  
10    cigarettes, beer. It is horrible.

11          We even as spoke to the mayor, the  
12    mayor said he was going to come over there to tour the  
13    area and speak to the residents.

14          What I would like to do, each and every  
15    one of you city council members, come, just come over  
16    here to Southeast Queens and see exactly with your own  
17    eyes what's going on because you really do not  
18    understand that why it is imperative to draw the line  
19    on a sanctuary city.

20          Let us take care of what we got, but we  
21    cannot do it anymore. Thank you. I want to see one  
22    of you come over here. Contact me and come over here  
23    and do a walkthrough. Thank you.

24          MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

25          So what a impactful evening. I think

1 lots of -- two more? Sorry, I don't have cards for  
2 them.

3 Melissa Inniss.

4 MS. INNISS: Hello. Good evening.

5 MR. SCISSURA: Good evening.

6 MS. INNISS: My name is Melissa Inniss.  
7 Can you hear me?

8 MR. SCISSURA: Yes.

9 MS. INNISS: My name is Melissa Inniss  
10 and I'm the coordinator of the operating committee of  
11 St. Ann's Church for the Deaf in Manhattan. I have  
12 been one of the leaders at the church for over 12  
13 years, and I would like to thank you for allowing me  
14 to testify to this commission.

15 I, along with many deaf New Yorkers,  
16 are asking that you consider these three things which  
17 will drastically improve the lives of many deaf New  
18 Yorkers.

19 It is my understanding that there are  
20 79 chapters of the New York City Charter and not one  
21 section titled ADA and Disability Access. I'm asking  
22 that you please add the American Disabilities Act to  
23 the NYC charter.

24 Number two, I'm also asking that you  
25 will add ASL, which is a American Sign language to the

1 list of designated citywide languages under Local Law  
2 30. There are ten spoken foreign languages under  
3 Local Law 30 for New Yorkers that are limited English  
4 proficient, ASL is not one of them.

5 Many deaf New Yorkers are limited in  
6 English reading proficiency. If ASL was to be added,  
7 this would allow websites to include video clips in  
8 ASL, allowing deaf individuals to have equal access to  
9 information as there's no written form of ASL.

10 And number three, create a New York  
11 City Commission for Deaf Affairs. This will ensure  
12 all deaf have ASL interpretation and translation of  
13 city websites, applications, and forms into ASL  
14 videos.

15 If deaf individuals express themselves  
16 in their language, they will have a better chance of  
17 ensuring that their unique needs will be addressed and  
18 met. Thank you for listening.

19 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

20 Electra Holmes.

21 MS. HOLMES: Hello. Good afternoon.  
22 Good evening. My name is Electra Holmes. I am the  
23 founder of the Steer Excellence Initiative, but our  
24 purpose is to promote literacy through audio  
25 engineering and production.

1 I am also a student at Medgar Evers  
2 College in Brooklyn, New York. I reside and represent  
3 the council District Area 2 with Council Member Joann  
4 Ariola. I also put for referendum towards reparation  
5 studies and that initiative.

6 More education, we can make better  
7 choices since that is on the ballot and that has some  
8 that with some things to be spoken about.

9 I think it's very important that that  
10 be included. With that being said, in regards to the  
11 Sanctuary City, I am not against it, but would  
12 allow -- would push for the extension and allowances  
13 for migrants to earn a decent living so they can get  
14 out of the concentration camps.

15 Which is what they look like over at  
16 the Aviation Center, and to be able to afford their  
17 way of living as opposed to it being given to them.

18 My intention is to help, not to destroy  
19 and I think that's what everybody here on this board  
20 and everybody listening officer as well. Thank you.

21 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you very much.

22 MS. ROWE-ADAMS: Thank you.

23 MR. SCISSURA: Okay. That concludes  
24 the public hearing. If we did not call on you and you  
25 came in -- are we taking more?



1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is there any  
2 more up there?

3 MR. SCISSURA: Are there any more that  
4 signed in in the timeframe?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: They came after  
6 7:30.

7 MR. SCISSURA: Okay. Michael and Mark,  
8 you signed on late, but I'll let you come on for one  
9 minute and these are the last two. So let's start  
10 with Michael Sisitzky. I hope I got that right.

11 MR. SISITZKY: You did. Thank you.  
12 And I've testified at a previous commission. I'll  
13 keep this short. I'm Michael Sisitzky, assistant  
14 policy director at the NYCU.

15 I just want to raise some process  
16 concerns. To the extent that the commission has been  
17 informing people tonight to send in written testimony.  
18 The commission's own website has said that written  
19 testimony submission concluded on July 12th.

20 So it raises real concerns about how  
21 the commission is using the public's time. Over the  
22 past week, the commission has basically said that  
23 public written submission is no longer being accepted.  
24 You're now telling people to send in written testimony  
25 tonight.

1           It raises real questions about how much  
2 the public is actually able to input the process at  
3 this stage and how much the commission is really  
4 incorporating public input tonight as it is preparing  
5 to vote on its final recommendations this Thursday.  
6 So just wanted to have that in there for the record.  
7 Thank you.

8           MR. SCISSURA: Thank you.

9           Mark? Mark Perri? Mark Perri, are you  
10 there? No?

11           Okay. So let me just first of all say  
12 thank you to everybody. Thank you to everyone who  
13 came out and testified tonight. We appreciate it.

14           Just so that there's no confusion, we  
15 are listening to people tonight. We have listened for  
16 the last few months, and we will continue to focus on  
17 what we have heard from over 200 people and hundreds  
18 of people who have shown up either in person or by  
19 Zoom.

20           Before I close the meeting, I do want  
21 to get approval of minutes for July 8, 2024 in  
22 Manhattan, July 9, 2024 in Staten Island, and July 11,  
23 2024 in the Bronx. I will call a motion to accept the  
24 minutes as submitted. Any -- opposed? Any  
25 abstentions? The motion carries.

1                   Thank you very much, everybody. Our  
2 next meeting will be on Thursday, and we look forward  
3 to seeing you then. Thank you very much.

4                   (Whereupon, the meeting concluded at  
5 7:52 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSITION OFFICER

I, THEA POPKO, the officer before whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that any witness(es) in the foregoing proceedings, prior to testifying, were duly sworn; that the proceedings were recorded by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of said proceedings are a true and accurate record to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.



THEA POPKO  
Notary Public in and for the  
State of New York

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I, KELLY TAYLOR, do hereby certify that this transcript was prepared from the digital audio recording of the foregoing proceeding, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which this was taken; and, further, that I am not a relative or employee of any counsel or attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.



KELLY TAYLOR

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