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2018 NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING

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120-55 Queens Boulevard  
Kew Gardens, New York 11424

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5

July 26, 2018  
6:00 p.m.

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9 A P P E A R A N C E S:

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11 Commissioners:

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13 RACHEL GODSIL: Vice Chair

14 ANNETTA SEECHARRAN

15 KYLE BRAGG

16 MARCO CARRION

17 RACHEL GODSIL

18 JOHN SIEGAL

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1 MS. GODSIL: Good evening. I would like to  
2 call the meeting to order of the 2018 Charter  
3 Revision Commission. My name is Rachel Godsil. I  
4 am the Vice Chair of the Commission. I would first  
5 like to invite the members to introduce themselves;  
6 and first of all, thank you all for coming out.  
7 This is really existing as an opportunity to hear  
8 people talk about something that is incredibly  
9 important to our City, so thank you all.

10 MR. CARRION: Good evening, everyone. My name  
11 is Marco Carrion. I currently serve as  
12 Commissioner for the Mayor's Community Affairs  
13 Unit.

14 MS. SEECHARRAN: Good evening. My name is  
15 Annetta Seecharran, and I'm the Executive Director  
16 of Chhaya Community Development Corporation right  
17 here in Queens.

18 MS. GODSIL: As I said, my name is Rachel  
19 Godsil. I'm a professor of law at Rutgers Law  
20 School where I focus on land use, environmental  
21 justice, and the intersection of race, poverty, and  
22 education. I also am the co-founder and director  
23 of Perception Institute, which is a consortium that  
24 focuses on how we can best use social science to  
25 address issues of race, gender, and inequality;

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1 and, again, thank you all for being here.

2 MR. BRAGG: Good evening. I'm Kyle Bragg.  
3 I'm secretary-treasurer of SEIU 32BJ, 160,000  
4 member service union across the East Coast; and I  
5 welcome you this evening and all my fellow  
6 commissioners to my borough of Queens.

7 MR. SIEGAL: Good evening, John Siegel. I'm a  
8 practicing lawyer in Manhattan. I'm also one of  
9 the mayoral designees to the Civilian Complaint  
10 Review Board, which is why when representatives of  
11 that agency testify tonight, I will not be  
12 questioning them since I'm kind of on both sides of  
13 that so --

14 MR. BRAGG: I should add that I'm also a  
15 member of Community Board 13. If there's any of my  
16 fellow members testifying this evening, I will not  
17 be participating in the questioning portion of that  
18 panel either. Thank you.

19 MS. GODSIL: So this is the fourth of five  
20 public borough hearings that we're holding in the  
21 five boroughs; and if you wish to testify, if you  
22 haven't already, please sign up at the table.

23 As, again, many of you know, there are some  
24 familiar faces. Every mayor has an opportunity to  
25 appoint a Charter Revision Commission to review the

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1 City Charter essentially the City's constitution,  
2 the document that organized how the City can  
3 function and what laws are passed. Our role is to  
4 listen to people in the community who come to these  
5 hearings and who write comments. People can submit  
6 comments on the website, and come up with  
7 recommendations to amend the charter, which will be  
8 put on the bureau for all the voters to vote upon  
9 in November.

10 We've conducted extensive outreach in advance  
11 of this meeting. Our goal is to have as many  
12 people as possible. You may have noticed people  
13 standing outside with a sign inviting you to attend  
14 and to testify. Of course, we followed all the  
15 Notice of Procedures; and, again, the primary goal  
16 is to ensure that as many people as possible have  
17 an opportunity to consider what we're considering  
18 and to provide insight to us and give us guidance  
19 as we consider this extraordinarily important task.

20 So this meeting is being live streamed for  
21 those of you who want to have a second time to  
22 watch the meeting, and I'm sure that many of you  
23 will at [nyc.gov/charter](http://nyc.gov/charter). Videos and transcripts  
24 from our prior hearings and meetings are available  
25 on our website; and tonight, as at the each

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1 hearing, we have sign language interpreters and  
2 loop listening devices available. If anyone  
3 requires translation to testify, please let us  
4 know, we have translators available; and we will  
5 give double time to anyone who requires translation  
6 to make sure each person has an equal opportunity  
7 to share their insights with us.

8 As we indicated, this is about the Charter,  
9 this is a public hearing, so the goal here is for  
10 us to listen to you and to hear your thoughts about  
11 what the charter revision proposal should focus  
12 upon. Again, those of you who have been following  
13 this process know this is a stage where we're  
14 narrowing our focus. We have to put a small number  
15 of proposals before the voters. Last week our  
16 staff worked extraordinarily hard and presented the  
17 preliminary staff report which if you haven't read  
18 it yet is available on our website,  
19 [nyc.gov/charter](http://nyc.gov/charter). There's also an executive summary  
20 of the report, which has been translated into ten  
21 languages.

22 We're seeking public feedback on the  
23 preliminary staff purported recommendations, and  
24 the staff essentially invited the public to testify  
25 and share insight with us about five areas of focus

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1 described in the report, campaign finance reform,  
2 elections in New York City, civic engagement,  
3 community boards, and restricting.

4 If you wish to speak, please sign up at the  
5 welcome table; and needless to say, if there's an  
6 area of City Charter that you think we should be  
7 considering, please feel free to address that as  
8 well. We will allow -- we will have each speaker  
9 have three minutes. We will be having panels and  
10 speakers; and what we'll do is, we'll have each  
11 speaker present their testimony. And then after  
12 the fourth speaker, the commissioners will have an  
13 opportunity to ask questions and, of course, invite  
14 responses.

15 At this time we would like to invite  
16 Councilman Darsh -- I'm sorry, we would like to  
17 invite Councilman Dromm. You're so important you  
18 didn't even have a sign, so thank you so much.

19 COUNCILMAN DROMM: Councilman Dromm --

20 MS. GODSIL: For the elected officials we're  
21 having single panels.

22 COUNCILMAN DROMM: Thank you very much. It is  
23 good to be here, see so many people and friends and  
24 colleagues that I work with on the commission; and  
25 I applaud the work that you're doing.

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1           New York City and Queens in particular have  
2           undergone a seismic demographic shift over the past  
3           few decades, perhaps the most dramatic in the  
4           country; but rather than reflect this change, our  
5           City relies on outdated methods for encouraging  
6           civic engagement. I ask that the commission  
7           consider two important items aimed at reforming  
8           current practice, redrawing the community district  
9           lines and term limits for our community boards.

10           Through community boards, New York City  
11           provides the opportunity for its citizens from all  
12           walks of life to become involved in shaping their  
13           communities. Community board positions should not  
14           be lifetime appointments but rather opportunities  
15           for as many civic-minded neighbors as possible to  
16           participate in a valuable democratic exercise. Any  
17           revision of the charter should include 12 year  
18           limits for community board members. Twelve years  
19           is ample time for both to build -- ample time both  
20           to build knowledge and experience and to make a  
21           significant mark.

22           In 1975 when the community district lines were  
23           last drawn, Queens was comprised of nearly 85  
24           percent white residents. Today 61 percent are  
25           Asian, Hispanic, and African American. None of the

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1 boards come close to including adequate  
2 representation of these communities including  
3 foreign born residents who make up half the borough  
4 of nations. The trend is not new, but the  
5 composition of our boards is lagging far behind.  
6 To take advantage of all our vibrant communities  
7 have to offer, we need to ensure the boards reflect  
8 the individuals who actually live and work there.

9 As for community district boundaries, I would  
10 like to illustrate just one of the discrepancies  
11 caused by the outdated lines. Community district  
12 seven encompasses a nearly quarter million  
13 residents of Flushing and surrounding  
14 neighborhoods. The population of neighboring  
15 community district 11 is less than half that. The  
16 problem speaks for itself. Communities are dynamic  
17 and so too should our community districts and  
18 boards be.

19 Inclusion of these proposals in the revised  
20 charter will only strengthen democracy by allowing  
21 for flexibility and room for change. Thank you  
22 very much.

23 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much, Councilman.  
24 So this has been a topic that there has been a  
25 great deal of testimony about; and it seems as



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1           though the competing perspectives are one, the idea  
2           that you suggested and the importance, of course,  
3           of having diversity of representation on community  
4           boards. The other, about which many seem to feel  
5           as strongly, is the idea of institutional knowledge  
6           and people developing sufficient capacity to engage  
7           on obviously the very complex issues of land use  
8           that community boards address. Some have suggested  
9           that with attrition, there's sufficient opportunity  
10          for the diversify that you described to be achieved  
11          without the term limits, so I would be really  
12          curious to hear your perspective on the challenge.

13                 COUNCILMAN DROMM: I would disagree with that  
14          perspective obviously. I am a term-limited council  
15          member. I proposed 12 years a term -- a term of 12  
16          limits for community boards. I was lucky enough to  
17          get the third term in the City Council; and I feel  
18          that the first four years that I was in the council  
19          were, you know, it was a time when I needed to  
20          learn my job so to speak. I thought I had a very  
21          productive second term, and now my third term I'm  
22          able to kind of finish up the projects that I  
23          started when I first came in as council member, you  
24          know so I hold elected officials those who are in  
25          the community eye, those who serve the community.

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1 I think that, you know, a longer period of  
2 time in a position of power like the power the  
3 community boards wield in terms of land use, in  
4 terms of liquor licenses, other issues like that  
5 for example, it should be limited; and it should  
6 also be distributed more equally amongst other  
7 members of the community, giving them opportunity  
8 to participate in the community boards.

9 With regard to the area of expertise, we in  
10 the council have staff that provide us with a lot  
11 of that expertise. I think that one of the things  
12 that we should look at if we're going to look at  
13 term limits is providing some expertise to  
14 community boards. First of all, I will say that  
15 they are underfunded; and we did in the council  
16 this year tried to boost the funding that community  
17 boards get. Still not enough. We were successful  
18 I think in getting them about \$40,000, but they do  
19 need to have some people in the community boards  
20 who would be able to provide some of that expertise  
21 to community board members; and not every community  
22 board has the expertise of land use people. Some  
23 do in areas where more professional, higher paid  
24 income folks might work; but in other areas,  
25 oftentimes that opportunity doesn't present itself.

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1 MS. GODSIL: Other questions?

2 MS. SEECHARRAN: Hello, council member.  
3 Council member is my council member, so it's nice  
4 to see you and to be on the other side.

5 COUNCILMAN DROMM: Yes.

6 MS. SEECHARRAN: So just to follow my  
7 colleague's question, the notion of expertise, so  
8 one of the recommendations that we've heard is that  
9 each community board has a paid professional  
10 planner; so I wanted to hear your thoughts on that  
11 if you thought that that would provide and is  
12 that -- in your view would each community board  
13 require that level of consistent capacity?

14 COUNCILMAN DROMM: Well, I think that would be  
15 very helpful and very useful. I think one of the  
16 things that we would have to consider is the cost  
17 obviously; but, you know, another thought that I  
18 had is that you could have a planner who would be  
19 shared with, you know, two or three community  
20 boards. And that person could be the expert person  
21 to whom those boards would turn to on those types  
22 of issues; so, you know, I think it comes down to  
23 the question of what is it that the City would be  
24 able to afford really. Obviously, the best option  
25 there would be to have one person on each board;

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1 but short of that, I think the idea of having an  
2 expert who can work with two or three boards, four  
3 boards might be an answer as well.

4 MS. GODSIL: Are there additional questions?

5 MR. CARRION: Hello, council member. So we've  
6 also heard from some folk who have come and  
7 testified that in some boroughs they have a  
8 difficult time actually yielding enough applicants  
9 to -- for community boards to actually have full  
10 boards. What would you say to that concern?

11 COUNCILMAN DROMM: I've heard that concern,  
12 and I've seen that concern as well; but I think one  
13 of the reasons why you have people who don't want  
14 to participate is because they see the power on a  
15 community board in the hands of the very few, and  
16 they wonder how or what type of a change they can  
17 effect by becoming a member of that community  
18 board. And I think one of the problems for  
19 community boards is the inconsistency in which  
20 executive boards are chosen. Some executive boards  
21 have self-imposed term limits for their president.  
22 Others do not, and I think that that is an area  
23 that we should also look at, you know, is, you  
24 know, how new members who come into boards can feel  
25 that they have an equal say in the decision-making

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1 process.

2 MR. CARRION: Thank you.

3 MR. BRAGG: Good evening, Councilman Dromm.  
4 Good to see you. I heard you testify in regards to  
5 term limits; but forgive me if I missed your  
6 testimony and you addressed this, but I'm asking if  
7 you have thoughts on the appointment process. If  
8 you testified to it, forgive me if I missed it; but  
9 if you haven't, do you have any opinions about the  
10 appointment process in regards to community boards?

11 COUNCILMAN DROMM: Yes. So the appointment  
12 process is very complicated and convoluted. For  
13 example, I don't really know who appointed people  
14 to my two community boards prior to me being  
15 elected; so oftentimes when I meet with the borough  
16 president, it's, like, oh, no, you know, Helen  
17 Sears or John Sabini or even somebody before and,  
18 you know, John Sabini was a councilman in the  
19 nineties, so it's oftentimes hard to trace about  
20 who it is that we can nominate from our side of the  
21 council to say we either wanted to renominate them  
22 or even put up new members to become members of the  
23 community board.

24 Ultimately, it's, of course, the decision of  
25 the borough president to appoint those community

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1 board members; but the other question is,  
2 oftentimes when district line are redrawn, my  
3 district might expand or it might shrink in  
4 different community boards. Oftentimes when that  
5 happens, it's hard to know how many community  
6 boards I will lose in terms of representation on  
7 the board. I don't really have an idea as a  
8 council member, as an elected official, how those  
9 decisions are actually made.

10 MR. BRAGG: Thank you.

11 MS. GODSIL: Any additional questions? Thank  
12 you so much for your testimony.

13 COUNCILMAN DROMM: Thank you very much.

14 MS. GODSIL: So if we could call Jonathan  
15 Darche, Erwin Figueroa, Maggie Clarke, and Henry  
16 Euler, please. Thank you so much. Mr. Darche?

17 MR. DARCHE: Thank you council and members of  
18 the Charter Commission. Thank you for the  
19 opportunity to appear before you today. I would  
20 also just like to thank the staff of the commission  
21 for all of their hard work throughout this process.  
22 My name is Jonathan Darche; and I'm executive  
23 director of the Civilian Complaint Review Board, or  
24 CCRB, which is an independent City agency which  
25 investigates, prosecutes, and mediates complaints

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1 of misconduct filed by civilians against New York  
2 City Police Department officers.

3 In May 2018, the agency submitted a letter to  
4 the Commission detailing four proposed changes to  
5 Charter Chapter 18A, which governs the work of the  
6 CCRB. First, to codify the CCRB's administrative  
7 profession unit or APU. Second, to enable the  
8 board to designate subpoena signatory power to the  
9 agency's highest ranking staff. Third, to better  
10 define the department's duty to cooperate with  
11 agency request for --

12 MR. CARRION: I apologize. Can I ask you to  
13 move the mic a little closer to you, sir? Thank  
14 you.

15 MR. DARCHE: Third, to better define the  
16 department's duty to cooperate with agency request  
17 for information and documents related to policy  
18 outreach and operational support; and, fourth, to  
19 amend the CCRB budget to be one percent of the  
20 NYPD's budget. We've submitted this letter along  
21 with my testimony this evening for the public  
22 record; but I am here tonight to focus on  
23 codification of the APU.

24 The work of the APU is governed by a 2012  
25 memorandum of understanding between the NYPD and

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1 CCRB. This is the first unit of its kind in the  
2 United States and heralded as a significant step  
3 for police oversight by local elected officials and  
4 advocates. The APU prosecutes nearly all of the  
5 cases in which the board recommends charges and  
6 specifications, the most serious disciplinary  
7 recommendation. Since the creation of APU, the  
8 CCRB has administratively prosecuted officers for  
9 misconduct at 367 trials. As evidenced by the  
10 APU's prosecution in the Garner case, the APU is a  
11 vital part in the disciplinary process for officers  
12 who commit misconduct. Amending the City Charter  
13 to codify the APU will ensure that this independent  
14 and effective tool for civilian oversight will  
15 continue.

16 I welcome any further opportunity to discuss  
17 these changes with the commissioner and staff, and  
18 I am happy to answer any questions about the agency  
19 or our charter proposals.

20 MS. GODSIL: Thank you. Mr. Figueroa?

21 MR. FIGUEROA: Thank you Vice-Chair Godsil and  
22 the members of the New York City Charter Commission  
23 for convening this hearing and discussing topics  
24 integral to the democratic health of our City. I  
25 am Erwin Figueroa. I am a senior organizer at



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1           Transportational Alternatives. We are a  
2           40-year-old nonprofit with more than 100,000  
3           volunteers in our network dedicated to improving  
4           the safety of New York streets. We appreciate and  
5           encourage this community's efforts to improve our  
6           City's community boards and making them open and  
7           accessible to more New Yorkers.

8           We are here to support the preliminary  
9           recommendations of the committee with regards to  
10          the community boards. We support term limits for  
11          members of leadership in community boards, a more  
12          transparent and objective application process,  
13          access to urban planners for each community board,  
14          and bringing greater equity in community board  
15          membership. Our reason for strongly supporting  
16          these measures is because our work is closely tied  
17          to community board process, proposals for life  
18          saving street signs are traditionally brought to  
19          community boards for approval and at the committee  
20          and the full board level. Because of this  
21          relationship, our organizers and volunteers spend  
22          hundreds of hundreds of hours each year at  
23          community board meetings, and we have honed our  
24          views for that relationship.

25          We strongly support the effort to impose term

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1 limits for community board members. Five two-year  
2 terms is a good amount of time for a member to  
3 build knowledge and apply it in community board  
4 meetings. However, we would like to bring up  
5 additional measures to trend those measures. No  
6 grandfathering clause for current members. All  
7 community board members should be subject to term  
8 limits if the measures are passed as a valid  
9 initiative.

10 Today corruption and personal enrichment at  
11 the public's expense exists among elected officials  
12 whothat are under far more scrutiny than community  
13 board members who often operate with little  
14 transparency. These elected officials are  
15 typically limited to two terms of four years. By  
16 contrast, community board members are unelected,  
17 politically unaccountable, and face far less public  
18 scrutiny and should not be allowed to accrue  
19 additional power and influence for more than ten  
20 years. Therefore, we should be -- there should be  
21 no nonconsecutive terms for community board  
22 members. We feel that members who have served a  
23 ten-year term can continue their civic engagement  
24 as a nonvoting public member of the board or move  
25 on to other forms of civic engagement in the

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1 community.

2 We also believe that public participation  
3 needs to be prioritized in the City Charter to  
4 bring greater democracy. Public testimony must be  
5 permitted to perform representation of City  
6 projects; and, furthermore, participation from the  
7 general public must be enshrined and ensured from  
8 the community level. And also we support providing  
9 institutionalized urban planning expertise to  
10 community boards as well. Thank you.

11 MS. GODSIL: Ms. Clark?

12 MR. CLARKE: I'm Maggie Clarke, PhD, founder  
13 of Inwood Preservation. Inwood Preservation is a  
14 group of over 750 members in Northern Manhattan in  
15 favor of seeing charter change to reform ULURP and  
16 CEQR. The CEQR manual is deficient and does not  
17 follow state CEQR rules, which require that the  
18 local rulebook cannot be any less stringent than  
19 the state or federal. Any EIS also must do any  
20 reasonable study; and yet, over and over again the  
21 City's deficient manual is being quoted as an  
22 excuse for allowing an agency and a mayor that  
23 desperately wants development to blow off the  
24 community's comments and requests for reasonable  
25 studies. The CEQR manual from our understanding

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1 was never a law but administrative action and  
2 they're treating it as law.

3 Also, environmental impact statements are  
4 supposed to be done prior to planning. When the  
5 National Environmental Policy Act was passed, it  
6 was for the purpose of showing in advance of an  
7 action. All the environmental and social impacts  
8 goes to influence and possibly modify or abandon  
9 the proposed action. The EIS was not supposed to  
10 be an afterthought, and yet this is exactly how the  
11 City does ULURP. Those entities that are voted for  
12 or against the zoning plan, community board,  
13 borough president, City Planning Commission, City  
14 Council do not have the benefit of a final EIS; so  
15 the impact statement is an afterthought and  
16 meaningless to planning. And that can be  
17 disastrous for a neighborhood like mine where  
18 decisions are made blindly, and the community is  
19 ill-equipped with insufficient infrastructure,  
20 awful environmental impact, social displacements  
21 and the like.

22 The reason -- excuse me -- the changes that  
23 are needed, all planning by City planning or EDC  
24 must come after full EIS process. Community  
25 outreach must be considerably bolstered. Current

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1 process ensures a tiny fraction of residents and  
2 businesses are aware of zoning and other changes.  
3 Informative neutral postal communications to every  
4 resident and business well ahead of every EIS  
5 process in ULURP should occur. EIS process and the  
6 planning process in general should actually utilize  
7 community-based plans such as we developed, not  
8 have full community input sessions by agencies.  
9 Thousands of Inwood community testified and have  
10 been ignored. All local media should be involved  
11 educating the population. Local groups should be  
12 given funding for independent research and  
13 outreach. Use of the state's CEQR manual until the  
14 city's can be made at least as stringent. ULURP  
15 should not begin until the FEIS has been released  
16 and public participation completed. Community  
17 boards, borough presidents, City Planning  
18 Commissioners, and City Council members should not  
19 have to vote prior to seeing an FEIS.

20 Agencies should be required to publically  
21 release all documents pertaining to ULURP and EIS  
22 on the date of the documents; and, finally, halt  
23 any ULURP on any area-wide rezoning immediately  
24 until these changes are made and reverse ULURP  
25 decisions made using flawed CEQR manual or EIS

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1 process within the last two years.

2 MS. GODSIL: Thank you, Ms. Clarke.

3 Mr. Euler?

4 MR. EULER: My name is Henry Euler, first vice  
5 president of the Auburndale Improvement Association  
6 and a member of Queens Community Board 11. I'm  
7 also a vice president of the Queens Civic Congress  
8 and a member of the Queens Preservation Council.

9 My testimony today represents my own opinions  
10 and not necessarily those of the organizations that  
11 I belong to. With regards to community boards,  
12 there have been proposals that community board  
13 members should be term limited. I disagree with  
14 that stance. I have served on my local community  
15 board for several years and have seen firsthand the  
16 importance of experience on my board. The  
17 institutional knowledge that our seasoned board  
18 members possess assist with decision-making with  
19 frequent regularity. Many of the experienced  
20 people on my board have lived in their communities  
21 for long periods of time and understand the needs  
22 and workings of those communities. This year, six  
23 new members joined my board. Last year, six other  
24 new members joined as well. We still have six  
25 vacancies on my board. We have an excellent mix in

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1 terms of the diversity, age, and viewpoints.

2 My board is changing naturally with long time  
3 members gradually leaving the board, and those  
4 seats being replaced by new people every year.  
5 There's no need to remove from the board  
6 knowledgeable, unpaid volunteers who have served  
7 with distinction and integrity over the course of  
8 several years and bettered their communities. I  
9 believe that this is the case through many boards  
10 across the City. Term limiting will result in  
11 weaker boards in my opinion because of the loss of  
12 experienced members.

13 Also, we also have to realize that the borough  
14 president and the council member appoints board  
15 members and renews the membership every two years;  
16 and if a board member is not doing his or her job,  
17 then they should be dismissed from the board. If  
18 they're absent too many times, they should be  
19 dismissed so that other people can take over.

20 I also made several comments in my testimony  
21 about voting procedures. I think that all the new  
22 ideas, early voting, absentee voting without having  
23 to give a reason for doing so, these are all  
24 important aspects that need to be put into effect  
25 to increase voter participation in our City.

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1 I also made several comments about land use  
2 issues; and I note that at this point, you're  
3 considering that more or less in future commissions  
4 for discussion. But I had written all of that out  
5 in my testimony as well.

6 Thank you so much for letting me testify today  
7 and thank you for coming to hear what we have to  
8 say as well.

9 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much. So, I'm  
10 curious, Mr. Figueroa, how you respond to the  
11 testimony and, obviously, the topic that you raised  
12 as well and whether or not the -- again, this  
13 question of experience and institutional knowledge  
14 particularly in the context and in some sense this  
15 brings up Ms. Clarke's testimony of the complexity  
16 of land use; how do you balance between the goal of  
17 diversity and representation and with a notion that  
18 there's some benefits that are really important to  
19 having sufficient institutional knowledge on  
20 community boards?

21 MR. FIGUEROA: Yeah. So in regards to the  
22 term limits and in regards to diversity, I think as  
23 New York City neighborhoods change, it's important  
24 to have in that representation; and having a  
25 community board that truly represent how the



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1 preserved nature of the community is important for  
2 the community to feel that the community board is  
3 taking the positions that represent their  
4 interests.

5 In regards to having community board members  
6 and that institutional knowledge, that can be  
7 implemented in terms of having systems where  
8 current members can partner with new members and  
9 have the institutional knowledge be passed along to  
10 new members.

11 In regards of having that difficult topics as  
12 land use, transportation can be one of them as  
13 well, having dedicated urban planners in each of  
14 the community boards is going to be -- going to  
15 be -- to bridge that gap between the knowledge that  
16 we bring as a community to the process and also the  
17 professional aspect -- the technical aspects that  
18 can be difficult at times to be understood by the  
19 general public.

20 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much. Other  
21 questions?

22 MR. BRAGG: Thank you. I would like to just  
23 address your -- a true comparison between elected  
24 officials and community board members, and clearly  
25 there's a difference between being elected and

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1 being in a paid position versus being in a  
2 volunteered position and being appointed. Can you  
3 kind of talk to that issue for me, please?

4 MR. FIGUEROA: So in regards to that issue,  
5 the main thing is that the process of how community  
6 board members get together on a community board and  
7 sometimes in different community boards can be a  
8 little bit difficult to understand especially for  
9 people in the public. We, personally -- is we  
10 hold -- in each borough, we hold informational  
11 meetings of how people can join community boards;  
12 but even between each borough, the process of how  
13 to get on community boards is a little bit -- it's  
14 sometimes not clear. And I think that lack of  
15 accountability sometimes can discourage new people  
16 that would like to be part of the community board  
17 to not apply because the rules of how they -- how  
18 they apply and getting into a community board can  
19 sometimes not be extremely clear. I think with  
20 term limits, it will help; and by having a  
21 standard, at the very least you'll have to know how  
22 much time each community group would be serving,  
23 community board member.

24 MS. GODSIL: Other questions?

25 MS. SEECHARRAN: I actually have a question

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1 for the gentleman at the end. I'm sorry, I didn't  
2 quite catch your full name. I wonder if you --  
3 what your thoughts are on if there were to be term  
4 limits if there was a requirement that -- well, if  
5 folks were allowed to take a break and then come  
6 back for a year, how would you feel about that?

7 MR. EULER: Well, I think that we can always  
8 still participate in community boards if we are on  
9 the board or not on the board. We have ample  
10 opportunity to make comments; and in my particular  
11 board, we have public participation. We also have  
12 an opportunity for the public to give their  
13 opinions about the different land use cases that  
14 come up, so I think that we can always participate  
15 in board discussion. That's pretty much what I  
16 think.

17 MS. GODSIL: Thank you all so much for  
18 testifying. We really appreciate it.

19 Betty Braton, Philip Papas, Mark Laster, and  
20 Lucy Schilero, and I apologize if I mispronounced  
21 anyone's name. Oh, yes, thank you. So why don't  
22 we stark start with you, sir.

23 MR. PAPAS: Hello. I'm Philip Papas. I'm the  
24 chairperson from Community Board 3 in Queens. That  
25 covers Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, and North

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1 Corona. I don't want to be too redundant about  
2 term limits so -- but after what else was said  
3 already, but I'll just add that I am in favor of  
4 term limits. I think ten to twelve years sounds  
5 like about right in terms of allowing people to get  
6 through the learning curve and knowing the whole  
7 process.

8 I also strongly feel that the position of  
9 chair should possibly be an even shorter limit.  
10 I'm proud to say that CB3 has a three-year term  
11 limit -- I'm sorry, three term limit for community  
12 board chairs, which I think is really important.

13 Having said all of this about term limits, I  
14 just want to go on record as saying I really  
15 treasure our senior members and have really  
16 benefited from their mentorship; so as far as the  
17 grandfathering thing, it's a difficult thing to say  
18 because it might need to be a sliding scale or  
19 something along those lines to ensure that there's  
20 proper mentorship for new members. It is  
21 definitely a concern. I'm not sure exactly how  
22 that would work out in terms of the nuts and bolts  
23 but something to keep in consideration, but I think  
24 it's important to have term limits because we're --  
25 as board members we're serving the community, not

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1 the other way around; and the community is  
2 constantly changing. We have to really represent  
3 not only what's come before and what exists today,  
4 but we have to be proactive and think of the future  
5 and the always changing demographics in our  
6 neighborhoods; so I think it's really important to  
7 reflect that by allowing new membership.

8 And I'll quickly add two points as far as the  
9 reappointment process, which I think would help  
10 with this. One is involvement with the board  
11 committees. Currently as I understand it, part of  
12 the reappointment process is that the consideration  
13 of attendance is taken into account; but it really  
14 as far as I know just reflects the monthly public  
15 hearings. It does not affect -- is not affected by  
16 committee attendance. I know from my own  
17 experience, the first year that I was a board  
18 member, I basically did the minimum requirement,  
19 feeling it out, just went to the monthly meetings,  
20 signed up for the minimum two committees, and did  
21 not feel like I was being an effective board  
22 member; so the second year, I approached our chair,  
23 our district manager, the councilman who sponsored  
24 my membership, and asked them what more can I do  
25 and just kept getting pointed to committees, show

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1 up, roll up your sleeves, and do the work. And I  
2 know that on our board, we do have a solid core of  
3 members, many of them very senior members, who do  
4 most of the heavy lifting; and I would like to see  
5 the entire board be more involved. And I know that  
6 for me being on that committee level has made me a  
7 better board member, more informed, more familiar  
8 with the process; and I think that that's something  
9 that will quickly make the new influx of members  
10 better community board members and help them learn  
11 the whole process more quickly. That should be, I  
12 think, a requirement, the attendance at committees  
13 for appointment and reappointment.

14 Finally, just for new members coming in,  
15 having email access and text access, it's hard as a  
16 chair for me to contact people by phone or wait for  
17 people via mail; so I think that should be an  
18 expectation for new members.

19 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much.

20 MS. SCHILERO: Good evening. My name is Lucy  
21 Schilero, and I run the organization known as the  
22 Coalition of United Residents for a Safer  
23 Community. I've been an active member for 40  
24 years, but on the community board for 32 years; and  
25 that's because my community has been diverse from

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1 the very beginning. When I went out, I had to do  
2 it in Spanish, Chinese, and even Indian. Now I  
3 have Pakistani, Bangladesh; and I had to deal with  
4 Urdu, Farse, and much more. Still do it today.  
5 When I go out, I have to do it in different  
6 languages. When I bring them to my board, they get  
7 a little intimidated because they don't speak in  
8 English very well. Others are new to the  
9 community.

10 I don't believe in term limits. You cannot  
11 put a price on volunteerism, and you can't put a  
12 price on the time you give to the people of your  
13 community and those that live in your community.  
14 We don't get paid. We don't get compensation; and  
15 to have this kind of dedication and time for your  
16 committees on a community board takes a lot of  
17 sacrifice. Even when I come here to the borough  
18 president, I left my family tonight as well as my  
19 job to make this point. You can't put a price on  
20 it, so I'm going to make a suggestion to you being  
21 I'm around a long time. We have quadrupled in  
22 population. Take that number and grow. We  
23 probably even need another council seat. Build the  
24 community board. Leave the seniors in to be of  
25 some assistance. They've got great knowledge, and

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1 I'm one of them. Put at least another five or six  
2 more to the boards. They can only take in new  
3 members. Use the census as a guideline for those  
4 boards because sometimes they don't know how to  
5 reach out. They use the census. They'll say, "All  
6 right, we have so many seniors. We have so many  
7 people middle aged. Let's look at the census and  
8 see what we need to build this ward as it should  
9 be." That goes to the churches, the mosque,  
10 organizations, anything that we can use to reach  
11 out and mandate that those boards can get those  
12 people in with those extra five or six seats.

13 As time goes on, I can say this, many seniors  
14 do move on. Some through illness, some through  
15 deaths. Some, unfortunately, for myself, who has  
16 Parkinson's now, so they've left. They were my  
17 biggest supporters in my civic group. It hurts me  
18 greatly. I'm also insulted because Daniel Joan  
19 (phonetic) had 12 years to figure out how we're put  
20 in. I'm put in every time because I'm loyal to my  
21 community. I didn't run away. I didn't go to a  
22 different state. I stayed and helped my community  
23 with all the different nationalities, and it's been  
24 proven in books and in magazines.

25 Now I have another thing, training, we didn't



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1 know anything. Still today, I'm trying to figure  
2 all the laws, SLA, ULURP, DOB, you name it. I'm  
3 going to make a suggestion. At least once or twice  
4 a year the borough president, I hope she doesn't  
5 mind, she's been great to us, would give out better  
6 training for each of the board members. We get  
7 very quick training lessons on zoning. We don't  
8 even know what we're doing. When they come to us  
9 and we want to -- I'll make this quick. We don't  
10 even know what we're doing when we make our vote.  
11 They come to the community board, and we have to  
12 make a decision quickly. We need more training,  
13 and I ask of this; and I hope you take some of  
14 these suggestions with you. Thank you.

15 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much.

16 MR. LASTER: Good evening. My name is Mark  
17 Laster, and I'm a Licensed Clinical Social Worker  
18 who's been in practice for over 37 years. During  
19 this time I have served in numerous civic  
20 leadership positions starting as a student senate  
21 right here at Queens College, served as president  
22 of my co-op board, president of the temple; and I'm  
23 currently co-chair of the Forest Hills Green Team,  
24 a team leader for the Medical Reserve Corps, and  
25 co-chair of Community Board Member 6's Aging and

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1 Social Services Committee.

2 As is mentioned in 2018 preliminary staff  
3 report, I agree there needs to be term limits for  
4 community board members balancing out the need for  
5 institutional memory and the need to have new  
6 voices. I also see more of a need to have term  
7 limits for executive officers to allow for new  
8 leadership of the community board. I also support  
9 the idea of both standardizing the appointment and  
10 recruitment process for community board members as  
11 well as standardizing meeting procedures. In the  
12 appointment of recruitment process, there should be  
13 a stronger attempt made to reach out to  
14 disenfranchised members of our community. I would  
15 suggest reaching out at Social Security offices,  
16 homeless shelters, SNAP offices, et cetera, to  
17 empower people who receive City services to give  
18 them more control of their lives.

19 As for standardizing meeting procedures, live  
20 streaming would be a great idea to encourage more  
21 participation; but I also would suggest to  
22 standardize that all public comments should be made  
23 at the beginning of meeting; and, finally, I would  
24 suggest -- I did not see mentioned in the  
25 preliminary report. And I did see chair talking

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1 about committee meetings that are very important.  
2 I would suggest -- I think it varies from community  
3 board to community board. Some community boards I  
4 think have more meeting than others, so I think it  
5 should be standardized across the board; and I  
6 think we should at least mandate the standing  
7 committee should meet quarterly. Thank you very  
8 much.

9 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

10 MS. BRATON: Good evening. My name is Betty  
11 Braton. I'm a lifelong Queens resident. In the  
12 interest of full disclosure, please be advised that  
13 I am a member of Queens Community Board 10 and also  
14 serve as the chairperson in Community Board 10.

15 Since your preliminary report was issued in  
16 July when community boards do not normally meet,  
17 there has not yet been an opportunity for Community  
18 Board 10 to discuss and formulate a formal position  
19 to present to you this evening. Therefore, my  
20 remarks to you this evening reflect my opinions,  
21 not necessarily those of the board. However, I  
22 believe my remarks to you will generally reflect  
23 the opinions of many others who also serve on  
24 Community Board 10 with me.

25 Among the proposals you're considering are

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1 imposing term limits, standardizing the appointment  
2 process, and providing additional resources. In  
3 your report you state that, "While perspective  
4 zones specifically forms differed, the testimony  
5 received confirmed the notion that more than 50  
6 years after their addition to the Charter in 1963  
7 community boards are central to civic engagement in  
8 New York City." And that is true. In my opinion,  
9 the major reason boards are central to civic  
10 engagement is that they have had the ability and  
11 flexibility to adapt over time to represent the  
12 people living and working in the chunks of these  
13 city's geography that they represent.

14 Despite our City's size, we are not a  
15 cookie-cutter place. While there are basic  
16 similarities common to all areas, there are many  
17 differences between our boroughs. What might work  
18 well in one borough might not be so workable in  
19 another borough. One thing my long experience in  
20 local neighborhood civic activism and on a  
21 community board has taught me is that the concept  
22 of the centralism may be a good thing; but it often  
23 does not have a positive result in the reality of  
24 implementation.

25 Sometimes when evaluating a one-size-fits-all

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1 idea, I like to put on community boards in the list  
2 that's attached to the testimony I left at the  
3 desk, which is just a list of all of the cities in  
4 New York State that have populations over 20,000  
5 people; and you could see where community boards in  
6 the City and in this borough rank. We would be  
7 cities among the most sizable cities in this state,  
8 and I like to look at it that way sometimes because  
9 it gives us the idea of where we fit in the  
10 relationship of population; but Buffalo, Rochester,  
11 and Syracuse are all cities. They do some things  
12 mandated by the state in certain ways. They don't  
13 have every procedure that they use in their zoning  
14 boards, whatever commissions they have, whatever  
15 representative bodies they elect, are not all the  
16 same. They're all done legally and fairly I would  
17 assume, but they're not all the same; and it  
18 doesn't have to be the same throughout this City.

19 You know, when we look at community boards, we  
20 should look at them from that perspective and  
21 realize that we don't have to be cookie-cutter. In  
22 my opinion, the Charter rightfully gives the  
23 responsibility for appointed community board  
24 members to the borough president and City Council  
25 members. Each City borough president has the

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1 obligation -- can I continue -- has the obligation  
2 to follow the Charter requirements and consider  
3 whether or not the appointments accurate and fairly  
4 represent all the segments of the community. The  
5 report that you've issued goes on to state that  
6 the -- I lost my thought here -- that the  
7 neighborhoods represent the different geographic  
8 sections and neighborhoods and consider whether the  
9 appointments accurate and fairly represent all  
10 segments of the community. Many comment is to the  
11 commission you went on to say contended that  
12 repeated reappointment that the same members has  
13 resulted in community boards lacking sufficient  
14 ideological and demographic diversity and that  
15 the --

16 MS. GODSIL: Ms. Braton?

17 MS. BRATON: -- of community boards may no  
18 longer reflect that.

19 MS. GODSIL: Ms. Braton?

20 MS. BRATON: Yes.

21 MS. GODSIL: We absolutely do hear what you  
22 want to say; but we do have a lot of people to  
23 testify.

24 MS. BRATON: No problem. You have a copy of  
25 my written testimony.

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1 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much. We appreciate  
2 that.

3 MS. BRATON: Count me as part of that  
4 institutional knowledge.

5 MS. GODSIL: I appreciate that.

6 MS. BRATON: Just bear with me one minute, I'm  
7 going to just give you one quick example of why  
8 institutional knowledge is important.

9 In my board, we have a major sewer street  
10 construction project going on. It has been from  
11 start to finish 25 years in the making. Without  
12 the institutional knowledge of my colleagues who  
13 have been there from the beginning to the end, that  
14 project would still be sitting out there in limbo  
15 waiting to get constructed; but having all of the  
16 knowledge of this happened then, that happened  
17 then, helps.

18 MS. GODSIL: Any questions?

19 MS. BRATON: Thank you for your courtesy.

20 MS. GODSIL: No. Thank you so much, and we do  
21 very much value your opinion. Questions?

22 So I would just like to note and thank all of  
23 you because the fact that we had four people with  
24 different points of view who gave such thoughtful  
25 testimony and treated each other so civilly is

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1 exactly the kind of civic engagement we need to  
2 see; so thank you to all of you. Thank you all.  
3 Michael Moore, Tom Speaker, Philip Condon, and  
4 Helen Ho, please.

5 MR. MOORE: So good evening; and thank you,  
6 commission. My name is M.K. Moore. I'm a resident  
7 of Community Board 9 in Queens; and I'm here  
8 tonight to request -- allow us to vote for  
9 immediate implementation of term limits on  
10 community boards.

11 Representation is the cornerstone of our  
12 democracy. The longer anyone retains power over  
13 the democracy, the less democratic it becomes. The  
14 continual transition of power is the core principle  
15 of our constitutional public. The absence of term  
16 limits dilutes or removes the ethics of  
17 responsibility in elected or appointed officials.

18 As a resident of Community Board 9 in Queens,  
19 our board does not now nor has it for a long time  
20 represented the demographic of our community. I  
21 talk about diversity; also talk about the  
22 socioeconomic makeup of our board as well as our  
23 community, which has changed. There is absolute  
24 belief, and it is true that community board members  
25 are appointed for life; and they represent the



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1 special interest groups that bring them to the  
2 board over the will of our community.

3 Our community board members openly refer to a  
4 restricted member civic group in our community as  
5 their sister organization, and that group is  
6 consulted prior to any decisions being made by our  
7 board. If you're not a member of that civic group,  
8 you're not a part of that decision-making process.

9 The existing rules governing community boards  
10 serve to disenfranchise large majorities of our  
11 citizens; and the selection process and term of  
12 office are slanted towards these people that are  
13 already sitting on the board.

14 Exception of current members from any newly  
15 imposed term limits is going to dilute the  
16 Commission's proposed revision and place another  
17 30-year timeline on our change. I'm aware of  
18 institutional knowledge; but, for example, on our  
19 community board, that's measured in multiple  
20 centuries. And I'm not sure just how much  
21 institutional knowledge we really need. I think  
22 that something less than that would be appropriate.

23 I think the commission has an opportunity to  
24 make a very big difference city-wide. You could  
25 make a change that will enhance the communities,

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1 broaden representation, and return the voice back  
2 to all the residents and not just these isolated  
3 groups. Ask you to focus to get this issue on the  
4 ballot and allow our voters to improve the  
5 democracy in our City and bring the reform and the  
6 vote back to the people. Thank you.

7 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

8 MR. SPEAKER: Good evening. My name is Tom  
9 Speaker, and I'm a volunteer member of the New York  
10 Chapter of Represent Us whose mission is to pass  
11 tough anticorruption laws in cities and states  
12 across America and to end the legalized corruption  
13 that has come to define modern politics. Thank you  
14 for holding this hearing and allowing me the  
15 opportunity to testify.

16 So the Charter of Revision Commission's  
17 preliminary report purports five great proposals  
18 for improving democracy in New York City. Among  
19 them rank choice voting. The arguments in favor of  
20 rank choice voting are sound. Under the current  
21 system, small pluralities are enabled to determine  
22 who represents a district making it so that in some  
23 cases a large majority of voters will oppose the  
24 candidate who wins an election.

25 By changing the system so that voters are

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1 allowed a second choice, rank choice voting allows  
2 for a fair and more representative democracy; so a  
3 common question about our City is whether it would  
4 --

5 MS. GODSIL: Sir, can you back away a little  
6 from the mic? Thank you.

7 MR. SPEAKER: Okay. A common question about  
8 our City is not whether it would create confusion  
9 among voters, like, that concern is understandable  
10 as rank choice voting can seem complicated to those  
11 who are unfamiliar with it; but when cities have  
12 implemented RCV in constant with civic  
13 organizations, the vast majority of voters end up  
14 understanding and approving of the new system.

15 One recent successful example is Santa Fe,  
16 which used rank choice voting in its selections for  
17 the first time this year. For a city of 71,000  
18 people, Santa Fe spent about \$100,000 on voter  
19 outreach and collaborated with numerous  
20 organizations to educate voters about the changes.

21 According to a report by the City government,  
22 Santa Fe hosted over a dozen public trainings and  
23 events spread out over four city council districts;  
24 and through multiple campaigns, generated more than  
25 two million impressions on Twitter, Facebook, and

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1 local media news sources. In exit poles, 81  
2 percent of voters said they were very satisfied  
3 with the experience; and 77 percent said they would  
4 support using RCV again.

5 Now, effectively educating voters in rank  
6 choice voting would cost the City money; and the  
7 exact amount is uncertain. For New York to spend  
8 at the same rate as Santa Fe, that's \$100,000 per  
9 71,000 voters, the total cost might be about  
10 \$11 million. The City already spends more than  
11 11 million on voter education and outreach and much  
12 of the rank choice voting campaign can be merged  
13 into that practice. It's important to remember  
14 that 11 million would only be .001 percent of New  
15 York City's \$89 billion annual budget, which is a  
16 small price to pay for a stronger democracy.

17 New York City has done some great work for its  
18 residents, but voter disenfranchisement and rampant  
19 inequality make it clear that there's still a long  
20 way to go. We're at a moment when voters want  
21 bold, sweeping ideas rather than the marginal  
22 improvements that have defined politics over the  
23 past several decades. The Charter Revision  
24 Commission our City has an opportunity to be a  
25 national leader in democratic reform, and we think

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1 that implementing rank choice voting across  
2 elections is just the kind of initiative we need.  
3 Thank you for your time.

4 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

5 MR. CONDON: Good evening. Good evening,  
6 commission. Thank you for this opportunity. My  
7 name is Philip Condon, and I am a resident of  
8 Queens for the last 50 years; and I am here to  
9 speak a few words about how community boards need  
10 to be reformed in Queens.

11 First and foremost, term limits need to be in  
12 place for all for community board members. If our  
13 legislative and executive branches have term  
14 limits, I believe that community board members  
15 should also have term limits.

16 Presently, there are no term limits and too  
17 many of our communities are not properly  
18 represented by our community boards. Our community  
19 demographics are not a true representation of our  
20 present community board members. This needs to  
21 change and as soon as possible. Our community  
22 boards need to have a more diverse membership and  
23 have term limits. In doing so, it makes our  
24 communities more democratic and fair for all of us,  
25 not a select few that's presently taking place in

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1 Queens right now. Thank you very much.

2 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

3 MS. HO: Hello. Good evening, members of the  
4 Charter Revision Commission and thank you for  
5 hosting these hearings. My name is Helen Ho. I am  
6 currently a board member of Queens Community Board  
7 1; and additionally since 2004, I have attended  
8 community board meetings, district service cabinet  
9 meetings, and community board committee meetings in  
10 every single community board in Queens, all 14 of  
11 them, in addition to other boroughs, in my capacity  
12 as Mayor Bill DeBlasio's Director of Queens while  
13 serving in the mayor's Office of Community Affairs,  
14 also as a Parks Department employee, as a Health  
15 Department employee, and as a private citizen.

16 I trust that you have heard a lot, especially  
17 at this table here, about the lack of diversity and  
18 the true neighborhood representation on community  
19 boards. There is much that can be done to  
20 encourage more diverse participation. I offer two  
21 suggestions for making community boards actually  
22 work for the community.

23 First, I recommend term limits be instituted  
24 for members serving on the community board. Newer  
25 members are often intimidated and have a hard time

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1 speaking up and assuming leadership positions at  
2 board meetings without having 15 years of tenure on  
3 the community board to give them legitimacy. I  
4 would recommend term limits be around 12 years for  
5 each board member. I am not opposed to previous  
6 board members rejoining the board after being term  
7 limited out; but it should be after a significant  
8 period of time, perhaps equal to time served, to  
9 ensure new voices also have an opportunity of being  
10 heard.

11 Secondly, I recommend a budget for language  
12 access, food, and childcare during meetings. In  
13 our diverse city, we should be able to accommodate  
14 non-English speakers, parents, and the general  
15 public's ability to participate. Community board  
16 members are typically held for English speakers  
17 only who are either retired or have 9:00 to 5:00  
18 jobs, don't currently have young children, and are  
19 okay with regularly not eating dinner during  
20 dinnertime, like, right now. How is this  
21 acceptable? Not only is there no incentive for  
22 participating among these groups, but there is a  
23 hindrance and a cost to participating at community  
24 board meetings in its current systems.

25 Those of you with community engagement

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1 backgrounds will understand that it is more  
2 difficult and expensive to engage people beyond the  
3 same 20 members in each community that come to  
4 every meeting, but I strongly believe that this is  
5 a necessary change in order to have true  
6 representation and increased diversity at community  
7 board meetings.

8 Again, I am glad that we're having this  
9 conversation; and I hope you take my 14 years of  
10 experience regularly attending more than 14  
11 community board meetings across New York City into  
12 consideration. Thank you.

13 MS. GODSIL: Thank you. So, Ms. Ho, I do have  
14 a question. With respect to the resources that are  
15 provided to community boards, we've heard many  
16 people suggest that every community board should  
17 have an urban planner; and you've just made a  
18 suggestion having to do with resources perhaps used  
19 for some alternative very important use such as  
20 language access. Would you -- and in our  
21 previous -- the previous testimony there was a  
22 suggestion that obviously not every community board  
23 is a cookie-cutter; so would your suggestion be  
24 perhaps that community boards have resources  
25 allocated to them that they could choose to use for



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1 either, again, a choice of an urban planner or  
2 language access or whatever is needed? Or how  
3 would you balance the different interests that have  
4 been suggested, all of which are clearly important?

5 MS. HO: I mean, I think that at all City  
6 meetings that there should be language access,  
7 right? At every City meeting conducted, community  
8 board, you know, any public City meeting should  
9 have language access no matter what, right; and,  
10 you know, not every meeting is the same. And so  
11 obviously every community board is going to be  
12 different.

13 I don't necessarily think that community  
14 boards should have to choose between having an  
15 urban planner or having language access services,  
16 right, because maybe a community board like CB3 in  
17 Jackson Heights might need both, right. So I'm not  
18 sure what the answer to that is. In a perfect  
19 world, we would have everything.

20 MS. GODSIL: Other questions? Thank you --  
21 oh.

22 MS. SEECHARRAN: I do have a question. Thank  
23 you all for your testimony. I have a question for  
24 the gentleman from Represent Us regarding rank  
25 choice voting. Is your view that rank choice

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1 voting should be -- should apply to all offices,  
2 not just city-wide offices?

3 MR. SPEAKER: I support applying it to all  
4 offices, like, one example, I think someone brought  
5 this up at the Brooklyn hearing, was that Donovan  
6 Richard's district, I think that's District 31.  
7 They had a special election back in 2013. That's  
8 City Council, right? You know, where you had eight  
9 candidates -- it was about nine candidates  
10 altogether; and then you had one who was more  
11 conservative, and then the others were quite  
12 liberal. But that one conservative candidate  
13 actually took up a large enough section of the vote  
14 that he almost managed to win the whole election.  
15 Ultimately, Donovan Richards only ended up winning  
16 about 80 votes, I think. Just barely managed to  
17 avoid a recount; and if you had rank choice voting  
18 there, it really wouldn't have been close, like,  
19 most of the votes went to Donovan Richards and his  
20 more conservative challenger. And then it's likely  
21 that for the other candidates, the second, third,  
22 fourth, fifth votes would have all ended up going  
23 to more liberal candidates, which would have  
24 created a better balance; so, yeah, I mean, I think  
25 it should be applied to those types of races as

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1 well.

2 MS. GODSIL: Any additional questions? Thank  
3 you all so much for your thoughtful testimony. So  
4 if we could have Ben Turner, Joel Chusai, Bill  
5 Meehan, and Toby Shepard Block, please.

6 MR. MEEHAN: My writing is bad. It's Bill  
7 Meehan. Good evening, and thank you very much for  
8 giving us the opportunity to talk tonight. I'm  
9 privileged to be a community activist from Jackson  
10 Heights, and I'm here speaking on my own behalf and  
11 not for the community board or for other  
12 organizations I belong to. I'm a member of many  
13 civic and political groups, and my testimony  
14 tonight is gleaned from my participation in those  
15 groups.

16 I'm in my fifth term as a member of Community  
17 Board 3 in Jackson Heights in Queens where I serve  
18 on the executive committee, where I co-chair the  
19 airport committee; and I'm a member of  
20 transportation and land use committees. I'm also a  
21 member of Citizens Union for the past 15 years, and  
22 I'm a local candidates committee with them and  
23 combined municipal and state affairs committee.  
24 Both CU and CB3 have influenced my thinking of  
25 community boards; but, again, I am not officially

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1 speaking for either one of them.

2 CU has weighed in on three areas where it sees  
3 attention that would greatly benefit the  
4 functioning of community boards and through them  
5 benefit the City. I have participated in these  
6 discussions as a member of CU; and as a CB3 member,  
7 was able to supply a realistic view to our  
8 theoretical discussions.

9 We believe, and I concur, that community  
10 boards should receive an independent budget on  
11 location that is not at the discretion of the mayor  
12 or the council. Community boards are in their 55th  
13 year, and yet for some people we're still the new  
14 kid on the block and for other others the kid not  
15 wanted on the block.

16 During the Bloomberg years, the budgets of  
17 CBs, CCRB, and the public advocate, were  
18 substantially reduced. This should not be allowed  
19 to happen again, and an independent budget  
20 allocation would ensure that it does not happen  
21 again.

22 I would like to see a mechanism created that  
23 available pool of urban planners be independent of  
24 the borough president's office and be able to be  
25 accessed by community boards. I think in hearing

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1 what other people talk about for cost effectiveness  
2 that a number of boards can share a planner. I  
3 also think that community board members need  
4 ongoing education, and this should be provided not  
5 in classrooms but online.

6 Finally, I'm in favor of term limits. I  
7 believe it's necessary to bring new members in and  
8 new ideas. I'm a firm believer that community  
9 service is the rent we ought to pay for the  
10 privilege of living in a diverse community. I'm  
11 grateful for the opportunity of being a member of  
12 Queens Community Board 3 and for the opportunity of  
13 working alongside such a group of talented and  
14 dedicated people. Thank you for the opportunity to  
15 present to you this evening. Thank you for your  
16 service.

17 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

18 MR. CHUSAI: My name is Joel Chusai. I'm a  
19 former community board member, and I served two  
20 terms before deciding not to renew for a third. In  
21 2013, it was suggested to me by a friend in my  
22 neighborhood that I might consider joining the  
23 local board. I applied, council member, and was  
24 approved and served beginning of 2013.

25 If I have any advice for the commission, it

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1 would be to institute term limits for board members  
2 and to engage some way of ensuring that community  
3 boards observe the open meetings law. My time on  
4 the board, that was not done consistently. I'll  
5 get into that more, but that issue was one of the  
6 reasons why I chose not to continue. It was  
7 difficult to find information about what even some  
8 of the committees on the board were doing. I asked  
9 to join the Transportation Committee Board and was  
10 ignored, and then we would receive reports from  
11 this Transportation Committee. We didn't know when  
12 it was meeting or who was on it, and that was just  
13 the beginning.

14 These discussions took place in a kind of  
15 vexed environment surrounding the Woodhaven SBS  
16 plan. I was a proponent of the plan, had many  
17 questions. Could not really get the kind of  
18 information that I needed. Reached outside of the  
19 community to Writers Alliance, Transportation  
20 Alternatives, and other like-minded groups just to  
21 get information and was kind of ridiculed and  
22 called an outsider, a foreigner, in my own  
23 neighborhood by some of the leaders and on the  
24 board.

25 I think that having term limits would do a lot

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1 to ensure that some of the fiefdoms and kingdoms  
2 that develop with some of the factions, some of the  
3 regional factions, and some of the ideological  
4 grounded say pro business or pro car kind of people  
5 would be mitigated. It would be more opportunity.  
6 People wouldn't be able to kind of cling so tightly  
7 and develop those kind of power bases.

8 I agree very strongly with the point that was  
9 made previously about the relationship of the  
10 civics. I think they have too much power. They  
11 influence too greatly. They can mobilize huge  
12 army. I didn't anyone. I was speaking only for  
13 myself when serving on the board and was demonized  
14 for asking that we use facts in our discussions and  
15 not personal anecdotes. Some of the anecdotes seem  
16 to portray conflicts of interest. It was spelled  
17 out right there for everyone to see and yet nothing  
18 was said. Senior members of the board got a pass.  
19 They could yell and scream and insult people and  
20 nothing was done. I speak up, and I'm demonized.

21 Council members -- my council member's aide  
22 pulled me aside in this very building to say that  
23 the council member did not like the way that I was  
24 speaking out on behalf of SBS, and then I was told  
25 that I had to come in to see her in order to

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1 continue my renewal application and decided not to  
2 proceed. Thanks.

3 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

4 MR. BLOCK: Good evening, Commission. My name  
5 is Toby Shepard Block. I'm a resident of Glendale.  
6 I'm a member of Community Board 5 and the co-chair  
7 of the Transportation Committee.

8 I do support some sort of mechanism to ensure  
9 turnover in community board membership on a regular  
10 basis and to ensure that community boards reflect  
11 the communities that they are intended to  
12 represent. I was drawn to my board also around the  
13 issue of enhanced public transportation in the  
14 district and enhanced street safety when I heard  
15 members of the community board who purported to  
16 represent me and my family, only representing the  
17 interests of car drivers. A proposal that would  
18 have taken 25 percent of the street base of  
19 Woodhaven Boulevard and dedicated it to 33 percent  
20 of the street users was ridiculed and dismissed out  
21 of hand, and it became clear that my community  
22 board was going to become a loud voice of  
23 opposition in this plan and that catalyzed me to  
24 action to join my board and to join, specifically,  
25 the Transportation Committee before I was appointed



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1 to the board; and I share that detail with you  
2 because I think that is the answer to this question  
3 of experience and institutional knowledge. One  
4 need not be a voting member of the entire community  
5 board to be an active participant. There are other  
6 avenues to engage the board and to express your  
7 views to agency staff and other state voters making  
8 decisions that are quite effective.

9 I joined that committee as a clearly  
10 dissenting voice because I was able to engage with  
11 the members of the board. I was able to join the  
12 leadership of that committee and have a more  
13 equitable conversation around this project, and so  
14 there are multiple avenues for engagement; and I  
15 think the lifelong appointment system is simply  
16 broken.

17 In my time on the board, I've seen multiple  
18 younger, more diverse members appointed to the  
19 board that are more reflective of the community;  
20 and they have oftentimes left after a single term  
21 so dispirited by the hostility to new voices and  
22 new perspectives on the board. Hearing from people  
23 that have been on the board for 20, 30, 40, 45  
24 years, it's -- this is the way it is. There's  
25 nothing that we can do. This is the way the City

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1 works. Just live with it, and people lose their  
2 spirit; and they become despondent, and they  
3 resign. And so as a board member who's trying to  
4 make sure that our board really does respond to the  
5 needs of the entire community, when you see a  
6 couple like-minded folks join you on a board and  
7 you think that there's a ray of light, that there's  
8 some hope, to stick this out for a little longer,  
9 it becomes very hard to continue your service; and  
10 it doesn't seem like it's a useful way to spend  
11 your time. Thank you very much.

12 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

13 MR. TURNER: Hi there. My name is Ben Turner,  
14 and I'm on Community Board 11. I'm speaking here  
15 on my own behalf, and I too would like to see some  
16 sort of -- some form of term limits brought to  
17 community boards. I think there's a real need for  
18 new voices on community boards for a diversity of  
19 voices, greater representation, and reflection of  
20 the communities they serve; and I'd just like to  
21 echo some of the other comments that have been  
22 voiced here. I've been on the CB for the last  
23 year, and I've really been dismayed by the  
24 treatment of younger and newer community board  
25 members.

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1           A colleague of mine was verbally abused at a  
2 meeting just this past year, was told that he had  
3 an agenda for no real particular reason other than  
4 the senior member making comments seemed to have a  
5 dislike for him. Other senior members have audibly  
6 scoffed during public comments section towards  
7 members of the public who voiced concerns about  
8 level rise in an area like Bayside. I personally  
9 had a -- I've been told or had it implied to me  
10 that I was too young to understand things, that I  
11 didn't have the expertise needed to understand  
12 issues, and made it clear why my input wasn't  
13 welcome; and it's just really dispiriting when  
14 we're trying to contribute to our City. We want to  
15 make our communities better, and there's -- so many  
16 of our ideas are just greeted with such hostility.

17           I think term limits would be very helpful in  
18 ensuring greater turnover and greater diversity on  
19 the community boards. Thank you.

20           MS. GODSIL: Thank you all so much. Any  
21 questions from the commissioners?

22           MR. BRAGG: Just one quick one, I've heard  
23 testimony saying that term limits turnover should  
24 be regulated. Term limits should be helpful,  
25 that -- any sense of what that looks like because

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1 no one offered up a idea of what term limits might  
2 look like.

3 MR. TURNER: I think eight to ten years  
4 myself.

5 MR. BLOCK: Eight to ten.

6 MR. CHUSAI: Ten to twelve.

7 MR. BLOCK: I think ten years with one term  
8 off would be a minimum benchmark for that.

9 MR. BRAGG: Thank you.

10 MR. CHUSAI: I would say also that that should  
11 stand for the executive committees as well.

12 MS. GODSIL: Thank you all very much. Joseph  
13 Marziliano, Dominic Stiller, Marta Laverton  
14 (phonetic), and Clive Williams, please.

15 MR. MARZILIANO: Thank you for the  
16 opportunity, commissioners, elected officials,  
17 colleagues, and neighbors. My name is Joseph  
18 Marziliano, and I'm the district manager for  
19 Community Board 11. I wanted to attend tonight's  
20 public hearing to be able to testify that in 2015,  
21 Community Board 11 responded to the proposed  
22 legislation regarding community board term limits  
23 proposed by Council Member Dromm by resoundingly  
24 voting against that measure.

25 The community board that I work for, actually,

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1 is against term limits on the notion of  
2 institutional knowledge; and I would like to expand  
3 on that a little bit tonight. I do agree that the  
4 boards do need additional support and resources to  
5 perform our duties, and that the recruitment  
6 process could be enhanced to better inform the  
7 public of all the good work that the boards do.

8 However, I strongly disagree with the proposal  
9 to impose term limits on board members to improve  
10 the diversity of the communities served. Yes,  
11 there may be board members who should not be  
12 reappointed for an additional term. There should  
13 be board members that should be outright dismissed.  
14 The current system of council member and borough  
15 president appointments are adequate to this and  
16 given political courage to do so. We are lucky  
17 that in the borough of Queens, especially in our  
18 community board, that Community Board 11 is  
19 comprised of members that are younger adults and  
20 seniors, black and white, Hispanic and Middle  
21 Eastern, East Asian and South Asian from the public  
22 sector and the private sector, lawyers, healthcare  
23 professionals, general contractors, and everything  
24 in between. This includes some board members of  
25 over 30 years. One of those board members was our

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1 chairperson for over 30 years. He once wrote and I  
2 quote since its beginning, CB11 has held more 400  
3 public hearings on variances, zoning changes, and  
4 land use matters. Prior to 1969 this process did  
5 not exist. Community boards have brought sunshine  
6 into communities throughout the City and in  
7 communities, some input in the planning process  
8 that would impact their lives. This is the kind of  
9 institutional knowledge that I recommend  
10 protecting.

11 On my community board, we would lose 19  
12 members if eight- to ten-year term limits were  
13 implemented leaving us with 26. We did not get --  
14 we did not regularly get enough appointments to  
15 even have a full board at 50. This would  
16 eviscerate our institution, which I believe is  
17 important. The time it takes to learn how to  
18 navigate City bureaucracy as an unpaid volunteer  
19 takes years to become versed, and I truly believe  
20 that the work that these people do for decades and  
21 better deserves to be honored, not simply  
22 dismissed. Thank you.

23 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

24 MR. STILLER: Sorry, I've got my writing here.

25 Hi, thank you very much for all the work that

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1           you're doing. Let me find my notes. Thanks for  
2           listening to my opinion. I'm here to discuss term  
3           limits in community boards. My name is Dominic  
4           Stiller. I was raised in Eastern Queens. I'm a  
5           resident of Western Queens. I own a structural  
6           engineering firm in Western Queens, 17 employees.  
7           My wife and I own a gastropub in Western Queens,  
8           also 17 employees. I'm a past president of the  
9           Dutch Kills Civic Association, presently a member  
10          of CBI in my third year. I've lived in Manhattan,  
11          Long Island, London; and I'm happy to call Queens  
12          my home. I appreciate and am honored to have been  
13          appointed to our community board, but I don't think  
14          it's best for me to or assume I should have the  
15          right to serve forever. To assume that only a tiny  
16          fraction of the public could and should represent  
17          our entire diverse, changing community for decades  
18          is acts of hubris and self-interest. It is not  
19          like our seat is validated by periodic re-election.  
20          We are not re-elected. We serve forever. We are  
21          not the Supreme Court. We are not the Pope. Yet  
22          we can serve forever.

23                 Communities change in density and demographic.  
24                 I think it is obvious that community makeup changes  
25                 much quicker than change by natural attrition.

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1 Internet research shows no clear purposeful reason  
2 why term limits were not included in the original  
3 '63 charter. I suspect it was simply overlooked or  
4 possibly strategically ignored in the transition  
5 process. However, it is natural and healthy to  
6 tweak a program after implementation.

7 I wonder how many local social issues  
8 encountered over the past 50 years may have been  
9 partially or significantly helped by term limits at  
10 the community board level.

11 I'm going to go a little bit off mic, and I'm  
12 going to wrap up my conclusion after. I have a few  
13 examples here of things in the 70s such as -- I  
14 just want to say this, perhaps the notion that term  
15 limits should be for life is just so -- if you went  
16 from out of space and you came and you start  
17 talking to people and they say, "What? For life?"  
18 It's -- there's really some wacko aspect to it, and  
19 we're all so serious here; and we're discussing the  
20 little tweaks of it, but how in the world did it  
21 ever evolve? Well, it did; and it probably did due  
22 to limitations on imperfect social justice and  
23 other reasons, and I think we're right to consider  
24 to tweak it at this point by imposing term limits.  
25 This is New York City. Let's be daring. Let's not



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1 be afraid. I do -- I'm going to jump to my  
2 conclusion. I suggest the transition of term  
3 limits of a minimum of ten to twelve years and for  
4 smoothness, consider to let current board members  
5 be granted full agreed term going forward. I'm  
6 open to this suggestion of reappointment after  
7 hiatus. I'm confident with the opportunity that  
8 with all the important business tasks to the  
9 community boards, it will be imaginable to add a  
10 small task of being aware of training, designing,  
11 and implementing procedures that ensure  
12 constitutional continuity and smooth transitions.  
13 It will strengthen.

14 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

15 MS. LAVERTON: Good evening. Thank you for  
16 letting me speak. My name is Marta Laverton. I am  
17 the former chairperson of Community Board 3. I  
18 have been on that board -- this is my 15th year. I  
19 am speaking on my own opinions. It is not the  
20 opinion of the board. I feel that term limits  
21 should not be imposed on community boards. We are  
22 reappointed every two years, so you have to fill  
23 out that application every two years; and you run  
24 the risk of not being reappointed.

25 We recently in our community had a transition

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1 with the council member; and before that council  
2 member left, I sent my application to that person.  
3 I also sent it to the new council member because I  
4 was not sure that I would be reappointed; and I was  
5 told that's not going to happen. You'll be  
6 reappointed, but you don't know that; so every two  
7 years you have to be reappointed to the board, and  
8 I think that's important because there is turnover.  
9 There are your core set of people who work on the  
10 board and who attend the meetings, and I do believe  
11 that attendance should not just be ten meetings a  
12 year. It should be mandatory for committee  
13 meetings because we do a lot of work. I do work a  
14 full-time job, and I do the community full time;  
15 and I take pride in that.

16 I started going to community board meetings  
17 when I was 17 years old, and I learned what the  
18 community board is. A lot of people today do not  
19 know what a community board is. When you tell them  
20 what it is, they're, like, that exists? They  
21 cannot believe that a community board exists. When  
22 I was chairperson, we're the only community board  
23 that does an outdoor full board meeting in June;  
24 and we have continued that since I was chairperson,  
25 and it is wonderful to see people come out and ask

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1           what is a community board.  What do you do?  How do  
2           you get on it?  You let them know how to do that.  
3           I think the process is transparent because you get  
4           the application, and you fill it out.  You let your  
5           council member know who you are.  The borough  
6           president appoints you.  I was appointed through  
7           the former borough president Helen Marshall, and I  
8           take pride in being that community board member;  
9           and I really think you're going to lose a lot of  
10          people.  We have a lot of long-term members.  
11          You're going to lose them; and the people that come  
12          in do not care, do not want to work.  They think  
13          it's power and control to say, "I am a board  
14          member."  And that's not what it is.  It is an  
15          agency from New York City.  It's a New York City  
16          agency, and you are appointed; and you have to take  
17          pride in that, and I don't think that term limits  
18          are going to do that because you're going to  
19          lose -- and you're going to end up with boards with  
20          at least ten members on each board in Queens.  
21          Thank you.

22                   MS. GODSIL:  Thank you so much.

23                   MR. WILLIAMS:  This has become a really very  
24                   thorny matter.  My name is Clive Williams.  I'm  
25                   board chair of community board 13.  First of all, I

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1 must defer to my board member Mr. Bragg upon the  
2 days -- I want to congratulate you for being on  
3 this very August commission.

4 This is very emotional, the whole matter of  
5 term limits. I realize that it is almost divisive.  
6 I'm a newbie, and I'll give you a sense from where  
7 I come. I am a businessman. I am a retired  
8 professional; and I went in a business, been in  
9 business for the last 18 years. And when I joined  
10 the community board, I saw a different side of  
11 bureaucracy. All the above that has been listed  
12 here, I saw. I saw the resistance to new members.  
13 I saw the stayed position that this is how it is,  
14 and it's not going to change. In fact, it can  
15 easily -- and I speak as a chair; and this is my  
16 second go around. It could become a fiefdom; and I  
17 think the regard against that is to, yes, apply  
18 term limits. On a cautionary note though, term  
19 limits if applied can cause all the problems that  
20 have been elucidated here this evening. It can  
21 create a situation of attrition. Immediately  
22 you're going to lose people, but I think we've got  
23 to look at organizations as we do organisms. They  
24 will grow. They will regrow, and they will regrow  
25 in maybe a better way.

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1           I think there has come a time because of the  
2           tremendous diversity in our communities that we  
3           need to be more inclusive. The major thing we have  
4           to accomplish is to -- this has to be -- the  
5           Charter Revision Commission has not just got to  
6           implement change from -- by the pen, but you have  
7           to implement a psychological change. The way  
8           community boards are perceived, it's very important  
9           that this psychological shift be made because if it  
10          isn't, then you'll be just a panel sitting up there  
11          listening to us; and business goes on as usual, and  
12          I hope this is not what results from this  
13          conversation.

14           I truly believe that we can find answers; and  
15          if we impose term limits, then we've got to find a  
16          way to attract new members into our ranks. And the  
17          only way to do that is to raise the level of  
18          activity of community boards. I will guarantee you  
19          if you walk out into any community as diverse as  
20          they have become and speak to ten people in the  
21          streets and ask them about a community board, they  
22          don't know what the heck you're talking about.  
23          They don't know. Therefore, given the situation,  
24          we have to find a way to outreach now. Community  
25          boards have got to have enough funds to get out in

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1 the communities and let them know we're here, we're  
2 relevant and we're here to help them. Do I have a  
3 30 seconds?

4 MS. GODSIL: Thirty seconds.

5 MR. WILLIAMS: In terms of standardizing and  
6 enhancing the existing appointment process, I don't  
7 think we have to -- we have to do a win-lose  
8 situation. It can be win-win situation. I think  
9 the -- I like the idea of my -- the elected  
10 official, the borough president but why not include  
11 the chair of the community board as well in this  
12 process of appointment? That way it's a win-win  
13 for the community because the community board chair  
14 or the community board knows who is capable of  
15 working. They know the history and the activities  
16 of the people in the community; and, therefore,  
17 they can advise both elected official and the  
18 borough president as to who should be eligible to  
19 be a board member.

20 Thank you very much for the opportunity, and I  
21 trust that all that we have said here this evening  
22 will at least be meaningful in the decisions that  
23 you make.

24 MS. GODSIL: Thank you all so much. I  
25 actually have one question for Ms. Laverton because

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1 as Mr. Williams suggested, this has become very  
2 emotional; and there are people like Ms. Laverton  
3 and other people who have testified who clearly  
4 have devoted so much time to their service and  
5 community boards. Ms. Laverton, if this Commission  
6 were to recommend term limits and there were to be,  
7 of course, one year that present community board  
8 members could serve, do you think as a person who's  
9 obviously devoted so much and who would want to be  
10 respected as such, would you be willing still to be  
11 an engaged community member? As a public member  
12 sometimes suggested, is there a way this could be a  
13 win-win so the institutional knowledge and  
14 commitment that you've shown and others have shown  
15 could still be present in the community board?

16 MS. LAVERTON: I think you need to grandfather  
17 them in. You have to grandfather them in. You  
18 have to grandfather in those long-term members. So  
19 for members who have been there, I'm going to say,  
20 15 years or more, they need to be grandfathered in.

21 MS. GODSIL: For what period of time?

22 MS. LAVERTON: They need -- if they want to --  
23 being that you're reappointed every two years, as  
24 long as you're reappointed, I think those members  
25 should stay. I think when you have a hiatus, what

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1 happens is, you may still be involved; but you may  
2 not want to return, and that's what's going to  
3 happen. People will feel that, "Okay, now I can't  
4 be reappointed. I have to wait two years. I have  
5 to wait three years." At that time they may not  
6 want to come back, and then you lose them  
7 completely; and then you lose them at the meetings.

8 MS. GODSIL: Thank you. Any additional  
9 questions?

10 MS. SEECHARRAN: My question is for any of  
11 you. I wonder if you really believe that it would  
12 be difficult to fill the seats that might be  
13 vacated; and, additionally, we've heard that in  
14 many community boards across the City, there are a  
15 number of vacant seats. Do you have any thoughts  
16 as to why?

17 MR. WILLIAMS: I think I've proposed that. I  
18 think it would be difficult to fill these  
19 positions. We have to do an outreach to the  
20 community on a consistent basis. Right now there's  
21 no knowledge. Most people in our communities,  
22 except those in the know, except those who are  
23 political in their approach, they don't know about  
24 community boards. That's a fact; so what we need  
25 to do is find a way to outreach to reach these



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1 people, to let them know that by participating with  
2 a community board, they are, in fact, participating  
3 in the civic process. They're helping their  
4 community.

5 MS. SEECHARRAN: I guess let me clarify my  
6 question. I guess I'm wondering if you truly  
7 believe that for those of you who commented that it  
8 would be difficult to fill these seats, if you  
9 truly believe that there are not enough qualified  
10 or interested individuals out there who would want  
11 to serve because I do agree that there is -- there  
12 would be a need to increase awareness.

13 Ms. Laverton, you spoke to the issue of the vast  
14 majority of residents are not even aware that  
15 community boards exist; so I -- if you could speak  
16 to that.

17 MR. MARZILIANO: As a district manager who on  
18 a day to day runs a City agency, which is a  
19 community board, I can tell you that yes, most  
20 people, you got on the street part of your outreach  
21 includes a little pamphlet that says what is a  
22 community board, getting to know your community  
23 board. That's a fact of life.

24 You also have a situation where apathy in a  
25 society is rampant, and I know for a fact that my

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1 board is not at full capacity. Not every board is,  
2 and it will actually take more outreach for sure;  
3 but to lose 19 members pretty much overnight would  
4 hamstring us. In my bylaws, for example, in order  
5 to have -- in order to have, I believe, a public  
6 hearing, a monthly board meeting, you need to have  
7 a minimum of 26 members out of the proposed 50; and  
8 I would need two absences to have to cancel board  
9 meetings. It would -- this would create a  
10 significant problem for us at least in the short  
11 term to the medium term for sure.

12 MS. GODSIL: Okay. How about one additional  
13 comment; we have three additional panels.

14 MR. STILLER: It seems logical that the  
15 Charter Commission would -- I'm surprised to hear  
16 this one-year mandate. Is this, like, a done deal  
17 in your proposal because it seems like a suggestion  
18 of grandfathering would be a smooth transition; and  
19 then in just a few years, the community would have  
20 a much more broader knowledge of community boards.  
21 And there would be no term limits. It would roll  
22 smoothly into broader awareness of the community  
23 when there are no term limits because you would  
24 have more people having a chance to get on the  
25 board.

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1 MS. GODSIL: All right. Thank you so much.  
2 We really appreciate all of your testimony. Peter  
3 Beadle, Gary Giordano, John Kelly, and Ivyonne  
4 O'Neal.

5 MR. BEADLE: Good evening. I'm Peter Beadle,  
6 20-year resident of Rego Park, an attorney, and a  
7 member of Community Board 6 for the last six years.  
8 Of course, all of my comments here are my personal  
9 ones. They're no reflective of the board, but  
10 thank you to the Commission for the opportunity of  
11 testifying for the important work that you're  
12 doing.

13 I very much believe that community boards are  
14 one of the more important institutions that people  
15 have the potential to engage with on a regular  
16 basis in their communities. It provides people  
17 with some of the most direct access to the  
18 democratic process; but despite that, it doesn't  
19 meet that potential. And this great institution  
20 that could provide people an immediate way to get  
21 their concerns heard by this huge, complex City,  
22 instead becomes one of the barriers to actually  
23 getting change happening in our communities.  
24 Community boards should not be the last faction of  
25 the defense of the status quo, but that's very much

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1           how they operate.

2           What needs to be done is, we need to find ways  
3           to increase the transparency and the accessibility  
4           of our community boards so that you don't have  
5           people testifying that if you went on the street  
6           tonight and asked ten people, eight of them  
7           wouldn't even know what you were talking about.  
8           That testimony should spur us into very direct and  
9           immediate action to change the way that these  
10          boards are structured. When you look at the  
11          Charter, there's an entire chapter on community  
12          boards, Chapter 70; but when you look at it, it's  
13          jurisdictional. It tells you what kinds of things  
14          the community board should look at, but it doesn't  
15          structure it. It doesn't help these community  
16          boards function in a way that improves their  
17          accessibility.

18          I came here rather torn on the issue of term  
19          limits. After listening to the testimony, I'm now  
20          convinced that it's absolutely necessary. This  
21          shouldn't be about defending the real estate of a  
22          certain group of people. It should be about  
23          opening this process to as many of us as possible.  
24          The idea of -- more along the 12-year timeline I  
25          think makes sense to address that institutional

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1 knowledge, but we need to make sure that our  
2 community board meetings are advertised. Everybody  
3 knows when every committee meeting is happening.  
4 It needs to be live streamed. The minutes need to  
5 be posted regularly so that that institutional  
6 knowledge is right there, that everybody has access  
7 to it. They're not just relying on that one person  
8 who always comes to the land use meeting to say,  
9 "Well, this has been going on for 15 years." No.  
10 We all need to be part of that; and also executive  
11 board members, I believe need to have a shorter  
12 term limit. The chair wield a huge amount of power  
13 on the board appointing committee members, chairs  
14 to those committees, and controlling the agenda.  
15 But yes on term limits, and there needs to be real  
16 structure provided in the charter so that meetings  
17 are consistent from community board to community  
18 board; and the community has more access to those  
19 meetings.

20 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much.

21 MR. GIORDANO: Good evening. I'm Gary  
22 Giordano. I'm the district manager of Community  
23 Board 5 in Queens. So maybe my testimony is a  
24 little more lengthy than the three minutes.

25 First, I thank you all for doing this night

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1 after night. I know that can wear you down. You  
2 look quite, you know, fit and fresh to me; so God  
3 bless you. I've heard criticism of community  
4 boards tonight; and I'm of the opinion that by  
5 empowering, for lack of a better term, up to 50  
6 people within a community district, it may have  
7 been the most important structural improvement in  
8 the City of New York in the last 50 years. Board  
9 members have been the eyes and ears of communities.  
10 Board members do not have to get campaign  
11 contributions. Board members do not have to be  
12 beholden to those contributors or lobbyists or  
13 anyone else if they're doing their jobs correctly.

14 We at Board 5 Queens have I think done a very,  
15 very good job of being as apolitical as humanly  
16 possible. We have not had the problems in my  
17 opinion, and I'm pretty open-minded, that I'm  
18 hearing from other people, that the boards aren't  
19 very open. Anybody can come to any committee  
20 meeting of Community Board 5 as long as we can fit  
21 them in our space, and sometimes they are -- if the  
22 issue is a bit heated or controversial, they are --  
23 there's standing room only at some of the committee  
24 meeting.

25 I do agree that not enough people maybe know

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1 about their community board, but that's not a new  
2 thing. I think more needs to be done to outreach  
3 the people that community boards exist and what  
4 their purpose is; but we, I think, as Joe  
5 Marziliano, Marziliano said, we live in a society  
6 where what percentage of the people voted in the  
7 last mayoral election just a for instance? Even in  
8 a presidential election, the amount of voter  
9 turnout is really a problem.

10 I think that -- and this is my own opinion,  
11 but I think that it's very dangerous to have term  
12 limits on community boards just for the sake of  
13 either having term limits or having turnover. I  
14 think by leaving a few spots open every year, that  
15 you can achieve a lot of that. We have community  
16 board members who would be very, very hard to  
17 replace who have expertise with regard to reading  
18 plans, having been in construction, having been in  
19 the school system, attorneys. We have many, many  
20 people whose expertise would be very, very  
21 difficult to replace.

22 We have gotten some good community board  
23 members in the last few years and some young  
24 community board members; and I think as far as  
25 Board 5 goes, the borough president has done a good

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1 job as far as appointing some younger members who  
2 reflect the community change.

3 MS. GODSIL: Thank you --

4 MR. GIORDANO: But to have term limits just  
5 for the sake of having term limits I think is a big  
6 mistake.

7 MS. GODSIL: Thank you for your testimony.

8 MR. KELLY: My name John Kelly. I'm a  
9 Community Board 11 member; but if I am quoted,  
10 please say that I do not speak on behalf of the  
11 board.

12 From my experience in business, I know that  
13 when a worker terminates from a job, they're  
14 generally gone a hundred percent and no longer  
15 contribute in any way to that corporation. I'm  
16 sorry. Is that better? Apologies.

17 From my experience in business, I know that  
18 when a worker terminates from a job, they're  
19 generally gone a hundred percent and no longer  
20 contribute in any way to that corporation. Other  
21 speakers may say implementing term limits on  
22 community board members may do the same thing,  
23 losing valuable experience but that is patently not  
24 the case.

25 An important piece that is often overlooked is



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1 the community aspect of the community boards. All  
2 of our neighbors are invited to community board  
3 meetings, and everyone is given time to speak. The  
4 only distinction community board members should  
5 have is voting rights. Term limits move around  
6 voting rights so that votes can be more  
7 representational of the neighborhood today instead  
8 of being representational of the neighborhood 40  
9 years ago.

10 Term limits do not silence or remove those  
11 with experience. It really moves them to the  
12 public comment period of the meeting with the rest  
13 of the neighborhood. Term limits stop the  
14 consolidation of power. After being appointed for  
15 eight or ten years, a retired community member  
16 should be able to influence the newer board members  
17 during the public comment period. If the  
18 opinions -- if their opinions are not persuasive  
19 enough after a decade on the board, why are we  
20 defending their seat for more decades?

21 When our Founding Fathers designed America's  
22 judicial branch, they set up a system where subject  
23 matter experts try to influence a rotating jury of  
24 everyday citizens. This checks the power of any  
25 one specific group, judges, prosecutors, or police

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1 over the powers of the citizens. Community board  
2 term limits checks the power of any one subgroup by  
3 rotating voting rights much more often, but  
4 everyone is still encouraged to share their  
5 opinions and expertise so voting members can make  
6 the best decisions for the neighborhood. Just as  
7 judges, prosecutors, and expert witnesses, et  
8 cetera, can use their specific knowledge to  
9 influence jurors; so can term limited out city  
10 members influence the new members.

11 Right now I stand before a temporary committee  
12 trying to influence you through my words and  
13 experience. The system would be far less fair if  
14 your committee ruled for life and was able to  
15 ignore the changing community concerns and protect  
16 your personal interests.

17 As a community board member, I ask you to  
18 propose a fixed term limit of eight to ten years  
19 for all community board members without a loophole  
20 of nonconsecutive term limits. I know this will  
21 limit my voting rights time and will not undo the  
22 damage that other members have done over decades;  
23 but good governance reform is far more important  
24 than personal influence, title, or dynasty that  
25 many currently crave on the community boards today.

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1 Thank you very much for your time.

2 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

3 MS. O'NEAL: Good evening. I am Yvonne  
4 O'Neal. Thank you Madam Vice-Chair and the members  
5 of the Charter Revision Commission with a warm  
6 welcome the third evening in a row.

7 I represent New York City for CEDAW, a  
8 grassroots movement of over 200 organizations  
9 advocated for New York City to adopt the principles  
10 of the 1979 UN Convention in the Nation of  
11 Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW. We feel that  
12 the time is right and that the Charter Revision  
13 should take into account a gender equity  
14 perspective.

15 This evening I wish to talk about gender  
16 budgeting as it relates to CEDAW. Gender budgeting  
17 is not rocket science nor is it pie in the sky.  
18 Gender budgeting is a strategy to achieve equality  
19 between women and men by focusing on how public  
20 resources are collected and spent.

21 In a study by Janet Stotsky titled Gender  
22 Budgeting: Fiscal Contexts and Current Outcomes  
23 states, "Gender budgeting is not a special approach  
24 to budgeting or even an add-on to budgeting.

25 Rather gender budgeting is an approach to budgeting

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1 that can improve it when fiscal policies and  
2 administrative procedures are structured to address  
3 gender inequality and women's developments needs.  
4 When properly done, one can say that gender  
5 budgeting is good budgeting."

6 The purpose of gender budgeting is threefold.  
7 One, to promote accountability and transparency in  
8 fiscal planning. Two, to increase gender  
9 responsive participation in the budget process.  
10 For example, by undertaking steps to involve women  
11 and men equally in budget preparation; and three,  
12 to advance gender equality and women's right.

13 Effective implementation of gender budgeting  
14 requires political commitment matched with a  
15 technical capacity for gender mainstreaming.  
16 Engaged leadership is a particular importance to  
17 ensure that gender equality is integrated into the  
18 planning and budgeting processes and that public  
19 budgets, revenues, and expenditures benefit women  
20 and men equally.

21 Key enabling factors for gender budgeting  
22 include political will and political leadership,  
23 high level commitment of public administrative  
24 institution, improved technical capacity of civil  
25 servants, civil society involvement, and sex

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1 disaggregated data. Does New York City have the  
2 political commitment to implement CEDAW and gender  
3 budgeting?

4 Madam Vice-Chair, it warms my heart that you  
5 and Ms. Wendy Weiser and Ms. Sharon Greenberg are  
6 very knowledgeable where CEDAW is concerned as I'm  
7 sure that some of the other commissioners also are.  
8 I urge you and these esteemed commissioners on the  
9 Charter Revision Commission to lead the way for the  
10 other commissioners in understanding why a gender  
11 equality framework in the Charter for New York City  
12 as the capital city of the world should truly be  
13 the leader in living under CEDAW principles and  
14 implementing gender budgeting.

15 If we are truly serious about civic engagement  
16 and the welfare of the citizens of the New York  
17 City, we can do no less. Thank you.

18 MS. GODSIL: Thank you. Any questions from  
19 the commissioners? All right. Thank you all so  
20 much for your testimony. Former council member  
21 Archie Spigner, Sheila Katzman, Prameet Kumar, and  
22 Ethan Felder, please. So it appears a former  
23 council member may not be present.

24 MR. BRAGG: He's here.

25 MS. GODSIL: I'm sorry. Oh, he's here.

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1 MR. SPIGNER: I'm here, I'm here. I  
2 started -- I learned of this meeting this morning,  
3 and someone from the councilman's office called me;  
4 and we were talking about something else. He said,  
5 "By the way, do you know that the Charter  
6 Commission is having a meeting tonight, six o'clock  
7 at Borough Hall." I said, "No, I didn't know about  
8 it." And he said that he had sent out on their  
9 mailing list, and I looked and I saw it; so I  
10 called Community Board 12. And I says well -- she  
11 said, "Well, they had put it on their Facebook  
12 page, whatever that is."

13 So I think -- this could be work at this  
14 commission if you're serious about it, you know,  
15 you would need a much larger room to hold a meeting  
16 than this if you're talking about a borough with  
17 two and a half million people if you're serious  
18 about what you're doing. I -- so when I walked in,  
19 I said do I want to testify? Well, I got a lot to  
20 say; but I don't know what to say because I don't  
21 know what you're talking about. I mean, I can  
22 recall having been exposed to Charter in my prior  
23 life, work; but I think you should do more vigorous  
24 out -- and I read here that you've held five  
25 hearings, meetings, already; is that correct?

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1 MS. GODSIL: Actually, this is our -- we held  
2 five public hearings before the initial report; and  
3 this is our fourth, and there will be five public  
4 hearings after the preliminary staff report.

5 MR. SPIGNER: So there are going to be more  
6 hearings?

7 MS. GODSIL: Yes.

8 MR. SPIGNER: So I would suggest, recommend,  
9 that you do a very serious outreach and let people  
10 know this Charter Revision Commission exists and  
11 what the purpose is because I assure you they don't  
12 know. I don't know if you're going to -- I don't  
13 see anybody -- we have a very sophisticated  
14 community board, and we have a very sophisticated  
15 community; and I would assure you had they known  
16 about this, more of us would be here tonight.

17 Just one comment on the community board. I  
18 support -- I support term limits, but it should be  
19 staggered so that you don't wipe out half the board  
20 or so that there's a continuity; but I would like  
21 to -- I just learned that sitting here. I didn't  
22 come prepared to testify; so if you could have more  
23 outreach, I think the City population would  
24 appreciate. And I'll be back, and I'll testify.  
25 Thank you.

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1 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much. We very much  
2 appreciate that you're here, and you'll have other  
3 opportunities to share your insights. Thank you so  
4 much.

5 MR. SPIGNER: Thank you.

6 MS. KATZMAN: Good evening. My name is Sheila  
7 Katzman, and I am president of the International  
8 Association for Women in Radio and Television USA.  
9 I am the chair of New York City for CEDAW, a  
10 volunteer organization in New York City that is  
11 part of the cities for CEDAW national movement.

12 I just want to kind of get off script a little  
13 and say most people didn't know about this night.  
14 Neither did I; and if I -- we never met with Helen  
15 Rosenthal recently in her office we wouldn't have  
16 known that, you know, there was revision happening,  
17 there was, you know, these meetings taking place.  
18 So I think you can have more turnout if public  
19 outreach -- I, you know, concur with the former  
20 council member here.

21 I'm going to jump right into it. I kind of  
22 want to speak on some of the focused areas because  
23 I've been educated two days now on the -- on what  
24 the Charter is about, and I am not from a community  
25 board; so I'm the odd one out at this table



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1 perhaps, all right. Instead of women being  
2 recognized as over half the population, they're  
3 being treated as marginalized minority. Specific  
4 narrow issues are defined as women's issues and  
5 relegated to the women's committee. Where is the  
6 men's committee? All of the issues are determined  
7 as -- not as women's issues, such as campaign  
8 finance, municipal elections of New York City,  
9 civic engagement, community boards, and the  
10 districting process are all women's issues. Please  
11 do not overlook the explicit effects of the  
12 different proposals upon women, the articles of  
13 CEDAW are a good framework to do this.

14 In fact, there's a good framework to look at  
15 the affect on women of all government activities.  
16 One of the policy areas is campaign finance. While  
17 reviewing the New York City campaign finance laws,  
18 this must additionally examine the role of women  
19 and gender in relation to campaign finance. We  
20 have observed that the numbers of women in the City  
21 Council has diminished. We want to explicitly  
22 ensure that campaign finance is not the reason for  
23 that.

24 Community boards are another important focused  
25 area and are most important when it comes to

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1 communities and putting the people who live in the  
2 community at the fore. This has dominated both the  
3 hearings in Brooklyn and the Bronx and here tonight  
4 also, and thereby shows a kind of urgency.

5 Presenters were calling for diversity and  
6 training and for politics to be taken out of  
7 appointments and given back to the community.  
8 However, as long as community boards are appointed  
9 by elected officials, they will answer to them and  
10 not to the communities they are supposed to  
11 represent. We recommend using petitioning as a way  
12 of appointing members. Petitioning will enforce  
13 respective board members to face the community they  
14 serve and explain the role of community boards and,  
15 hopefully, convince the public to participate.

16 MS. GODSIL: Okay. If you could wrap up your  
17 comments.

18 MS. KATZMAN: I will.

19 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

20 MS. KATZMAN: Surely community boards and  
21 civic engagement seem to be overlapping forward as  
22 one will seem to compliment the other. It is  
23 through these boards that a community should be  
24 educated about civic activities and the public  
25 right to participate; and, lastly, and there is

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1 much more that you will have there, but I want to  
2 just say the districting process because women head  
3 most households, there voices must count.

4 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much, and we promise  
5 to read the written comments as well. Thank you so  
6 much.

7 MS. KATZMAN: Thank you.

8 MR. KUMAR: Good evening. My name is Prameet  
9 Kumar. I'm a member of Queens Community Board 6,  
10 which encompasses the neighborhoods of Rego Park  
11 and Forest Hills where I grew up and have lived  
12 most of my life. Like many other people, I would  
13 like to talk about community boards tonight.

14 Queens community boards do not currently  
15 represent the demographic diversity of Queens. As  
16 a young brown immigrant person, I wouldn't say that  
17 I'm particularly unique in this borough. There's a  
18 lot of us here, but I'm, unfortunately, somewhat  
19 unique on my board. To help make community boards  
20 look more like their communities, we need to  
21 establish term limits. The appeals to safekeeping  
22 institutional knowledge are -- they seem to me to  
23 be vastly overblown. There are many other ways  
24 they belong on a position other than to keep  
25 appointing the same people year after year, decade

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1 after decade. Community board membership should  
2 not be a lifetime appointment. I would take a  
3 fresh perspectives over institutional knowledge any  
4 day.

5 We need to establish fair and transparent  
6 appointment criteria that are applied across the  
7 board regardless of tenure so we don't discourage  
8 passionate people trying to get newly involved.

9 There are about 120,000 people who live in  
10 Forest Hills and Rego Park. I find it very hard to  
11 believe that if term limits were instituted there  
12 would be a shortage of qualified applicants. The  
13 real problem isn't lack of qualified applicants.  
14 The problem is lack of outreach. Most New Yorkers  
15 have no idea what the board is or what it does,  
16 which is to be expected because the board does a  
17 very poor job of publicizing what it does. Yes,  
18 the board has a website where it posts upcoming  
19 meetings, agendas, and minutes; but very few people  
20 know about the site or use it.

21 So much neighborhood discourse is increasingly  
22 taking place online on platforms like Facebook and  
23 Twitter which our board at least is conspicuously  
24 absent from. Community boards must be properly  
25 resourced so they can actively manage online

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1 communications and go where the people are and  
2 where the local conversations are happening.

3 I hope this commission takes these issues  
4 seriously. Without community boards that are  
5 diverse, embracing members, and truly inviting  
6 interactions with the residents, boards risk  
7 becoming insular and ineffective. Thank you for  
8 your time.

9 MS. GODSIL: If Jean Silva can also come up  
10 and testify so we can fill out the panel. Is Jean  
11 Silva here? Melissa Barnes? Thank you so much.

12 MS. BARNES: Hello.

13 MS. GODSIL: We didn't mean to catch you off  
14 guard.

15 MS. BARNES: No. It's quite all right. Thank  
16 you. Hello, everyone.

17 MS. GODSIL: Can you put your mouth a little  
18 closer to the mic so we can make sure we hear you.

19 MS. BARNES: Hi, hello, everyone. My name is  
20 Melissa Barnes, and I live within Community Board  
21 6, just to say that; and I'm just going say a  
22 couple of things.

23 The first reason why I wanted to speak up is  
24 completely off topic of community boards, which is  
25 I just would like to see the laws enforced when it

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1 comes to bicycles. I have seen too many bicycles  
2 blow through red lights and -- in front of the  
3 police and nothing happens; and it's an issue of  
4 public safety, and I would really like to see them  
5 have license plates and take a written test to make  
6 sure they know the traffic laws, et cetera. So  
7 there's that.

8 The second thing I would like to address is  
9 about community boards. Simply that I actually  
10 myself did apply to get on the community board, and  
11 I know someone in Brooklyn who's in politics; and  
12 they're, like, "Oh, you got to know somebody to get  
13 on the community board." And I was like, "Oh, no,  
14 no really." And then sure enough, I didn't get  
15 picked just for a first time choice. I became  
16 interested in it. I didn't know anything about it,  
17 but I was interested; but it didn't seem like --  
18 seemed like I did really need to know somebody, so  
19 I think there maybe some cronyism or just it's a  
20 closed space or may be not open. I don't know. I  
21 don't know what that's about, but it should be  
22 examined; and a way to deal with that would be to  
23 deal with term limits to make sure that everybody's  
24 voices are getting heard, and I also think that if  
25 someone does not want to participate in a community

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1 board simply because they cannot be on the board  
2 and have a vote, then you really probably should  
3 look at the motivations for being on that board.

4 And, lastly, I just want to say that I believe  
5 in equality for all; and that means -- and we talk  
6 about race and gender and so forth. Everyone  
7 should be treated the same. We shouldn't have to  
8 be talking about men getting paid more than women,  
9 et cetera. It's the same job, the same pay.  
10 Equality for all. Thank you.

11 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much. Any questions  
12 from the commissioners? Thank you all very much  
13 for your testimony, and thank you so much City  
14 Council Members for being here, Richard David,  
15 Laura Shepard, Stephan Edel, and John Cho. If we  
16 could start on our left, your right, please.

17 MR. CHO: After the September 11th attack in  
18 2001, then Mayor Giuliani demanded an unprecedented  
19 three-month emergency extension of his term arguing  
20 that he was indispensable in restoring law and  
21 order. In 2008, utilizing a similar argument, then  
22 Mayor Bloomberg convinced the City Council to  
23 extend term limits in violation of popular  
24 referenda because he was considered indispensable  
25 and chaos would result if he was not mayor for

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1 another four years.

2           Tonight you will hear some members of our  
3 community boards claim that they are also  
4 indispensable, that the loss of their  
5 institutional knowledge and expertise that they  
6 have will cripple governments and destroy our  
7 democracy. I have attended community board  
8 meetings for more than 15 years, and I can assure  
9 you that is not the case. In fact, I would argue  
10 that the lack of term limits for appointed  
11 officials is even more dangerous. Case in point,  
12 Robert Moses, an unelected official who had gone  
13 with unchecked power and destroyed many  
14 neighborhoods in our City.

15           When given an opportunity this year to approve  
16 a health clinic by which there are 40,000  
17 additional low income immigrants, CB7, my community  
18 board, had no qualms about rejecting the proposal  
19 and endangering the lives of the most vulnerable in  
20 our community. The lack of diversity is symbolic  
21 of broader structural dysfunction where community  
22 boards lack the resources, the technology, and the  
23 staff to effectively fulfill their planning and  
24 advisory role.

25           In CB7, the most populous and linguistic



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1 diverse community board in the City, we lack staff  
2 who speak Korean and the Chinese dialects spoken by  
3 most immigrants in our community. How can such a  
4 community board be the eyes and ears of the  
5 community when they do not even speak the language?  
6 My neighbors and I cannot afford another decade of  
7 missed opportunities and unfulfilled needs.  
8 There's too much at stake, and I urge the Charter  
9 Revision Commission to act.

10 In a real democracy, no one is indispensable.  
11 Let's move on and enact term limits so that we can  
12 focus on the many important issues that need to be  
13 addressed in our community. Thank you.

14 MS. GODSIL: Could you identify yourself for  
15 the record, please.

16 MR. CHO: John Cho.

17 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

18 MS. SHEPARD: Hi. My name is Laura Shepard,  
19 and I'm here to share some of my experiences. I  
20 began covering community boards as a journalist  
21 when I was 23 years old shortly after I graduated  
22 from college. Among other reforms, I strongly  
23 support term limits and codifying the role as  
24 advisory of all decisions with environmental  
25 consequences.

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1           Unelected boards should not have veto power  
2           over City agencies. Community boards have a lot of  
3           problems with regards to transparency,  
4           accountability, and even democracy. Most people in  
5           New York City do not know their community board  
6           member, what powers it has, when it meets, or how  
7           to get on it. Even my best friends native New  
8           Yorkers graduates of city specialized high schools  
9           and known universities do not know these things.

10           If the system were more visible, it would have  
11           no problem attracting smart, talented people who  
12           are committed to improving their communities and  
13           heckling global challenges. Even those who do know  
14           of their existence find them baffling. There are  
15           stark inconsistencies between the boards. They  
16           start and end at different times. They follow  
17           different procedures. Some have robust discussions  
18           about everything from major construction projects  
19           to sidewalk cafe licenses out in the open, or  
20           others just rubber stamp their committee books.

21           I've covered nearly three-hour meetings before  
22           where only one or two people even speak until  
23           public comment. Most frustratingly some do not  
24           even allow public comment before meetings or before  
25           voting on relevant issues. Not allowing public

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1 comment until 10 p.m. discourages working people  
2 and parents from attending meeting at all. Once I  
3 criticized a board chair for doing this and he  
4 replied, "We are the public." When, in fact, he  
5 was appointed and should welcome community input.

6 If board members didn't feel like their  
7 appointments were life sentences, members may  
8 welcome more public engagement knowing that they  
9 would eventually end up on the other side. Because  
10 of lack of turnover, some see their boards as their  
11 personal kingdoms, which also the lack of  
12 transparency, websites are rarely up to date, do  
13 not list current members, their neighborhoods, or  
14 how long they've served. I've tried to contact  
15 boards as a journalist and a citizen to ask simple  
16 questions and often had to wait two to three weeks  
17 for simple answers, and you shouldn't need a  
18 member's personal cell phone number to get a -- to  
19 have a question like what was the vote count  
20 answered.

21 As far as the lack of diversity goes, the long  
22 time members consistently overvalue long-time  
23 residency. People preface statements by telling  
24 you what hospital they were born at, where they  
25 went to elementary school, how long they've been

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1 married as if that makes their word gospel. This  
2 also turns community members into echo chambers for  
3 the most provincial and reactionary elements. This  
4 is off putting to new residents, to immigrants, and  
5 to young people. There's so few young women on  
6 boards, and I'm not surprised. As a journalist, I  
7 often had my questions answered with things, like,  
8 talk to me after the meeting, sweetheart; and there  
9 are also -- I guess I'm out of time.

10 MS. GODSIL: Thank you very much.

11 MS. SHEPARD: You're welcome.

12 MR. EDEL: Thank you. My name is Stephan  
13 Edel. I'm the project director for New York  
14 Working Families, and I appreciate the opportunity  
15 to speak to the board, the commission, and thank  
16 all of you for your work and your hard working  
17 staff.

18 I'm not going to talk about community boards.  
19 Although I feel as if I should as somebody who is  
20 not a community board member and has often gone to  
21 those meetings and has strong feelings, but I'm  
22 going to focus my comments on responding to a  
23 couple of the points primarily about campaign  
24 financing in the initial staff report.

25 Generally, we agree, I agree, with the

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1 recommendations in the staff report. It's focus on  
2 democracy, strengthening our democracy in this  
3 moment is incredibly needed. The focus on campaign  
4 finance, elections, civic engagement, and forming  
5 our community boards as well as districting process  
6 will strengthening the City and protect New Yorkers  
7 in a really critical moment.

8           However, in this moment, I want to push you  
9 all and in this national context to be a little  
10 bolder. The board is working very fast with  
11 limited resources to go through a tremendous amount  
12 of feedback; and there are some great ideas in  
13 there, not only that you've looked at and dig into  
14 but that have sort of gone by the wayside.  
15 Specifically, there are some that you are  
16 addressing where I think you could go bolder.  
17 Reducing campaign limits is one of the key ways --  
18 donation limits is one of the key tools that you  
19 address, but we consider in the staff proposal only  
20 reducing it by roughly half. We think that those  
21 should be reduced as much as possible legally, and  
22 that could look much more like what the average New  
23 Yorker donates to a participating candidate, under  
24 \$500, or a limit around there; and it should be  
25 reduced by nonparticipating candidates as much as

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1           legally possible. We could have a very different  
2           political system in this City and demonstrate a  
3           very different political culture for this country  
4           if, in fact, we have a system that focuses on low  
5           dollar donors.

6           Substantially increasing matching and the cap  
7           on matching funds is part of that. We need to make  
8           sure that participating in the system actually pays  
9           for candidates and pays for complains that can  
10          stand up to, you know, candidates who can self-fund  
11          to billionaires and rich folks who can easily step  
12          out of the system and raise enough money to run  
13          much larger campaigns than the current system  
14          allows.

15          Additionally, there are things that the board  
16          commission in the recommendations didn't include  
17          that were included in other or in the commentary  
18          that are much -- we could do more; and in this  
19          moment I would encourage you to really look back at  
20          all those ideas and think about how you can be more  
21          aggressive. Whether that is bringing in those who  
22          can't actually afford to make campaign donations  
23          through something like the Seattle Democracy  
24          Vouchers. Other ways that were proposed also are  
25          very interesting, and I know I have limited time;

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1 but I'll submit testimony as well. You know,  
2 there's another point where looking at it that was  
3 sort of passed over, the current system looks at  
4 internal communications from unions and other  
5 members of organizations -- sorry, and  
6 organizations to their members as donations; and I  
7 strongly urge you to consider doing otherwise.  
8 Thank you.

9 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

10 MR. DAVID: Good evening. My name is Richard  
11 David. I live in Southeast Queens; and I'm happy  
12 to offer the following comments, suggestions, and  
13 observations to this commission. I've been on  
14 Community Board 9 for the last ten years, and I'm  
15 in favor of term limits; but I don't think term  
16 limits by themselves go far enough. I think that  
17 other efforts to standardize community boards would  
18 go further including things like how key committees  
19 are formed, the number of committees, the kinds of  
20 committees, the officer positions, and descriptions  
21 for those roles and responsibilities that go along  
22 with them.

23 In addition to that, standardizing bylaws  
24 across community boards would also go a far way. I  
25 think that standardization is important, but each

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1 community board is very different; so leaving room  
2 for interpretation and other things will also allow  
3 boards to reflect their neighborhoods.

4 I want to also talk about the municipal  
5 elections. I recently ran for the City Council in  
6 District 28. That's also in Southeast Queens. I  
7 came in second. Unfortunately, in that election,  
8 the -- I achieved the most votes of any South Asian  
9 or Guyanese or Indo-Caribbean voter in New York  
10 City. That's actually a sad thing because it goes  
11 directly to the point about redistricting -- I'm  
12 sorry, it goes directly to the point about how we  
13 do municipal elections here. I'm in favor of a  
14 system where we're able to vote across party lines.  
15 A lot of voters are registered as independent and  
16 are, therefore, although registered to vote, unable  
17 to vote at all.

18 In a system where California -- if we  
19 implemented a system where California -- some local  
20 bodies allow citizens to vote across party lines  
21 and those candidates with the most votes across  
22 party lines run off in a general election, and  
23 that's how they determine the winner. I think that  
24 would be a very useful system to look at and want  
25 to consider here in New York City. The last point



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1 I want to talk about is how City agencies collect  
2 data and how that data is used to implement  
3 policies and how they provide programs across New  
4 York City; so I, again, I'm Guyanese. We're the  
5 fifth largest immigrant group in all of New York  
6 City. Unfortunately, not a single City agency  
7 collects data about my ethnic group; so although  
8 I'm Guyanese, I happen to be Indo-Caribbean. And  
9 so although my community faces increasing and  
10 higher rates of suicide, domestic violence, and  
11 other things, we're unable to respond to these  
12 things as a community and as a city because we  
13 don't have data to correlate with this population.  
14 So I would encourage City agencies and codify it in  
15 ways that they have to collect data.

16 In addition, the mayor uses the lack of this  
17 information to deny Hindus, for example, public  
18 holidays because the absence of data has allowed  
19 him to say that we don't know how many Hindus are  
20 in our public school system for example. I've also  
21 offered written testimony which I hope you'll  
22 consider that touch on redistricting and other  
23 points that are very important to our City. Thank  
24 you very much.

25 MS. GODSIL: Thank you. Any questions from

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1 the commissioners?

2 MR. SIEGAL: Yes. I have a question for the  
3 speaker from the Working Families Proposal; and I'm  
4 sorry, I didn't catch your name.

5 MR. EDEL: It's Stephen Edel.

6 MR. SIEGAL: I appreciate your comments and  
7 your supportive comments about the work that this  
8 commission is doing on campaign finance, and I just  
9 want to see if we agree on a couple things.

10 You indicated in your statement that you think  
11 we should reduce the contribution limit as far as  
12 legally viable. I take it you would agree that if  
13 we reduce it further and result in the system being  
14 declared unconstitutional by a court, that we would  
15 be making a mistake, right?

16 MR. EDEL: Yeah. I mean, I think lowering it  
17 to a point where it's clearly going to be  
18 challenged is a bad decision. I think lowering it  
19 to the point where it's, you know, aggressive and  
20 we can have that debate; and certainly there are  
21 other people far more expert than I about how  
22 likely it is to be dealt.

23 MR. SIEGAL: And you raised the the  
24 possibility that we might change the rules in some  
25 respect to make it more likely that candidates

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1 would opt out of this system and either self-fund  
2 campaigns or campaigns -- or fund campaigns through  
3 large contributions of the sort permitted under the  
4 state law but prohibited under the City law, so I  
5 take it you would agree that if we make it too hard  
6 for candidates to raise the money needed to run an  
7 effective campaign, we would be making a mistake,  
8 right?

9 MR. EDEL: I mean, I think it's -- there's a  
10 nuance to it. If we make it restrictive enough, it  
11 will change who runs within the system and who runs  
12 out of it. That I agree with you. I don't know  
13 that I think that's a problem, and I think forcing  
14 people in the system to run with essentially all  
15 small dollar donations would lead to a different  
16 candidate pool; and that -- I don't know that  
17 having people choose to participate or not  
18 participate and leaving that distinction very stark  
19 is necessarily a bad thing, but it would change who  
20 runs within the system.

21 MR. SIEGAL: So it's just my opinion, I as one  
22 commissioner support lowering the contribution  
23 limit as long as we take measures to offset that to  
24 provide the public funding necessary for people to  
25 run effective campaigns; but I think that taking a

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1 position that cutting the contribution limit, for  
2 instance, by 50 percent is not a bold position or  
3 is not actually a radical position. I question  
4 that, and I'm very concerned that in our enthusiasm  
5 for what we think we can do in a progressive New  
6 York City that we end up undermining this system by  
7 cutting contribution levels to a point that the  
8 federal courts have never endorsed and that this  
9 Supreme Court is highly unlikely to endorse and  
10 that we end up seeking the perfect; and the perfect  
11 can mean the enemy of the good, so I encourage you  
12 in your group to think about the significance of  
13 what we're doing and appreciate the supportive  
14 comments and hope that you will be when we make a  
15 final proposal.

16 MR. EDEL: Yeah.

17 MS. SEECHARRAN: My question is for Mr. David.  
18 I wonder if you -- I appreciate your testimony and  
19 particularly around the issue of redistricting,  
20 which I'm personally very familiar with what  
21 occurred in 2010 in your district. I wonder if you  
22 have an opinion around how the redistricting  
23 commission should be put together and composed,  
24 whether through appointments or any other ways and  
25 whether the composition of the commission has any

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1 affect on how the lines are drawn.

2 MR. DAVID: Absolutely. Starting bottom up,  
3 of course, the composition of the commission  
4 members influence heavily even if not entirely how  
5 the outcomes of the line look; and that's what we  
6 saw last time. Now, I've heard other presenters  
7 talk about a commission that appoints a commission  
8 and other efforts certainly on those -- I would  
9 encourage those, I think they're better than the  
10 system we have now; but I think as long as we're  
11 limited to using race as the sole barrier to  
12 drawing district lines, we will end up with a  
13 flawed process. I think other considerations can  
14 include things like housing, you know, if you have  
15 a neighborhood like mine where it's one- and  
16 two-family homes and it's grouped with an adjacent  
17 neighborhood where it's skyscrapers, our needs are  
18 going to be very different. And our elected  
19 officials' priorities will also be very different,  
20 and they will more likely respond to the area with  
21 the skyscraper housing because there are more  
22 people that live there; so I think we have to look  
23 at beyond race. We have to look at, you know, how  
24 the neighborhoods are made up when we're drawing  
25 district lines; and I think that we have to look at

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1 factors beyond race when we're appointing  
2 commission members.

3 MS. GODSIL: All right. Thank you all so much  
4 for your testimony. Our final panel is Jessamy  
5 Hanus (phonetic), James Gallagher, Jr., and  
6 Lorraine Gittens-Bridges, and Ingrid Gomez.

7 MS. HANUS: Hi. My name Jessamy Hanus. I am  
8 a resident of Rego Park, and I am a community  
9 member; and I many years ago started going to my  
10 community board. I was interested in finding out  
11 what it did, getting involved perhaps; and I  
12 actually volunteered to be a -- you know, a citizen  
13 member of the transportation committee. And I was  
14 told that the committee didn't meet, and then many  
15 years pass and I find out, in fact, that there have  
16 been meetings from time to time. And more recently  
17 I was finally able to attend one; and the first  
18 time I tried to go to one of these committee  
19 meetings, I rang the doorbell. And the look on the  
20 face from the district manager was who are you?  
21 What are you doing here? And when I walked in,  
22 that's actually what he said to me as I'm a  
23 community member; and he and the chair both on  
24 multiple times before the meeting began, told me I  
25 was not allowed to speak. I was not allowed to ask

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1 questions; and I said, "Okay. All right. That's  
2 how you run the meeting." And they came back  
3 multiple times to reiterate that; and, you know,  
4 when they have full board meeting, they don't have  
5 the public comment until after they take votes.  
6 But I've also been to Queens CB1, CB2, CB4, CB5,  
7 CB9, and CB67, and Brooklyn CB2 and a couple of  
8 Manhattan boards; and every single one of them runs  
9 their meetings differently, every single one of  
10 them. And it's all the whim of whoever is running  
11 that meeting, whatever chairperson is running that  
12 board; and we talk a lot about institutional  
13 knowledge, but I think there is serious  
14 institutional blockage. And when I think about how  
15 hostile they were to me coming in, a little blond  
16 white women, and I can't imagine what it would be  
17 like to be a person of color trying to get involved  
18 in the community and to have had that reception  
19 from these men. I think I would have attributed  
20 that a specific way.

21 And so I just think that we need to have more  
22 of a uniform meeting structure to maybe accommodate  
23 if we have term limits, if we have a uniform  
24 meeting structure, that institutional knowledge  
25 might not be such a big issue because we have a

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1 system in place that everybody has to follow.

2 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

3 MR. GALLAGHER: Well, good evening. My name  
4 is James Gallagher, Jr., and I'm a member of  
5 Community Board 8, which you didn't get to visit  
6 unfortunately. Anyway, to the Charter Revision  
7 Commission, you guys are doing a fantastic job; and  
8 I'm so happy I came tonight because I'm learning so  
9 much to see so many people.

10 My question is not about term limits. Mine is  
11 about education for the community board members. I  
12 would like to see City planning at the top of the  
13 buildings or put classes on rules regarding zoning  
14 and land use. Years ago at Queens College, I took  
15 as part of the real estate program over there, I  
16 took a class, adult education, for several weeks on  
17 our zoning and so forth; and it's very, very  
18 informative. And then they discontinued it from  
19 their program. I would like to see the City  
20 agencies offer these programs for community board  
21 members because they need to learn all the rules  
22 and regulations. I didn't mention that I also work  
23 for DEP, so I just wanted to put that out; and I'm  
24 president of the Fresh Meadow Homeowners Civic, and  
25 I'm so happy I came tonight. And I just wanted to



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1 pass the word to everyone, and Joe Marziliano used  
2 to work for us at Community Board 8, so we're very  
3 proud of him and his -- and I want to thank Vicky  
4 Morales (phonetic) for the great job that she's  
5 doing here on the community board for the borough  
6 president and for Tammy Baum (phonetic) for the  
7 great work that she does also with community  
8 outreach. Thank you.

9 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

10 MS. GITTENS-BRIDGES: Good evening, everyone.  
11 I would like to thank everyone on the commission  
12 for giving us this opportunity to voice our  
13 concerns. Thanks to our member from Community  
14 Board 13, we were informed about this meeting; and  
15 we had an opportunity to look at the proposals.  
16 I'm going to keep this relatively short and to the  
17 point.

18 MS. GODSIL: Can I ask you one favor --

19 MS. GITTENS-BRIDGES: Oh, my name is Lorraine  
20 Bridges. I'm sorry.

21 MS. GODSIL: Thank you.

22 MS. GITTENS-BRIDGES: I just want to talk  
23 about number one, term limits. I agree that there  
24 should be term limits, but I also hear what the  
25 other board members across this -- that have spoke

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1 earlier have said. We also got to be concerned  
2 will there be people to replace them; and one of  
3 the things that I'm suggesting that after the -- I  
4 agree that there should be 12 years of term limits,  
5 you know, term limits should end after 12 years.  
6 But I also agree that if there should be some type  
7 of stipulation that if no one else steps up after  
8 extensive outreach, then let the members that are  
9 up resume, you know, just give other people an  
10 opportunity to, you know, do the outreach within  
11 the community. Let people know what community  
12 boards are about because that's an issue; and then  
13 if nobody else steps up, then let the people stay  
14 because you don't want to have a situation where,  
15 you know, people aren't given an opportunity. So  
16 that's what I have to say about term limits, 12  
17 years with the stipulation if nobody else steps up  
18 because you don't want to have a situation where  
19 there's nobody else.

20 Number two is the appointment process. I  
21 don't believe that should be changed at this point.  
22 Only for the fact that I've been on -- I'm more  
23 education -- I've been on the education councils  
24 for many years, and I've been involved in that  
25 arena; and we do have it where people can vote.

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1 But, unfortunately, enough people don't -- there's  
2 not enough outreach to get people to come out to  
3 vote. We also have in the -- what our civic  
4 council members have a participatory budgeting and  
5 stuff like that and even those where voting with  
6 people, it's still not a large turnout; and these  
7 are the things that we really have to work on,  
8 trying to really engage the community a little bit  
9 more before we start shutting certain doors. So I  
10 lead the process appointment for right now. Maybe  
11 somewhere down the line after we do better, then  
12 open it back up for change.

13 Then last but not least is the outreach.  
14 Outreach, we really need to do a better job with  
15 the outreach. I would like to see some funding  
16 come to the community boards to help with outreach.  
17 Don't know what the community boards are. If it  
18 wasn't for the fact that Adrian Adams was now one  
19 of our City Council Women, she didn't come to one  
20 of my PTA meetings, I would have never heard of  
21 community boards; so I suggest more funding goes to  
22 outreach. Then also training. We also have to try  
23 to train the community board members a little bit  
24 more and make sure they know what they're doing.

25 Last but not least, okay, also when community

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1 board members don't show up for a certain period of  
2 time, I believe that they need to be removed. I've  
3 seen situations where community board members are  
4 on paper, and they're not showing up to our  
5 meetings; and something needs to be done about  
6 that.

7 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much.

8 MS. GITTENS-BRIDGES: Thank you.

9 MS. GOMEZ: Hi. Good evening. Thank you so  
10 much for this opportunity to speak before you. I'm  
11 Ingrid Gomez. I am an activist and organizer. I'm  
12 also the youth chair for Community Board 4. I've  
13 been a member for two years since 2016, and I was  
14 just reappointed. So just to the point that my  
15 friend here next to me spoke about, the idea that  
16 many people, many people on our board don't end up  
17 showing up to meetings, we have poor attendance;  
18 and I think this is unfortunate because it is a  
19 privilege to be a part of the community board. And  
20 when you don't see active participation, that  
21 really is disheartening because, again, it's an  
22 important part of our civic duty to show up to  
23 these meetings. So with that in mind, I really do  
24 agree that -- with a lot of people here that there  
25 should be -- this should be looked into, how to

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1 remove members who are not active. I know that the  
2 borough president can do that. I also believe when  
3 I read part of the bylaws that the community board  
4 can do it itself, but I don't see it enacted; so  
5 people who don't show for years, you know, I've  
6 been on the board for two years. And I know some  
7 people who have not come for an entire year or  
8 more, so that's really unfortunate; and I do  
9 believe that has to be worked on.

10 Also term limits, I believe in that as well.  
11 No one should sit on a board for 50, 60 years.  
12 Although I do appreciate those members who are very  
13 committed, who are dedicated, who show up, and have  
14 been part of the community board leadership, but  
15 that's the exception and not the rule. So that's  
16 very important to me.

17 The other issue is about public members, so  
18 Community Board 4 has an opportunity -- maybe like  
19 others, I don't know how many others, where you can  
20 become a public member by applying and filling out  
21 an application with a couple of questions about  
22 your interests in being a part of the board; and  
23 these members have an opportunity to then, you  
24 know, ask to be appointed, right, so speak to their  
25 council member and express interests. So that's a

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1 way that we can see this person is serious. This  
2 person wants to participate. They've come to all  
3 the community meetings, so I think that Community  
4 Board 4 is pretty much at the forefront of that;  
5 and I think that it should be sort of standardized,  
6 you know, within other community boards, just,  
7 again, to encourage public members to be a part of  
8 committees so that they can later become board  
9 members.

10 Educating the community is quite important. I  
11 am part of a board that's very diverse. I have to  
12 say that. We have people from all over the globe,  
13 and so that's a great thing; but we still don't  
14 have enough education. We need to educate better  
15 our communities so they know what we do. Thank you  
16 so much for this time.

17 MS. GODSIL: Thank you so much. Any questions  
18 from the commissioners? May I have a motion?

19 MR. BRAGG: Before that, may I make a  
20 statement?

21 MS. GODSIL: Of course.

22 MR. BRAGG: Madam Vice-Chair, I would just  
23 like to take this opportunity to correct a  
24 misstatement I made last night, end of last night's  
25 hearing in Brooklyn. When I responded to a

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1 speaker's comments to me regarding the authority of  
2 this Commission. I said this Commission is here to  
3 listen to the citizens of the City. What I meant  
4 to say was, we are here to hear from the residents  
5 of the City. My misstatement was in no way meant  
6 to marginalize or dismiss any of the many comments,  
7 suggestions, ideas, recommendations that have come  
8 before this Commission to address the inequities  
9 that exist in our City's democracy with those who  
10 live here but are not yet citizens, our immigrant  
11 population, but contribute greatly and enrich our  
12 City and society. I want to be clear that this  
13 Commission takes extremely serious the  
14 recommendations that have been presented to advance  
15 a more fair and equitable City government that will  
16 be accountable and open to all its residents and  
17 allow both greater access from a full participation  
18 in our City government and its governance, so thank  
19 you very much for that.

20 MS. GODSIL: Thank you very much. Any  
21 additional comments?

22 Thank you all. This has been an absolutely  
23 fantastic meeting. I feel like the quality and  
24 thoughtfulness that all of you put into your  
25 testimony really says an enormous amount for this

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1       amazing borough. So this is seriously -- this has  
2       been a wonderful meeting and thank you so much for  
3       being present, for testifying, for staying  
4       throughout the meeting; and just we appreciate it a  
5       great deal.

6               MR. BRAGG: Motion to adjourn.

7               MS. GODSIL: Second?

8               MS. SEECHARRAN: Second.

9               MR. ATTORNEY: Second.

10              MS. GODSIL: Adjourn.

11              (Whereupon, at 8:43 p.m., the above matter  
12       concluded.)

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## 1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3 STATE OF NEW YORK )  
4 COUNTY OF SUFFOLK ) : SS.:

5

6 I, NICOLE VELTRI, RPR, a Notary Public for and  
7 within the State of New York, do hereby certify:

8 That the above is a correct transcription of my  
9 stenographic notes.

10 I further certify that I am not related to any of  
11 the parties to this action by blood or by marriage and  
12 that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this  
13 matter.

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand  
15 this 27th day of July 2018.

16

17



18

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NICOLE VELTRI, RPR

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|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>\$</b>  | <b>32</b> [1] 30/24<br><b>32BJ</b> [1] 3/3  | 121/8   | 84/2 84/23  |
| <b>\$100,000</b> [2] 43/18 44/8  | <b>33 percent</b> [1] 56/19   | <b>absence</b> [2] 40/15 105/18   | <b>administratively</b> [1] 16/8  |
| <b>\$11</b> [1] 44/10  | <b>367</b> [1] 16/9   | <b>absences</b> [1] 74/8  | <b>adopt</b> [1] 83/9   |
| <b>\$11 million</b> [1] 44/10  | <b>37</b> [1] 33/18   | <b>absent</b> [2] 23/18 92/24   | <b>Adrian</b> [1] 115/18  |
| <b>\$40,000</b> [1] 10/18  | <b>4</b>  | <b>absentee</b> [1] 23/22   | <b>adult</b> [1] 112/16   |
| <b>\$500</b> [1] 101/24  | <b>40</b> [3] 30/23 57/23 81/8  | <b>absolute</b> [1] 40/23   | <b>adults</b> [1] 61/19   |
| <b>\$89</b> [1] 44/15  | <b>40,000</b> [1] 96/16   | <b>absolutely</b> [4] 38/21 76/20<br>109/2 119/22   | <b>advance</b> [4] 4/10 20/6 84/12<br>119/14  |
| <b>\$89 billion</b> [1] 44/15  | <b>40-year-old</b> [1] 17/2   | <b>abused</b> [1] 59/1  | <b>advantage</b> [1] 8/6  |
| <b>'</b>   | <b>400</b> [1] 62/2   | <b>acceptable</b> [1] 47/21   | <b>advertised</b> [1] 77/2  |
| <b>'63</b> [1] 64/3  | <b>45</b> [1] 57/23   | <b>access</b> [13] 17/13 30/15<br>30/15 47/12 48/20 49/2 49/6<br>49/9 49/15 75/17 77/6 77/18<br>119/17  | <b>advice</b> [1] 53/25   |
| <b>.</b>   | <b>5</b>  | <b>accessed</b> [1] 52/25   | <b>advise</b> [1] 70/17   |
| <b>.001</b> [1] 44/14  | <b>50</b> [8] 36/5 45/8 62/15 64/8<br>74/7 78/5 78/8 117/11   | <b>accessibility</b> [2] 76/3 76/17   | <b>advised</b> [1] 35/12  |
| <b>1</b>   | <b>50 percent</b> [1] 108/2   | <b>accessible</b> [1] 17/7  | <b>advisory</b> [2] 96/24 97/24   |
| <b>10</b> [5] 35/13 35/14 35/18<br>35/24 99/1                          | <b>55</b> [1] 1/3   | <b>accommodate</b> [2] 47/13<br>111/22  | <b>advocate</b> [1] 52/17   |
| <b>100,000</b> [1] 17/2  | <b>55th</b> [1] 52/12   | <b>accomplish</b> [1] 69/4  | <b>advocated</b> [1] 83/9   |
| <b>11</b> [7] 8/15 22/6 58/14 60/19<br>60/21 61/18 80/9                | <b>5:00</b> [1] 47/17   | <b>according</b> [1] 43/21  | <b>advocates</b> [1] 16/4   |
| <b>11 million</b> [2] 44/11 44/14                                      | <b>6</b>  | <b>account</b> [2] 29/13 83/13  | <b>affairs</b> [3] 2/12 46/13 51/23   |
| <b>11424</b> [1] 1/4   | <b>6's</b> [1] 33/25  | <b>accountability</b> [3] 26/15 84/7<br>98/4  | <b>affect</b> [3] 29/15 89/15 109/1   |
| <b>11th</b> [1] 95/17  | <b>60</b> [1] 117/11  | <b>accountable</b> [1] 119/16   | <b>affected</b> [1] 29/15   |
| <b>12</b> [9] 7/17 9/15 9/15 32/19<br>47/4 86/10 114/4 114/5<br>114/16 | <b>61</b> [1] 7/24  | <b>accrue</b> [1] 18/18   | <b>afford</b> [3] 11/24 97/6 102/22   |
| <b>12-year</b> [1] 76/24   | <b>6:00</b> [1] 1/6   | <b>accurate</b> [2] 38/3 38/9   | <b>afraid</b> [1] 65/1  |
| <b>120,000</b> [1] 92/9  | <b>7</b>  | <b>achieve</b> [2] 79/15 83/18  | <b>African</b> [1] 7/25   |
| <b>120-55</b> [1] 1/3  | <b>70</b> [1] 76/12   | <b>achieved</b> [2] 9/10 104/8  | <b>after</b> [25] 6/11 20/24 28/2<br>36/6 47/6 47/7 57/20 64/6<br>64/12 65/6 76/19 78/1 81/14<br>81/19 87/4 91/25 92/1 95/17<br>97/21 100/8 111/5 114/3<br>114/5 114/7 115/11   |
| <b>13</b> [3] 3/15 67/25 113/14  | <b>70s</b> [1] 64/13  | <b>across</b> [14] 3/4 23/10 35/5<br>42/12 45/1 48/11 72/14 92/6<br>103/24 104/14 104/20<br>104/21 105/3 113/25                                     | <b>afterthought</b> [2] 20/10 20/15   |
| <b>14</b> [3] 46/10 48/9 48/10   | <b>71,000</b> [2] 43/17 44/9  | <b>act</b> [2] 20/5 97/9  | <b>again</b> [15] 3/1 3/23 4/15 5/12<br>19/20 24/12 44/4 48/8 49/1<br>51/25 52/19 52/21 105/4<br>116/21 118/7   |
| <b>15</b> [5] 47/2 51/21 71/20 77/9<br>96/8                            | <b>750</b> [1] 19/14  | <b>action</b> [6] 20/1 20/7 20/9<br>56/24 76/9 121/11   | <b>against</b> [6] 15/1 20/12 60/24<br>61/1 68/17 83/11   |
| <b>15th</b> [1] 65/18  | <b>77 percent</b> [1] 44/3  | <b>active</b> [4] 30/23 57/5 116/20<br>117/1  | <b>age</b> [1] 23/1   |
| <b>160,000</b> [1] 3/3   | <b>8</b>  | <b>actively</b> [1] 92/25   | <b>aged</b> [1] 32/7  |
| <b>17</b> [3] 63/6 63/8 66/17  | <b>80</b> [1] 50/16   | <b>activism</b> [1] 36/20   | <b>agencies</b> [6] 21/8 21/20 98/2<br>105/1 105/14 112/20  |
| <b>18</b> [1] 68/9   | <b>81</b> [1] 44/1  | <b>activist</b> [2] 51/9 116/11   | <b>agency</b> [12] 3/11 14/24 15/3<br>15/11 15/16 16/18 19/22<br>57/7 67/15 67/16 73/18<br>105/6  |
| <b>18A</b> [1] 15/5  | <b>85</b> [1] 7/23  | <b>activities</b> [3] 70/15 89/15<br>90/24  | <b>agency's</b> [1] 15/9  |
| <b>19</b> [2] 62/11 74/3   | <b>8:43</b> [1] 120/11  | <b>activity</b> [1] 69/18   | <b>agenda</b> [2] 59/3 77/14  |
| <b>1963</b> [1] 36/6   | <b>9</b>  | <b>acts</b> [1] 63/18   | <b>agendas</b> [1] 92/19  |
| <b>1969</b> [1] 62/4   | <b>9:00</b> [1] 47/17   | <b>actually</b> [20] 8/8 12/8 12/9<br>14/9 21/6 26/25 46/21 50/13<br>60/25 70/25 74/2 75/22 87/1<br>94/9 102/8 102/22 104/10<br>108/3 110/12 110/22 | <b>aggressive</b> [2] 102/21<br>106/19  |
| <b>1975</b> [1] 7/22   | <b>A</b>  | <b>Adams</b> [1] 115/18   | <b>Aging</b> [1] 33/25  |
| <b>1979</b> [1] 83/10  | <b>abandon</b> [1] 20/8   | <b>adapt</b> [1] 36/11  | <b>ago</b> [3] 81/9 110/9 112/14  |
| <b>2</b>   | <b>ability</b> [2] 36/10 47/15  | <b>add</b> [5] 3/14 28/3 29/8 65/9<br>83/24   | <b>agree</b> [15] 34/3 55/8 61/3<br>73/11 78/25 100/25 100/25<br>106/9 106/12 107/5 107/12<br>113/23 114/4 114/6 116/24   |
| <b>20</b> [2] 48/3 57/23   | <b>able</b> [14] 9/22 10/20 11/24<br>47/13 52/7 52/24 55/6 57/10<br>57/11 60/20 81/16 82/14<br>104/14 110/17  | <b>add-on</b> [1] 83/24   | <b>agreed</b> [1] 65/5  |
| <b>20,000</b> [1] 37/4   | <b>about</b> [87] 2/8 5/8 5/10 5/25<br>8/25 9/4 10/18 13/9 13/19<br>16/18 23/21 24/1 27/6 27/13<br>28/1 28/5 28/13 35/1 40/21<br>40/21 43/3 43/7 43/18 43/20<br>44/9 45/9 46/17 50/9 50/16<br>53/1 54/7 55/9 59/7 69/21<br>69/22 72/23 74/12 76/7<br>76/21 76/22 79/1 83/15<br>85/15 86/4 86/7 86/14 86/16<br>86/18 86/21 87/16 88/13<br>88/24 90/24 91/13 92/9<br>92/20 94/9 94/16 94/21 95/6<br>95/8 96/18 98/18 100/18<br>100/23 102/20 104/4 104/11<br>104/12 105/1 105/7 106/7<br>106/21 108/12 109/7 111/12<br>111/14 112/10 112/11<br>113/14 113/23 114/12<br>114/16 116/5 116/15 117/17<br>117/21 | <b>address</b> [9] 2/25 6/7 9/8<br>25/23 76/25 84/2 94/8<br>101/19 119/8  | <b>aimed</b> [1] 7/7  |
| <b>20-year</b> [1] 75/6  | <b>above</b> [3] 68/11 120/11   | <b>addressed</b> [2] 13/6 97/13   | <b>airport</b> [1] 51/19  |
| <b>200</b> [1] 83/8  |   | <b>addressing</b> [1] 101/16  | <b>all</b> [96] 2/6 2/6 2/9 3/1 3/5<br>4/8 4/14 7/11 8/6 10/14<br>14/21 16/4 18/6 20/7 20/23<br>21/10 21/21 23/21 23/23<br>24/4 27/17 28/13 32/5 32/23<br>33/2 34/22 36/16 36/25 37/3<br>37/11 37/15 37/16 37/17<br>38/4 38/9 39/15 39/22 40/2<br>40/2 42/2 45/12 45/24 46/10<br>49/4 49/5 49/23 50/1 50/3<br>50/22 51/3 59/20 60/12 61/7<br>62/25 64/19 65/8 67/25 |
| <b>2001</b> [1] 95/18  |   | <b>adequate</b> [2] 8/1 61/15   |   |
| <b>2004</b> [1] 46/7   |   | <b>adjacent</b> [1] 109/16  |   |
| <b>2008</b> [1] 95/21  |   | <b>adjourn</b> [2] 120/6 120/10   |   |
| <b>2010</b> [1] 108/21   |   | <b>administrative</b> [4] 15/6 20/1   |   |
| <b>2012</b> [1] 15/24  |   |   |   |
| <b>2013</b> [3] 50/7 53/21 53/24                                       |   |   |   |
| <b>2015</b> [1] 60/20  |   |   |   |
| <b>2016</b> [1] 116/13   |   |   |   |
| <b>2018</b> [6] 1/1 1/5 2/2 15/3<br>34/2 121/15                        |   |   |   |
| <b>23</b> [1] 97/21  |   |   |   |
| <b>25</b> [1] 39/11  |   |   |   |
| <b>25 percent</b> [1] 56/18  |   |   |   |
| <b>26</b> [3] 1/5 62/13 74/7   |   |   |   |
| <b>27th</b> [1] 121/15   |   |   |   |
| <b>28</b> [1] 104/6  |   |   |   |
| <b>3</b>   |   |   |   |
| <b>30</b> [4] 57/23 61/25 62/1 70/3                                    |   |   |   |
| <b>30-year</b> [1] 41/17   |   |   |   |
| <b>31</b> [1] 50/6   |   |   |   |

|   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>A</b></p> <p><b>all...</b> [39] 68/11 68/19 70/21 70/24 75/1 75/2 75/8 77/10 77/25 81/1 82/19 85/19 85/19 89/1 89/6 89/10 89/15 93/15 95/5 95/10 95/12 97/24 99/2 100/16 101/9 102/20 104/17 105/5 107/14 110/3 110/3 111/1 111/10 112/21 118/2 118/12 119/16 119/22 119/24</p> <p><b>Allocated</b> [1] 54/19</p> <p><b>allocated</b> [1] 48/25</p> <p><b>allocation</b> [1] 52/20</p> <p><b>allow</b> [8] 6/8 34/7 40/8 42/4 98/24 104/2 104/20 119/17</p> <p><b>allowed</b> [7] 18/18 27/5 43/1 52/18 105/18 110/25 110/25</p> <p><b>allowing</b> [6] 8/20 19/22 28/5 29/7 42/14 98/25</p> <p><b>allows</b> [2] 43/1 102/14</p> <p><b>almost</b> [2] 50/14 68/5</p> <p><b>along</b> [5] 15/20 25/9 28/19 76/24 103/21</p> <p><b>alongside</b> [1] 53/13</p> <p><b>already</b> [5] 3/22 28/3 41/13 44/10 86/25</p> <p><b>also</b> [66] 2/22 3/8 3/14 5/19 10/6 12/6 12/23 14/20 19/2 19/8 19/19 20/3 22/7 23/13 23/13 23/20 24/1 25/16 27/11 28/8 32/18 34/6 34/8 34/21 35/13 35/23 40/21 45/15 46/14 47/9 51/20 53/3 56/12 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| <p><b>W</b></p> <p><b>which...</b> [1] 112/5</p> <p><b>while</b> [4] 36/3 36/15 46/12 89/16</p> <p><b>whim</b> [1] 111/10</p> <p><b>white</b> [3] 7/24 61/20 111/16</p> <p><b>who</b> [75] 4/4 4/5 4/21 5/5 5/12 8/3 8/8 9/24 9/25 10/20 11/18 12/2 12/6 12/13 12/24 13/13 13/20 16/12 18/13 18/22 23/6 29/23 30/3 32/15 34/17 35/23 39/12 39/24 42/22 42/24 43/11 47/17 50/10 54/12 56/15 59/7 61/11 66/9 66/10 67/5 70/14 70/18 71/3 71/3 71/9 71/19 72/22 73/7 73/10 73/17 77/8 79/16 79/17 80/1 90/1 92/9 96/12 97/2 98/11 98/13 100/19 102/10 102/11 102/21 107/11 107/11 107/19 110/20 117/1 117/5 117/7 117/12 117/13 117/13 119/9</p> <p><b>who's</b> [4] 33/18 58/3 71/8 94/11</p> <p><b>whoever</b> [1] 111/10</p> <p><b>whole</b> [4] 28/6 30/11 50/14 68/4</p> <p><b>whom</b> [1] 11/21</p> <p><b>whose</b> [2] 42/10 79/20</p> <p><b>whothat</b> [1] 18/12</p> <p><b>why</b> [12] 3/10 12/13 27/21 39/7 54/6 59/12 64/2 70/10 72/16 81/19 85/10 93/23</p> <p><b>wide</b> [3] 21/23 41/24 50/2</p> <p><b>wield</b> [2] 10/3 77/12</p> <p><b>wife</b> [1] 63/7</p> <p><b>will</b> [51] 3/11 3/16 4/7 4/23 5/4 6/8 6/8 6/9 6/12 8/20 10/14 14/6 16/13 16/14 23/10 26/20 30/9 35/22 41/2 41/25 42/23 48/1 65/9 65/13 68/24 68/24 68/24 69/18 70/22 72/3 74/2 82/20 82/21 84/22 87/3 90/9 90/12 90/18 90/22 91/1 96/2 96/6 101/6 104/2 107/11 108/14 109/12 109/19 109/20 114/2 119/15</p> <p><b>Williams</b> [3] 60/14 67/24 71/1</p> <p><b>willing</b> [1] 71/10</p> <p><b>win</b> [8] 50/14 70/7 70/8 70/8 70/12 70/12 71/13 71/13</p> <p><b>win-lose</b> [1] 70/7</p> <p><b>win-win</b> [3] 70/8 70/12 71/13</p> <p><b>winner</b> [1] 104/23</p> <p><b>winning</b> [1] 50/15</p> <p><b>wins</b> [1] 42/24</p> <p><b>wipe</b> [1] 87/19</p> <p><b>wish</b> [3] 3/21 6/4 83/15</p> <p><b>within</b> [8] 22/1 78/6 93/20 107/11 107/20 114/10 118/6 121/7</p> <p><b>without</b> [6] 9/11 23/22 39/11 47/2 82/19 93/4</p> <p><b>WITNESS</b> [1] 121/14</p> <p><b>witnesses</b> [1] 82/7</p> <p><b>women</b> [15] 83/11 83/19 84/10 84/19 88/8 89/1 89/12 89/15 89/18 89/20 91/2 95/8</p> | <p>100/5 111/16 115/19</p> <p><b>women's</b> [6] 84/3 84/12 89/4 89/5 89/7 89/10</p> <p><b>wonder</b> [6] 12/16 27/2 64/7 72/11 108/18 108/21</p> <p><b>wonderful</b> [2] 66/25 120/2</p> <p><b>wondering</b> [1] 73/6</p> <p><b>Woodhaven</b> [2] 54/15 56/19</p> <p><b>word</b> [2] 100/1 113/1</p> <p><b>words</b> [2] 45/9 82/12</p> <p><b>work</b> [31] 6/24 6/25 8/8 10/24 12/2 14/21 15/5 15/24 17/16 28/22 30/1 36/17 44/17 46/22 60/25 61/7 62/20 62/25 66/9 66/13 66/13 67/12 75/11 86/13 86/23 100/16 106/7 112/22 113/2 113/7 115/7</p> <p><b>workable</b> [1] 36/18</p> <p><b>worked</b> [2] 5/16 117/9</p> <p><b>worker</b> [3] 33/17 80/13 80/18</p> <p><b>working</b> [8] 36/12 53/13 70/15 99/1 100/14 100/16 101/10 106/3</p> <p><b>workings</b> [1] 22/22</p> <p><b>works</b> [1] 58/1</p> <p><b>world</b> [3] 49/19 64/20 85/12</p> <p><b>would</b> [125]</p> <p><b>wouldn't</b> [5] 50/18 55/6 76/7 88/15 91/16</p> <p><b>wrap</b> [2] 64/12 90/16</p> <p><b>write</b> [1] 4/5</p> <p><b>Writers</b> [1] 54/19</p> <p><b>writing</b> [2] 51/6 62/24</p> <p><b>written</b> [5] 24/4 38/25 91/5 94/5 105/21</p> <p><b>wrote</b> [1] 62/1</p> | <p>15/1 16/22 17/4 24/23 36/8 37/4 42/9 42/18 44/7 44/15 44/17 48/11 64/25 67/15 67/15 78/8 83/7 83/9 85/1 85/11 85/16 88/9 88/10 89/8 89/17 98/5 100/13 104/9 104/25 105/4 105/5 108/6 121/3 121/7</p> <p><b>Yorker</b> [1] 101/23</p> <p><b>Yorkers</b> [4] 17/7 92/14 98/8 101/6</p> <p><b>you</b> [343]</p> <p><b>you'll</b> [5] 26/21 66/5 69/10 88/2 105/21</p> <p><b>you're</b> [24] 6/17 6/25 24/2 35/25 41/7 41/8 63/1 67/9 67/11 67/18 67/19 68/22 69/22 71/23 71/24 75/11 86/14 86/16 86/17 86/18 86/21 87/12 88/2 100/11</p> <p><b>you've</b> [5] 38/5 48/17 71/14 86/24 101/13</p> <p><b>young</b> [6] 47/18 59/10 79/23 91/16 100/5 100/5</p> <p><b>younger</b> [4] 57/18 58/24 61/19 80/1</p> <p><b>your</b> [55] 5/10 9/12 11/10 11/12 13/5 14/12 25/23 27/2 27/3 30/1 31/12 31/13 31/15 35/15 36/3 39/19 39/21 45/3 48/23 49/23 49/25 51/3 53/15 57/6 58/9 58/11 66/9 67/4 73/20 73/22 74/17 75/2 80/7 82/14 82/16 83/1 85/20 88/3 90/16 93/8 93/17 95/13 95/16 100/16 100/16 106/4 106/6 106/7 106/10 108/12 108/18 108/21 110/4 117/22 119/24</p> <p><b>yourself</b> [1] 97/14</p> <p><b>youth</b> [1] 116/12</p> <p><b>Yvonne</b> [1] 83/3</p> | <p><b>Z</b></p> <p><b>zones</b> [1] 36/4</p> <p><b>zoning</b> [7] 20/12 21/2 33/7 37/13 62/3 112/13 112/17</p> |
|  | <p><b>Y</b></p> <p><b>yeah</b> [4] 24/21 50/24 106/16 108/16</p> <p><b>year</b> [32] 7/17 10/16 17/2 17/22 18/1 18/23 22/22 22/23 23/4 27/6 28/10 29/17 29/22 33/4 41/17 43/17 52/13 58/23 59/2 62/12 63/10 65/18 66/12 71/7 74/16 75/6 76/24 79/14 91/25 91/25 96/15 117/7</p> <p><b>years</b> [62] 7/18 9/15 9/18 18/15 18/20 22/1 22/15 23/8 23/15 28/4 30/24 30/24 32/19 33/18 36/6 39/11 45/8 47/2 47/4 48/9 51/21 52/16 57/24 60/3 60/7 61/25 62/1 62/19 64/8 65/3 65/22 65/23 66/7 66/17 68/9 71/20 71/23 72/4 72/5 74/19 75/7 77/9 78/8 79/23 81/9 81/15 82/18 96/1 96/8 97/21 103/14 110/9 110/15 112/14 114/4 114/5 114/17 114/24 116/13 117/5 117/6 117/11</p> <p><b>yell</b> [1] 55/19</p> <p><b>yes</b> [11] 11/5 13/11 27/21 38/20 61/10 68/17 73/19 77/15 87/7 92/17 106/2</p> <p><b>yet</b> [8] 5/18 19/20 20/10 35/17 52/13 55/17 63/21 119/10</p> <p><b>yielding</b> [1] 12/8</p> <p><b>York</b> [38] 1/4 6/2 7/1 7/10</p>  |  |  |