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2 NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
3 Bronx Community College
4 2155 University Avenue
5 Bronx, New York 10453

6 April 30, 2018
7 6:39 P.M.

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

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COMMISSIONERS:

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- 13 CESAR PERALES, Chair
- 14 RACHEL GODSIL, Vice Chair
- 15 JOHN SIEGAL
- 16 DEBORAH ARCHER
- 17 MARCO CARRION
- 18 DALE HO
- 19 UNA CLARKE
- 20 WENDY WEISER
- 21 ANNETTA SEECHARRAN
- 22 MENDY MIROCZNIK
- 23 ANGELA FERNANDEZ
- 24 CARLO SCISSURA, Secretary
- 25 KYLE BRAGG
- SHARON GREENBERGER
- LARIAN ANGELO

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PUBLIC HEARING

1 MR. PERALES: Welcome. I now will call to
2 order -- oh, and we've got one more commission
3 member, as well.

4 I call to order the 2018 Charter Revision
5 Commission, that is holding a meeting in the
6 Bronx.

7 This is the second of five public hearings,
8 and anyone who wants to testify can please sign
9 up at the welcome table.

10 I'd like to begin by introducing our two
11 host commissioners from the Bronx, Marco Carrion
12 and John Siegal. Commissioner Carrion, would you
13 like to say a few words?

14 MR. CARRION: Thank you, chair.

15 It's great to be here in the Bronx, where I
16 was born and raised. As everyone knows, the
17 Bronx is the home of the New York Yankees, the
18 real Little Italy, the birthplace of hip-hop, and
19 the home of the Bronx Zoo, and the real New York
20 Botanical Gardens. But all jokes aside, this is
21 a really dynamic, diverse borough that's filled
22 with a lot of pride. I'd just like to say the
23 folks in the Bronx never judge themselves or
24 define themselves by their past struggles, but by
25 the incredible future that this borough has in

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1 front of it. Thank you very much for everyone
2 joining us here today.

3 MR. PERALES: I'm told that everyone has to
4 turn off their mic for anyone else's mic to work.
5 Let me ask the -- let me ask the rest of the
6 commissioners to introduce themselves.

7 We'll start on my extreme right with Kyle.

8 MR. BRAGG: Good evening, I'm Kyle Bragg.
9 I'm the secretary-treasurer of SEIU Local 32BJ.

10 MR. HO: Good evening. My name is Dale Ho.
11 I am director of the ACLU voting rights project.

12 MR. MIROCZNIK: Good evening. My name is
13 Mendy Mirocznik. I'm the president of COJO
14 Staten Island.

15 MR. SCISSURA: Good evening, I'm Carlo
16 Scissura. It's a pleasure to be in the Bronx.

17 I'm from Brooklyn, and I would argue with
18 you about Little Italys, but let me take you to
19 dinner on Arthur Avenue anytime you want. In my
20 day job I serve as the President of the New York
21 Building Congress.

22 MR. PERALES: My name is Cesar Perales. I
23 should have introduced myself a moment ago. I
24 have the honor of serving as chair of this
25 Charter Revision Commission.

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1 I recently stepped down as the Secretary of
2 State of New York. I have a long history in
3 public service, but since I'm in the Bronx and
4 having recently passed Yankee Stadium on my way
5 up here, let's hope that that streak continues.

6 VOICE: Yes.

7 MS. CLARKE: Good afternoon. I'm Una
8 Clarke. I'm a former member of the New York City
9 council. I am a trustee for the City University,
10 and this beautiful institution in which you are
11 sitting is one of the colleges within CUNY, so I
12 am just so honored to be here.

13 I'm also a member of the Charter, and I'm
14 very pleased to be a part of this group of
15 commissioners, all who are intent on making sure
16 we listen carefully and we understand exactly
17 what the issues are in all of our boroughs, so
18 that we can come together and make sure that we
19 deepen the participation of all people in the
20 City of New York, and also make sure that
21 everybody is counted and accounted for.

22 MS. WEISER: Hello, my name is Wendy Weiser.
23 I direct the Democracy Program at the Brennan
24 Center for Justice at the NYU Law School. I'm
25 really delighted to be here, and I also want to

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1 thank all of you for being here and for actually
2 living what we are trying to accomplish, which is
3 an increased participation in the life of our
4 City and democracy.

5 MR. SIEGAL: Good evening. John Siegal. I
6 do reside in the Bronx nearby, and I'm a lawyer
7 in private practice, as well as a mayoral
8 designee to the Civilian Complaint Review Board,
9 reviewing citizen complaints against our police
10 officers. And I'm pleased to be here and hear
11 your views on City issues tonight.

12 MR. CARRION: Once again, I'm Marco Carrion.
13 I serve as the commissioner to the Mayor's Office
14 of Community Affairs.

15 MR. PERALES: I too want to thank all of you
16 for coming. This is, for us, very important,
17 that you get an opportunity to express
18 yourselves, let us know what is concerning you
19 regarding the New York City Charter.

20 Again, what we're here to do is to listen to
21 you as we prepare to revise, make amendments, and
22 make changes to the New York City Charter.

23 Under the law, the Mayor of the City of New
24 York can appoint a commission on any particular
25 year. We haven't had one in about eight years.

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1 I think, and that commission usually examines not
2 just the issues the mayor has raised and asked,
3 but looks at the entire Charter. The Charter is
4 the governing document of the City of New York.
5 It's like a constitution, but our role, really,
6 before we can do that, is to listen to the people
7 of our City, and that's what we are here to do
8 tonight. The recommendations that we ultimately
9 make are presented then to the voters in November
10 as an amendment. I'm sure all of you have gone
11 into a voting booth and seen all these
12 complicated amendments that you sometimes don't
13 have time to read, but you're asked to vote "yes"
14 or "no."

15 I'm hoping that this November, you get a
16 chance to read them well, and that they reflect,
17 perhaps, something you have heard tonight that
18 has been told to us by you, the residents of the
19 Bronx.

20 The mayor himself has asked us to look at
21 something in particular, and that is, how do we
22 make New York more democratic? What is it that
23 we can change or insert into the City Charter
24 that will enable us to have more fair elections,
25 have more people vote, and maybe take money, the

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1 importance of money is lessened by changes that
2 we make. So we're particularly interested in
3 your views on how elections are held, but we want
4 to hear everything you have to say about the City
5 Charter.

6 And with that, let me begin by quickly
7 introducing three of our staff members who are
8 new and haven't been introduced even to the other
9 members of the commission. Ingrid Kristofsen,
10 who is a legal -- on our legal staff. Michael
11 Massiano, a tech, Steve Newmark in Operations,
12 and Mary Van Noy in Operations.

13 You should know that after we conduct this
14 hearing here in the Bronx, we will be conducting
15 hearings in Queens on May 3rd, in Brooklyn on
16 May 7th, and in Manhattan on May 9th.

17 Our hope is after these initial borough
18 hearings, we will have an opportunity of going to
19 a variety of neighborhoods to have smaller
20 hearings there as well. Again, public testimony
21 here is open to everyone. The hearing is about
22 the Charter. If you wish to speak, please sign
23 up at the table, and I will take the liberty of
24 limiting the speakers to five minutes each,
25 because there are a number of them who have

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1 indicated an interest in speaking.

2 Any comments from any of the other members
3 of the commission? I tend to feel that I'm
4 dominating the conversation.

5 If not, we will hear from our first speaker.
6 I think it's Egidio Sementilli.

7 MR. SEMENTILLI: I'm honored.

8 MR. PERALES: Will you tell us what
9 organization, Mr. Sementilli, you represent?

10 MR. SEMENTILLI: Yes, I will, Commissioner.
11 I am the first one, and I have five minutes; am I
12 correct?

13 MR. PERALES: That's correct.

14 MR. SEMENTILLI: E-G-I-D-I-O
15 S-E-M-E-N-T-I-L-L-I.

16 And it was an honor to see Mrs. Clarke here.
17 Great woman. Many years I saw her when she --
18 still is a firebrand, but I saw her, it was
19 great. And the clock is running. Pelham Bay
20 Community Improvement and Safety Organization,
21 not for profit. I'm here today --

22 Welcome commissioners, and thank you for
23 coming here.

24 First issue -- first issue would be --

25 MR. PERALES: Let me interrupt you for a

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1 moment. The gentleman back here is
2 interpreting --

3 MR. SEMENTILLI: Yes.

4 MR. PERALES: -- for the deaf. I failed to
5 indicate that we've done, through this series,
6 taken steps to ensure that everybody can
7 participate and hear what is being said, so your
8 words are being translated.

9 MR. SEMENTILLI: And maybe we can run the
10 clock again? So that we can start fresh?

11 MS. CLARKE: Whatever frame of time.

12 MR. SEMENTILLI: Thank you. Thank you so
13 much.

14 Sementilli. Egidio Sementilli. My first
15 issue is with the CCRB. I'm happy that the
16 commissioner is here. I would like to see that
17 the Charter Commission here propose and hopefully
18 the voters will accept an independent agency, not
19 a mayoral agency, an independent agency with the
20 power of discipline. Right now, they don't have
21 the power, only to recommend, and it's solely
22 based on the commission. I believe it should be
23 an independent body. It should have the right to
24 fire and discipline officers, and the only way it
25 would be created through this revision as an

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1 independent agency, and the Comptroller, and
2 also, the Public Advocate; and in turn, as the
3 community boards are independent. And speaking
4 of the community boards, this unicameral
5 government that we set up here for -- for --
6 might be good for a small town. Minnesota, I
7 think, is the next largest state that has this
8 form of government with 600,000 people. New York
9 City, it does not work, and I believe to improve
10 that and to make it more transparent, I believe
11 that the community board should also be an
12 independent body, not appointed by the borough
13 president or recommended by the City Council; but
14 appointed through an election process, maybe, or
15 a petition process, and it should be as an
16 independent body, in the same manner as the
17 Public Advocate and the Comptroller were
18 established, and it's balanced to this one body
19 system of government. Is it balanced? And
20 that's what the charter states. It's identified
21 as a one-party system and the balance of it is
22 the City -- is the Comptroller and the Public
23 Advocate and the community boards, respectfully.
24 There should be no attachment to any political
25 office, because it becomes an extension of the

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1 politics, and that we do not want. We'll get
2 greater representation. That should be an issue
3 that should be brought up.

4 Third issue, what I'd like to see on the
5 charter since we're here for this, I would like
6 to see the allocation of public monies by elected
7 officials at least, minimum to go through a
8 review process through the community boards.
9 Unfortunately, we have politicians that allocate
10 millions and millions of dollars to groups that
11 no one even knows that there are in the
12 community.

13 So we need to open up that process. We need
14 the allocation of discretionary funds for the
15 City Council to be an open process and a review
16 process by a board, in this case, I think the
17 community board already set up for it would be
18 would be a great opportunity, too.

19 And number four -- since we're here, number
20 four, I would like to spend my next one minute
21 and thirty seconds to say I respect everyone on
22 this board, but I hope that this board does not
23 become the platform for a third term, for a
24 mayoral third term.

25 We, the people, the will of the people, were

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1 denied through the prior mayoral and we lost our
2 win legislatively. I hope that this board here
3 does not become a platform for Mayor De Blasio to
4 extend to a third term, and I beg and humbly
5 suggest that -- and to be independent and this
6 board and all the individuals that serve on this
7 board -- because at the end of the day, you will
8 make the recommendation, not the mayor.

9 So I hope you respect the people and respect
10 the community and the will of the people. This
11 board -- honorable board cannot be a front for
12 Mayor De Blasio to usurp the will of the people
13 and try and try to get a third term; and as we
14 know and read in the papers, the lack of
15 participation from the public voting will be able
16 to achieve that, if you allow it. If you allow
17 it.

18 So, I thank you, commissioners, and thank
19 you for the opportunity to be the first to
20 testify here, thank you.

21 MR. PERALES: Thank you. Don't leave. We
22 may have a question or two.

23 MR. SEMENTILLI: Of course.

24 MALE SPEAKER: You came to talk about the
25 CCRB?

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1 MR. SIEGAL: I guess I want to make sure I
2 understand your point about the CCRB. What you
3 were, I believe, saying was that your proposal
4 would be that the CCRB would make final
5 determinations on police discipline as opposed to
6 making recommendations to the police department
7 that the police commissioner then acts on?

8 MR. SEMENTILLI: Attorney, yes, an attorney.
9 That is what I said, but in addition to that, I
10 did also say that there would be a separate,
11 independent entity of government, in the same way
12 that the Charter indicates or describes the
13 Public Advocate and the Comptroller as
14 independent entities of the Charter and not
15 mayoral agencies. I would like to see that
16 absolutely to be.

17 In fact, today, I was on the phone with the
18 CCRB, making a complaint, and interestingly
19 enough, after I spent an hour on the phone making
20 my complaint, they tell me, well, we don't have
21 jurisdiction over this issue. It's going to be
22 sent down to the chief of department and as an
23 administrative issue.

24 And what was it? Basically, it was officers
25 refusing to take police reports, and we have a

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1 systematic problem with our precincts that
2 certain policies, maybe it might be City-wide
3 policy; I don't know, but certain issues that
4 they refuse to take complaints, and therefore,
5 becomes, knowing that they will become not a
6 disciplinary issue with CCRB, or reviewed by
7 CCRB, or IAB, but it will be referred back to
8 chief of department as an administrative issue.
9 That's enough. You know, it takes the power, the
10 teeth, the spirit of the law, I guess, or what we
11 as the public believe what CCRB disseminates as
12 to be an agency of righteousness, and to be a
13 fair -- a fair balance of police -- public good;
14 and I think that's not the case here, and the
15 only way it will be by, through an independent,
16 non-mayoral agency.

17 MR. SIEGAL: Obviously, I don't know the
18 specifics of the case you were talking about, nor
19 is this the time or place.

20 MR. SEMENTILLI: No, it isn't.

21 MR. SIEGAL: But I can say that there are a
22 lot of cases in the CCRB where we make
23 recommendations on, that the complaint is the
24 officer refused to take a citizen complaint, and
25 we recommend frequently discipline for officers,

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1 particularly people, you know, at the desk in the
2 stationhouse or even commanding officers in the
3 stationhouse who don't appropriately take
4 complaints and forward them to CCRB, where
5 they're supposed to go.

6 I'm not sure of the specifics, but -- and in
7 terms of the decider, I guess you're saying there
8 should be an independent judge who would decide
9 these cases?

10 MR. SEMENTILLI: I think that all --

11 MR. SIEGAL: Or an elected official?

12 MR. SEMENTILLI: No, no, mine is to limit to
13 the board.

14 MR. SIEGAL: Okay.

15 MR. SEMENTILLI: The Board's authority. You
16 have the CCRB board. I read through the profiles
17 of all of the board members. Great profiles and
18 so on. I think they're capable and could be fair
19 and honest to make decisions like that.

20 MR. SIEGAL: Just to clarify, the board is
21 not comprised of a majority -- they're all
22 mayoral-appointed but they're designated equally
23 by the mayor and the City Council and managed by
24 the police commissioner.

25 MR. SEMENTILLI: The appointment could stay

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1 the same. It would just be an independent
2 agency.

3 MR. SIEGAL: Thanks. I understand.

4 MR. SEMENTILLI: Thank you.

5 MS. CLARKE: Since I was a member of the
6 City Council, and you talked about the issue of
7 term limits, I believe in a democracy, the voters
8 should decide; and if we want to be democratic in
9 one, we have to be democratic all the time. We
10 need voter education, and that's what we need to
11 advocate for. They should know when their
12 representative is no good and kick them out. But
13 when somebody is good they should be able to
14 remain there. In other areas it becomes a
15 career, and it doesn't make the person who is the
16 elected official noneffective.

17 So I just want to put that out there so you
18 understand. I spent my ten years and I would not
19 come back, but let's say somebody comes, the
20 first four years, they learn how to be a council
21 member. The next four years, they start figuring
22 out, what the hell am I going to do with my
23 career after these four years, so they become
24 ineffective. So I would argue that the people
25 should decide who their representative is. Not

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1 some rich person who put a referendum and states
2 eight years is good enough. Somebody can say
3 12 years is good enough, and somebody can say
4 20 years is good enough. So, as far as I'm
5 concerned, having served in the City Council, and
6 I know what colleagues do and can do, I am not
7 for term limits. So let me just let you know
8 that. I think the people have the right to
9 decide who their representative will be.

10 MR. PERALES: Let me just say: I don't
11 expect this to be on the ballot. This is not an
12 issue that we -- it's not been raised anywhere
13 else. I don't think anybody on this panel is
14 interested in extending term limits.

15 MR. SEMENTILLI: Great to hear from you, and
16 thank you for saying so. Look at me in the eyes,
17 and the public in the eye, and tell them this
18 statement. That's a powerful statement from the
19 Chair. I do thank you for that statement.

20 MR. PERALES: Yes.

21 MR. SIEGAL: Thank you.

22 MR. SEMENTILLI: Thank you.

23 Anyone else or am I -- I'm good. Thank you,
24 sir, thank you again. I'll try to write
25 something, an e-mail.

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1 MR. PERALES: Wonderful. Thank you.

2 And that goes for anyone in the audience.

3 We are accepting written comments and questions.

4 Let me call on Jose Ofredo, 32BJ.

5 MR. OFREDO: First of all, good evening to
6 all. Pardon my appearance. I just came from
7 work. I apologize. On behalf of 32BJ, I work at
8 there right down the road. Thank you to you guys
9 for listening and everything. I hope you have a
10 blessed day.

11 First and foremost, I want to thank
12 everybody for all and everything on behalf of
13 myself and the members of the SEIU 32BJ union
14 effort in strengthening our City democracy, and
15 we ensure that everybody in New York's voices
16 count, basically. Our union members are 160 --
17 163,000 strong here in New York alone. We
18 represent over 85,000 buildings, service workers
19 to keep our cities, residential buildings,
20 schools, offices, stadiums, and airports clean
21 and safe. We proudly fight for the rights of our
22 members who are working class and predominantly
23 people of working color -- people of color --
24 pardon me -- to live safe and healthy lives with
25 dignity and respect. Through my Union I have

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1 been lucky enough to work -- excuse me, I
2 apologize.

3 Through my Union, I have been lucky enough
4 to work more -- I'm nervous, I apologize. This
5 is, like, last-minute, spur of the moment. I
6 really apologize.

7 Through my Union I have been lucky enough to
8 learn about democracy, the Democrats and have
9 been provided a vehicle of civic -- civic
10 engagement, and I am grateful to the opportunity
11 the Union has given me to make my voice and our
12 voice heard at the state level. And one
13 important way to get our work on election by
14 communicating with the Union brothers and sisters
15 about the candidates that I feel passionate
16 about. In New York City, because of our campaign
17 finance and law, our type of communication is
18 considered a campaign contribute -- excuse me,
19 I'm sorry. I'm really nervous -- a contribution,
20 and so they are prohibited. It doesn't -- it
21 does not make sense. I know through my own
22 experience that conversations between Union
23 members is one of the most effective ways to
24 advocate. This is why I believe that we need to
25 revise charter in order to clarify that these

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1 kinds of important conversations of our
2 candidates can happen. Not only is
3 members-to-members communication critical -- a
4 critical way to advocate, but it also gets
5 countless members involved in our electrical
6 [sic] and policy -- excuse me, campaigns.

7 We can count members-to-members
8 communications to -- as a campaign contribute --
9 oh, man, I'm so nervous.

10 MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's all right.

11 FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: You're doing great.

12 MALE SPEAKER: You sound good.

13 MR. OFREDO: Not only is member-to-member
14 communication a critical way to advocate, but it
15 also gets countless members involved in
16 electrical policies and campaigns. We count
17 member-to-member communication and independent
18 contributions and we distinctly -- oh, man, I'm
19 so nervous. I apologize, guys.

20 When we count member-to-member communication
21 with these kind of boots on the ground --
22 instead. I'm so sorry, man I --

23 MR. PERALES: It's all right.

24 MS. CLARKE: No, it's all right. Take your
25 time.

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1 MR. OFREDO: We should be doing everything
2 we can to ensure, but not to stifle it. Thank
3 you for your time and efforts to ensure our
4 democracy works for all, including working people
5 and the community. I apologize. (Applause).

6 MR. PERALES: Thank you. Anybody want to
7 comment? Carlo?

8 MR. SCISSURA: First of all, you did a great
9 job. And I always say this: If we had to come
10 and do the jobs you do, we couldn't do it as good
11 as you, so the fact that you're here, taking the
12 time to do it (unintelligible)(applause).

13 I just have a comment. I grew up in a union
14 household. My mother was a member of Local 372,
15 the DC37, and when my father died when I was a
16 teenager, I can tell you that if it were not for
17 her Union job, we would not have had medical
18 insurance, and after she had a bad stroke, it
19 would have probably lost her house, or if not for
20 the Union medical. So I give a lot of credit to
21 you for what you do.

22 MR. OFREDO: Thank you so much, sir.

23 MR. SCISSURA: Keep up the good work. To
24 you, and to all the members.

25 MR. OFREDO: Thank you.

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1 MR. PERALES: You in the chair.

2 MR. OFREDO: Yeah, I have a question.

3 MR. PERALES: So you said you came from
4 work.

5 MR. OFREDO: Yeah, I just came from work, me
6 and my coworkers. Yes.

7 MR. MIROCZNIK: And can you tell us why
8 hearing from your Union, political activities or
9 campaign-related issues is important to you?

10 MR. OFREDO: Sure. We're definitely trying
11 to strive, you know. When we do our picketing,
12 we're not always on the street. We're trying to
13 get some place, some shelter, some warm,
14 something that can benefit our workers and our
15 voices can really be heard.

16 We're very strong. We do what we have to
17 do. We're outside constantly, rain, sleet, snow,
18 it doesn't matter, just to get our point across
19 and basically, that's what we're here for, just
20 to try to get our voices heard, and hopefully for
21 the people in our environment are open.

22 MR. PERALES: Thank you. I take your
23 comments to be supportive of the idea that we as
24 a commission are to figure out more ways to make
25 it easier for the people like yourself to

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1 participate in politics and elections, right?

2 MR. OFREDO: That would be appreciated,
3 thank you.

4 MR. PERALES: Any other comments? Thank you
5 very much.

6 MR. OFREDO: Thank you so much for your
7 time. I appreciate you. Have a blessed night
8 (applause).

9 MR. PERALES: Louis Rocco, the president of
10 the Westchester Square Civic Association.

11 MR. ROCCO: (Indicating) Good evening. My
12 name is Louis Rocco. I'm president of the
13 Westchester Square Civic and I am honored to be
14 here tonight. Commissioners, I'm really honored
15 to be here tonight. Tonight marks the --
16 actually, this night marks six years of my civic
17 organization being in operation. I took this
18 endeavor on to make our neighborhood clean and
19 save. I found a newspaper article, going through
20 the news, and I said my mission was to make my
21 neighborhood safe and clean. I reached that
22 goal, but the hurdles that I've come through were
23 overwhelming. Our government does not work.
24 They had me take my signs down. They punished me
25 with building department inspectors. They used

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1 the police to harass and stop my places, and on
2 and on and on. I came close to having a
3 breakdown. I got on my niece and I said, "God, I
4 didn't finish my mission." And this is what it's
5 about. It's about good people wanting to make
6 the City of New York work. I love the City.
7 I've worked on the issues that our mayor wanted
8 to get done, Vision Zero, they stopped me or
9 tried stopping me, and that means they were
10 stopping our mayor. My daughter is an attorney.
11 It took two days to get the paperwork in. I got
12 the paperwork in and I succeeded. They made me
13 go through hell, getting signatures, stopping my
14 bumps. I didn't have enough signatures. I had
15 too many signatures. And what I'm talking about
16 is our community boards. Our community boards
17 are not brought up to time.

18 What I'd like to see done is independent
19 community boards. If you want the City to
20 survive, you need people. When I opened the
21 civic association, I wanted to teach people about
22 civic, about going out there and voting, getting
23 involved, volunteering, and becoming a good
24 representative in this City. When I see people
25 move out, it is horrific that we leave it and say

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1 we're only leaving bad politicians and bad
2 people.

3 Some of my recommendations that I want to
4 see -- I want you for get on a community board.
5 I have been on a community board. I have been on
6 almost anything you could mention this man has
7 been through, even working 32B. I've been a
8 police officer, a firefighter and it's not that
9 I'm just bragging, and where did I wind up? In
10 the Bronx, in the City of New York, to really
11 give back. I'm a 9/11 survivor. I'm not
12 bragging. I didn't want anything. I don't sue.
13 I'm out here to make my community the best place.
14 And what we're looking for is quality of life,
15 all right?

16 We've almost met that goal. We need to
17 change the community boards. The community
18 boards are hindering us from doing this. We have
19 people that gave up on the political system. Our
20 recommendations are change the Charter on a
21 Community boards, free them up, don't make them a
22 political agenda, open them up, let you go out
23 there, get signatures from the community, and
24 people will be -- welcome you and get these
25 signatures for you to get on these community

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1 boards. You have to go and do the legwork, the
2 same legwork you would have to go do petitions to
3 get on, to vote. So the recommendation I make is
4 that our community boards have to be more
5 independent and you're going to hear it from more
6 members and more people. Because if you don't
7 free up the community boards, you're going to
8 lose it as a political agenda. People are
9 getting sick and tired of living in New York. I
10 thank the mayor. He's done a lot of great
11 things, but there's a lot of people that tried
12 stopping him. I stood by him on the Vision Zero
13 and I fine-tuned it, and as we speak, I'm still
14 getting streets done. I'm still getting a lot of
15 stuff done in the community. I've gotten streets
16 paved and I don't think politician like when you
17 get things done. I get out there every day.
18 Really? We're not -- we're not looking to take
19 your jobs. I have no reason to run for politics.
20 I want the politicians to start working. You
21 work for us, we don't work for you and this --
22 you got to understand that, we're good people.
23 We have seniors eating out of garbage cans, and
24 it goes on and on and on. Where are our
25 community boards? Our community boards are only

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1 there to discipline, and some of the -- what I
2 get from the community, we're only an advisory
3 board. Are you guys an advisory board? No,
4 you're commissioners. You're above that, but
5 what the community boards do is they will go
6 after you and gang together. They work as
7 criminals. I hate to put words like that, but
8 they're supposed to be -- the clock stopped. It
9 means I've got plenty of time -- so they're
10 supposed to be working with us. We need to
11 change this attitude. I think on this election,
12 make my life on this election, put something on
13 there that frees the communities up, and you'll
14 see a better City; and you'll see us vote.

15 MR. PERALES: Thank you. Thank you very
16 much (applause).

17 MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Kyle
18 Bragg. There's two things I want to take
19 exception to I heard tonight.

20 One, this honorable chair, this honorable
21 commission is somehow the puppet of the mayor.
22 That's not the case. Each of these honorable
23 commissioners up here are charged with a
24 responsibility to look at this New York City
25 Charter, to examine whether or not there are

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1 things that we can do to make this City greater.
2 And to make it more democratic and more
3 inclusive. To indicate we might be puppets of
4 the mayor, I take great exception to.

5 The second thing is, I sit on Community
6 Board 13 in Queens, and I take exception that you
7 think we are also puppets of some political
8 apparatus and that we are the handmaidens or the
9 strongarms of some political force that,
10 personally, I don't know about because I have
11 been on that community board there, representing
12 my community, and that's my charge and that's
13 what I do, and I do that with as much, much honor
14 and distinction as I possibly could do it with.

15 So what you're speaking about, I'm not sure
16 how each and every community board in this City
17 operates, but I can guarantee you that's not how
18 mine operates, and that's not been my experience,
19 and so I just want to state that for the record,
20 that community -- community board members are not
21 criminals, because I don't consider myself a
22 criminal. I consider myself a person that's of
23 -- of our community who's doing a civic duty by
24 representing that community in the best way that
25 he can. So thank you.

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1 MR. ROCCO: Can I respond to that, please?

2 MR. PERALES: Yes, but please be very brief.

3 MR. ROCCO: I also sat on Community Board 9,
4 and while I was on there in the Bronx, I worked
5 with the parks, and it was hands-on, you know,
6 Field of Dreams. We got a lot of stuff done.
7 It's not an easy job. It's not a thankful job.
8 But we need to make some changes. And as far as
9 -- I can't suggest, or whatever it is, we have
10 people that shouldn't be on community boards.
11 That's why I'm suggesting term limits on the
12 community boards, and I'm suggesting to make sure
13 it's independent. Once it's independent and we
14 open it up and we the City would thrive by it.
15 We have a lot of talent but they're not coming to
16 community boards because they have a little
17 clubhouse, which I hate to say, and there have
18 been arrests of community board members. There
19 have been people arrested, okay? So that doesn't
20 bring out the best of the best. We want the best
21 of the best in these community boards, but we
22 need to make them more independent, and we need
23 to put it on as a vote.

24 MR. PERALES: Okay, Mr. Rocco, thank you
25 very much.

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1 MR. ROCCO: Thank you, sir.

2 MR. PERALES: I've been getting a lot of
3 sheets of paper representing the people who want
4 to speak. I'm going to have to limit it from
5 five to -- let's make it three minutes. Is that
6 fair to everybody?

7 FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: No.

8 FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: No, but still.

9 MR. PERALES: But you understand the
10 problem. You want everyone to get an
11 opportunity.

12 FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

13 MR. PERALES: Yes, you will get an
14 opportunity.

15 Sheek Musa Morala, I think.

16 I must have destroyed your name. The
17 handwriting is not good. What is your name, so
18 we will all hear it correctly?

19 MR. MORALA: No problem. My name is Saf
20 Musa Morala.

21 MR. PERALES: Thank you.

22 MR. MORALA: Thank you, Chairman, and thank
23 you, honorable commissioners. Thank you for
24 having me here to testify as to how we can make
25 New York City a better place for all.

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1 I am suggested that post-9/11, the level of
2 expenditure in law enforcement and intelligence
3 and incarceration is unsustainable; therefore, we
4 need to have Commissioner of Peace or Commission
5 for Peace in New York City Charter, so that the
6 preventive services that can be provided on a
7 volunteer basis will eliminate the need to spend
8 billions of dollars, you know, for intelligence
9 that creates more adversary relationships among
10 residents than they serve.

11 For the past ten years, I have travelled
12 around the world to see how people maintain peace
13 and sustain peace, and the best thing that any
14 City can do, especially New York City, is to
15 create an environment where citizens become, you
16 know, preventing agents, not just depend on law
17 enforcement that unfortunately don't always have
18 the best relationships with the community that
19 they serve. I have submitted a suggestion as to
20 how that will work in five boroughs, and with
21 limited expenditure, next to nothing, it will
22 create a whole line of preventive services, you
23 know, from the gangs on the streets to religious
24 conflicts to extremism to terrorism, you name it;
25 we can do the preventive work without involving

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1 law enforcement, and if we do that, we will save
2 billions of dollars and perhaps, maybe we can
3 prevent events such as 9/11 and any other.

4 Personally, you know, I have been active in
5 preventive mechanisms here in the Bronx.

6 For the past 24 months we have removed 105
7 gang members through the preventive service we
8 provide, and throughout the world our
9 organization has spread from here to 43
10 countries, to bring people who do not normally
11 talk to each other to sit at the table. And that
12 is what I'm suggesting, so that we have
13 Commissioner for Peace at the mayor's office,
14 just like we have for the commissioner of
15 preventative services. Thank you.

16 MR. PERALES: That is a very interesting
17 idea, and I invite you to submit a description of
18 how you think it could be done, as you suggest,
19 across the five boroughs.

20 MR. MORALA: Absolutely.

21 MR. PERALES: Anyone else have any comments?

22 MS. CLARKE: I detect that, like myself,
23 that you're an immigrant and that you are looking
24 for ways in which you can settle and make sure
25 communication is respectful within the community,

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1 and apart from that, that you serve as a voice
2 for what would otherwise be disruptive in the
3 community and whether you call it peace or not,
4 it's about a way in which people conduct
5 themselves, both because of their religion,
6 because of their race, because of settling in and
7 sometimes, people don't really recognize that a
8 behavior is to the person, what their culture is.

9 Is that what we're looking at?

10 MR. MORALA: Absolutely.

11 MS. CLARKE: Thank you.

12 And thank you, sir, for testifying.

13 MR. PERALES: Roxanne Delgado?

14 MS. DELGADO: Hello.

15 MR. PERALES: Hello.

16 MS. DELGADO: Hello, hi. Okay, the Campaign
17 Finance Board is responsible for protecting tax
18 dollars and the public interest, but is unable to
19 do so when the laws are set by the fox in the
20 chicken coop. As per my spreadsheet, which I
21 sent to you by e-mail, Queens Borough President
22 Melinda Katz received over \$550,000 in public
23 funds and outspent her two opponents by over 1.3
24 million. Her two opponents received no public
25 matching funds and raised less than 11,000

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1 combined.

2 Over half of Ms. Katz's spending went to
3 consulting fees. Even though Ms. Katz had the
4 advantage as an incumbent, she used public monies
5 against two unknown candidates who barely raised
6 one percent of what she raised. As expected, she
7 won her reelection with over 76 percent of the
8 vote, and Katz returned no money to the CFB. A
9 similar case of public activists has change, who
10 received over 750,000 in public monies, and he
11 turned no money back to the CFB. None of their
12 opponents received any public funds, and all five
13 combined raised less than two percent of the
14 1.67 million that Mr. James raised, and as
15 expected, James won reelection with over
16 77 percent of the vote.

17 Same with Mayor De Blasio who received --
18 who returned only \$377 of the 4.88 million that
19 he received in public funds. Only \$377, out of
20 3.4 million money that he received in public
21 funds. None of his opponents except for the
22 Republican candidate Nicole Malliotakis, received
23 public funding, and he outspent her 2.7 to 1 and
24 as expected, won the reelection by over
25 66 percent of the votes.

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1 Same with the City Council raises. For
2 example, Upper East Side council member Ben
3 Kallos. None of his opponents received public
4 funding matching. They spent less than 7 percent
5 of the 301,000 that he raised, and, as expected,
6 he won reelection with over 80 percent of the
7 vote. Not to mention that Kallos did not return
8 any of the public money, even though he has less
9 -- he has 26,000 left in his campaign fund, and
10 spent 5,000 this year for tote bags. Why is he
11 spending money when his campaign received over
12 125,000 in public funds and has not yet returned
13 any of it?

14 Shame on the media and shame on the good
15 government groups that say we have the New York
16 State campaign finance is the gold standard.
17 It's a sham to only give millions to incumbents
18 to demolish their opponents who are at a
19 disadvantage already -- the CAFB is not leading
20 -- is not levelling the playing field, but
21 instead is undetermining [sic] -- wait,
22 undermining challenges to the establishment. And
23 the worst part is the CAFB is using public money
24 to undermine our democracy. The money could have
25 been used for our parks, our libraries, and our

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1 food pantries. So I recommend that public
2 matching funds not be made in any way when other
3 opponents receive no public funds. And when the
4 matching will give someone a financial advantage
5 over 25 percent. For example, Candidate A
6 receives \$5,000. One minute. I'm almost done.

7 Half a minute. 40 seconds. All right.
8 This example, my recommendation. For example,
9 Candidate A raised \$5,000 and is eligible for
10 18,000 in public funds; however, all his other
11 candidates, opponents, only raised 20,000, not
12 eligible for public funds. So the highest raised
13 by one of his opponents is \$6000. So therefore,
14 Candidate A can receive 1250 in public funds
15 because his total campaign funds, what I see is
16 over 25 percent of any other opponents. So what
17 is disturbing is that City Council has just
18 introduced by saying that increase the matching
19 amount from 125 to 250 and increase the limit of
20 public funds from 55 percent to 85 percent of the
21 total spending limit. So under this scenario,
22 the financial gap is widened between the
23 incumbent and the opponents, and the worst part
24 is the public funding raised for the incumbent
25 and which only undermines our democracy more,

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1 because the incumbents win 99 percent of the
2 time. And I'm making sure because -- but the
3 point is the Campaign Finance Board needs to be
4 independent and has to have its own authority.

5 It needs to protect the chicken coop from
6 the fox. And the rest, if you have that e-mail
7 spreadsheet numbers, I gave the data. I did a
8 lot of work.

9 MR. PERALES: And I apologize for limiting
10 your time so that you had to --

11 MS. DELGADO: Sorry.

12 MR. PERALES: -- run through it. We are
13 very interested in this subject. I don't know if
14 I mentioned it as we started out. I mean, our
15 interest is in looking at campaign financing, so
16 your comments are very appropriate, and I hope we
17 get them in writing so that I can understand --

18 MS. DELGADO: Yes, e-mailed them too, an
19 hour before, and also placed similar comments to
20 CAB, because I ran for City Council as a third
21 party. I had no chance to win. But the point
22 was, I saw the system work, matching funds
23 against someone that had no chance in hell, and I
24 only raised -- oh, I used my own money. I spent
25 less than \$1000. I didn't raise money. They get

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1 matching funds, 6 to 1. Come on. I mean, it's a
2 joke, it's unfair. It's abuse of power, so thank
3 you.

4 MR. PERALES: All right. Anyone have any
5 comments?

6 MS. CLARKE: Just one. I just want to say,
7 part of the matching funds is meant to help to
8 make sure that communities that were less
9 fortunate, including myself as an immigrant to
10 run, because there were no matching funds at the
11 point, the rich person, because they had money
12 would be able to win, and therefore, I would not
13 be able to tell my story to my community so I
14 could be elected. So it is meant to level the
15 playing field in terms of who's got money, who's
16 got people with money, and who's got to depend on
17 the public so that they can do the public good.

18 MS. DELGADO: May I respond? But that may
19 have been the intention, which sounds great. I
20 love that intention, but, in fact, the reality is
21 that that's not what's really happening. What is
22 funding the incumbents and actually squashing
23 down any challengers to establishment, which is
24 why people don't want to waste time and money. I
25 mean, I give away \$500. \$500 is a lot to me, but

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1 I did it because I wanted to bring issues to the
2 table. Most people are not going to invest their
3 time and money when they have no chance of
4 winning, and on top of it, their opponent is
5 being funded 6 to 1 but they're not receiving any
6 matching funds. It's not a level playing field.
7 It's a scam. So unless putting these amendments
8 where no public matching funds given to the
9 incumbent if none of his opponents received. Why
10 is the incumbent getting 1.3 million when his
11 opponents raised 11,000 combined? Come on, is
12 that fair? It's not fair. I'm upset. I'm
13 sorry.

14 MS. CLARKE: We can look at the individuals.

15 MS. DELGADO: I've got a spreadsheet for
16 you.

17 MS. CLARKE: We can look at the system and
18 how it is working, and who benefits from it, but
19 it is not to say it's not a good system.

20 MS. DELGADO: The intention's great.

21 MS. CLARKE: Allows for the matching funds
22 and the rules could be reviewed to look at that.
23 If we go back to the old system, then there will
24 be people who will not, including yourself, who
25 will never be able to run, unless you have money

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1 by yourself.

2 MS. DELGADO: No.

3 MS. CLARKE: And 11,000 is not going to cut
4 it.

5 MS. DELGADO: Yes, but why would they give
6 Melinda Katz 1.3 million, then, if her opponents
7 only raised 11,000? That was the point. They
8 need to fix the system because, like every
9 system, they abuse the power. So you have to fix
10 the system if we review, because when you give an
11 opponent -- the incumbent 1.3 million, while his
12 other two opponents have no public funds and only
13 raise 11,000, you know. Come on. I mean, does
14 that seem right to you? It doesn't to me, I'm
15 sorry to say. Thank you, sorry.

16 MR. PERALES: Thank you (applause).

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: Good evening. Thank you
18 for having me. I'll try to be as brief as
19 possible. I'm here on behalf of FairVote, which
20 is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that
21 advocates for electoral reform. I'm here to
22 discuss instant runoff voting or ranked choice
23 voting, as it's often known. This is the primary
24 reform that FairVote advocates for. I personally
25 act as the deputy director of advocacy.

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1 So ranked choice voting or instant runoff
2 voting -- instant runoff is what it sounds like.
3 Instead of having to have a separate runoff
4 election, you could combine those two elections
5 into one. Voters would be able to rank their
6 ballots in order of choice. If no candidate
7 reaches the threshold that would trigger that
8 runoff, and instead of having votes come back to
9 the polls, you eliminate the candidate with the
10 fewest votes. Voters who selected that candidate
11 as their first choice would have their vote
12 instantly go to their second choice. And then
13 you count the votes again to see if somebody has
14 the majority or whatever the threshold would be.

15 I think this system would be really
16 well-suited for the City, considering runoff
17 elections are very expensive, and turnout is
18 usually very, very low. There are cities across
19 the country that are already using this system,
20 so there are examples that can be used. And the
21 equipment that is being use in those cities is
22 very similar to here, so there are solutions in
23 place and rules that can be drawn upon --

24 MR. PERALES: Can I interrupt you for a
25 minute. One of the concerns I have -- I'm an

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1 advocate of instant runoff is that our machines
2 may not be able to handle it.

3 Are you suggesting that you know of a
4 place --

5 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes.

6 MR. PERALES: -- where similar equipment is
7 used?

8 FEMALE SPEAKER: You have the DS200 system,
9 which I believe is what is used in Minneapolis.
10 They call it ranked choice voting, but it's the
11 same process.

12 MR. SCISSURA: I'm sorry -- what are you
13 calling it?

14 FEMALE SPEAKER: Instant runoff voting --

15 MR. MIROCZNIK: I know, but what are you
16 calling it? I didn't hear you.

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: Ranked choice voting.

18 MR. SCISSURA: Ranked choice, correct?

19 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes. The one describes the
20 election itself. The other describes the process
21 for the voter. But it's the same process. I'm
22 sorry for the confusing language, but they use
23 the S and S equipment with the DS200, and it
24 would be a simple software upgrade to do it, and
25 they've been running this for almost a decade

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1 now. So there is experience using it. And
2 cities that are using this, in addition to being
3 able to eliminate a costly runoff election and to
4 be sure we are electing people when the most
5 voters at the polls. It's a secondary benefit
6 but I think it proves not just practicality but
7 improving democracy. We're seeing candidates
8 reaching out to more voters because when you know
9 you're going to need supporters of your
10 opponents' second and third choices to be
11 elected, you are incentivized to reach out beyond
12 your base to bring people into the fold of your
13 campaign. In addition to that, we're seeing more
14 civil campaigning, as you can imagine with that.
15 If you're bashing your opponents, you're less
16 likely to get their supporters' second choices,
17 and in some of these cities where we're seeing
18 this, we're seeing much more issue-focused
19 campaigns, rather than kind of mudslinging, which
20 can be very frustrating, we're seeing very civil,
21 issue-focused debates. So I'll kind of leave it
22 there, but if there's any questions, I will be
23 happy to answer.

24 MR. PERALES: Thank you.

25 I've a question or two. Do you see instant

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1 runoff or ranked choice voting, the purpose of
2 that primarily to deal with elections and runoff
3 elections where there's low turnout?

4 FEMALE SPEAKER: There's been various
5 reasons why cities have moved forward because
6 they have nonpartisan elections. Others because
7 they have runoffs. So, San Francisco, as an
8 example, eliminated a runoff by adopting the
9 instant runoff voting, and has saved millions of
10 dollars at this point by not having to run that
11 election, while also seeing increases in
12 representation of people in color and women. So
13 it kind of has two-fold benefits in terms of
14 representation and cost savings, but largely,
15 cities have found a secondary election to be
16 unnecessary and looked for alternatives, and
17 instant runoffs have come up.

18 MR. SCISSURA: Let me turn it around and ask
19 it another way. Do you think it's an appropriate
20 solution in a situation where there is a very
21 high turnout runoff election?

22 FEMALE SPEAKER: I don't know if there are
23 very high turnout runoff elections, but if it
24 were the case, I would say that that -- I mean,
25 if the system is working, possibly, but looking

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1 at the turnout data that I've seen in this
2 city --

3 MR. SCISSURA: So if I know of a type of
4 runoff election where there's a high turnout.
5 Runoff elections for mayor in the City of New
6 York.

7 FEMALE SPEAKER: Sure.

8 MR. SCISSURA: Which have historically had
9 record high runoffs. And so that's why I'm
10 asking the question, as to whether I understand
11 the argument for some offices, where we have a
12 visibly low turnout, but in those few situations
13 where we have had mayoral runoffs, we've had
14 record-high turnout, and so I wonder about the
15 need or appropriateness of this remedy for that
16 election.

17 FEMALE SPEAKER: I mean, I think the
18 commission could consider all the angles if there
19 are offices where the system currently is
20 working, then that's a consideration you have to
21 make. It's your City and you understand your
22 elections. I would say in other offices where
23 you are seeing turnout that is extremely low,
24 it's definitely something to consider. So other
25 cities have carved out, you know, some offices

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1 are elected with this system, others aren't, and
2 that's perfectly easy to navigate on a ballot if
3 need be, and so that's a consideration to make.

4 MS. WEISER: I have two questions, one is a
5 follow-up. Does FairVote or do you have a
6 recommendation of my question as to which offices
7 are appropriate in New York for this, or is that
8 not part of your recommendation at this point?

9 FEMALE SPEAKER: I would say it's probably
10 not part of our recommendation at this point. I
11 think we want to have a robust conversation. We
12 have a lot of activists on the ground that we
13 talk to and work with, and I really would think
14 we would want it to come from them. I just
15 wanted to speak on our behalf of the expertise
16 that we have, so I think that's a discussion that
17 at least for now, we would not have an official
18 position on.

19 MS. WEISER: And then the other question I
20 have is on the examples of how it's working in
21 other cities, does -- are the cities that are
22 using some form of instant runoff voting, do they
23 have City elections separate from other elections
24 or are there any that do it at the same time as
25 there are, you know, statewide or federal

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1 elections as well?

2 FEMALE SPEAKER: Both would be the answer.
3 So Minneapolis and Saint Paul have their
4 elections in off years, whereas Oakland, San
5 Francisco, and other cities in the Bay Area have
6 theirs during on-year elections. So it's been --
7 it's been done both ways and it's been pretty
8 successful in both situation.

9 MS. WEISER: Thank you.

10 MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. You mentioned
11 some cities that do nonpartisan elections. Does
12 your group have a position on that?

13 FEMALE SPEAKER: We don't really take a
14 position. Cities construct their elections how
15 they need to. We just want to make sure that
16 systems are in place to ensure every vote
17 matters, and some -- in cities with nonpartisan
18 elections with however they do it, Santa Fe is
19 actually a great example. They just switched to
20 instant runoff, and they have one round of
21 nonpartisan election where, if five candidates
22 ran, somebody could be elected with 23 percent.
23 So they changed to this and they now have a
24 system that functions better. They have that
25 kind of majority component so that you're hearing

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1 kind of where the consensus is without having
2 somebody win with a small base being mobilized.
3 And there's a whole line of strategic voting on
4 that.

5 MR. SCISSURA: And you would not advocate
6 for eliminating runoffs?

7 FEMALE SPEAKER: With voiceable voting, I
8 would, but I would say that this is a system that
9 could combine those two elections and get you the
10 same results.

11 MALE SPEAKER: Great. Thank you.

12 MR. PERALES: Anyone else?

13 Thank you very much.

14 FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you (applause).

15 MR. PERALES: David Cowlick?

16 MR. COWLICK: Thank you. I am David
17 Cowlick. I am a deputy director of the Fiscal
18 Policy Institute. I'm also director of
19 immigration research, and I have to first of all
20 say I'm so pleased to be here. It's great to see
21 everybody. It's great to see people so engaged,
22 so I hope that your commission figures out ways
23 to continue this into the election process.

24 I also wanted to speak in favor of the idea
25 of instant runoff voting. Since I've come here

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1 from the Fiscal Policy Institute, you may expect
2 me to talk about the fiscal benefits, which I
3 will, but I think that's not the real reason to
4 support or not to support this. You know, I
5 think there are fiscal benefits. You do save a
6 lot of money by not having runoff elections. It
7 can cost \$10 million to have runoff elections,
8 but if -- if that \$10 million were in support of
9 greater democracy, better representation, I would
10 be in favor of spending it. I think this is a
11 rare instance where you can save money and also
12 improve the democracy along the way.

13 I was going to say some things about low
14 turnout elections and obviously, that's a big
15 challenge and with the answer to have an instant
16 runoff is you get the full electorate to
17 participate, but since you've brought it up, let
18 me also say I think that there are some big
19 advantages, even in the high turnout elections,
20 even especially in the high turnout elections,
21 one of the advantages of ranked choice voting or
22 instant runoff voting, is that you change the
23 dynamics of what it's like to be in the campaign.
24 So instead of -- so if you have a number of
25 different candidates running, rather than running

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1 off some and saying, okay, well, this person is
2 going to win in this district, and this person is
3 going to run among this constituency, and so I'm
4 going to focus on where I come in, right, you
5 have a number of different candidates who are
6 saying, well, okay, that's probably the way it
7 is. Because, you know, they're very strong in
8 that place, but at the same time, those people
9 are going to have to make a second choice and I
10 want those people to make the second choice me.
11 So you know, if you're running in one
12 neighborhood really strong, I think that really
13 does have an effect on how people are likely to
14 run; and I think it does not just affect the
15 election you're running at that time, but over
16 the longer term in building constituencies
17 together to be able to form sort of what the next
18 election is going to look like, as well as, you
19 know, I think that you see, you know, people --
20 in the low turnout elections, you see low
21 turnout. You see a skewed turnout, right, it's a
22 change in what the electorate looks like, and you
23 also see people turned off to the election when
24 their candidate is out. They say, well, there's
25 some bitterness often, and not just from that

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1 particular person, but for the whole sort of
2 constituency.

3 So, right, I think it is true that in other
4 -- in other locations as Grace just said, that
5 the experience has been that more people of color
6 are elected, more women are elected. It's more
7 possible to run as an additional candidate
8 because you're not at risk of seeming like a
9 spoiler, right? You can come into the election
10 and you can be somebody who is building a
11 constituency. In fact, as we've seen often,
12 people get drawn in, you know, people are not
13 voting all together in any election. They're
14 drawn in when they see somebody they're really,
15 really excited about. And I think that can be
16 something that can serve not necessarily to get
17 that person elected always, but to get that
18 person's people to vote for somebody else as
19 well.

20 So, as I said, I think the fact that you
21 saved maybe \$10 million for each time you don't
22 have to have a runoff election is certainly an
23 advantage. You could have a bunch of
24 after-school programs and, you know, you could do
25 a lot with that. But I think that that's not the

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1 reason person to support it. I think it's really
2 an additional benefit, you could say, to having a
3 system like that.

4 MR. PERALES: Just let me -- one follow-up.
5 I'm very interested in increasing turnout,
6 getting more people to vote. Are you suggesting
7 that if you have instant runoffs or ranked
8 voting, that someone who says, "I'm not going to
9 vote because my candidate can't possibly win,
10 might be more inclined to vote?

11 MR. COWLICK: I think so. Also a candidate
12 who is running so you might have both more people
13 running to represent the different
14 constituencies, and also, those people who are
15 going to try hopefully be part of the system, you
16 know, okay, vote for me because I represent what
17 you're saying or what you are, what you want to
18 see in office, but if I don't happen to win, vote
19 for this as your next choice. That's going to --
20 and then you have that dynamic of the various
21 people running who all are going to be angling
22 for who that next choice is going to be.

23 MR. PERALES: Anyone else have a comment?

24 MS. WEISER: I just wanted to follow up on
25 that last. Have there been, in the places that

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1 have had instant runoff voting, a documented
2 increase in the number of candidates? And then
3 the second question is also, does the turnout
4 increase both at the runoff stage and -- I mean,
5 it's one stage, but are you also saying there's
6 greater turnout in the underlying election as
7 well?

8 MR. COWLICK: I think so. I'll leave that
9 to the FairVote people to say for sure. Right?

10 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes.

11 MR. COWLICK: I think there has been an
12 increase in turnout. I'm not for sure who the
13 people are. I guess it's hard to tell, you know,
14 every election is unique, and there has been a
15 lot of change in how people have run for the New
16 York City races, for reasons not related to that,
17 right, but I think you have seen, certainly, very
18 nicely documented examples in Minneapolis of
19 people who -- the situation I was talking about
20 where people who did better than they probably
21 would have if they were, you know, if they were
22 to be the sort of third or fourth candidate.
23 Maybe they wouldn't have even run if they hadn't
24 seen the possibility of running that way, but
25 also, like, they build a constituency. They

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1 built their own name, but they also built some
2 sense of power in that constituency within the
3 election, when otherwise people would not have
4 voted at all.

5 MR. PERALES: Let me ask Mrs. Ramsey to
6 provide us data about the increase in voter
7 participation. That is of interest to us and if
8 you think that the instant runoff does improve
9 turnout, we would like to see it.

10 MR. COWLICK: Thank you very much.

11 MS. RAMSEY: Absolutely.

12 MR. PERALES: Thank you very much.

13 I can read the first name as Aluso. Is
14 there somebody by the name of Aluso here? They
15 may have left.

16 Leah James?

17 MS. JAMES: Good evening.

18 My name is Leah James. I have worked here
19 in the Bronx, well, five boroughs over the last
20 25 years. I just have some suggestions, voting
21 engagement and turnouts. So I'm speaking on the
22 grass roots at a community level. Bringing up
23 and transforming the community boards, and I'm
24 thinking that, can community boards have urban
25 planning committees? We see a lot of rezoning

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1 happening in the Bronx where City planning brings
2 its designs to the community. Is there a way
3 community boards can do a needs assessment in
4 their own districts and say what they would like
5 to change and bring it to City planning
6 themselves. And also, I'm noticing in some
7 community boards, the members don't reflect the
8 community.

9 Is there a way that community boards can be
10 mandated, meaning -- that's not the right word --
11 but have five business owners in the district,
12 homeowners, NYCHA residents, stuff like that. I
13 think a community board and there are no NYCHA
14 residents on the board. So I'm just wondering,
15 is it -- our charter is able to refine and change
16 and upgrade the community boards to reflect the
17 communities that they're supposed to represent?

18 MALE SPEAKER: First of all, thank you for
19 being here. You know, I was on the Charter
20 Commission eight years ago and one of the things
21 we had heard was something you brought up, so
22 you're really thinking of something positive,
23 which is that if a community board is to focus on
24 land use, which is one of their biggest roles,
25 that the City should provide as part of the

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1 budget a specialist in land use, so that every
2 community board should have somebody that
3 understands land use full time working there,
4 which is pretty good.

5 The other thing you brought up is something
6 that -- and so I spent five years as chief of
7 staff to Brooklyn Borough President Marty
8 Markowitz, and one of my jobs -- you know Marty.

9 MS. JAMES: I do.

10 MALE SPEAKER: And one of my jobs was to do
11 the community board appointments, to oversee that
12 and we always said, you know, there were some
13 districts that have large NYCHA populations.

14 MS. JAMES: Right.

15 MALE SPEAKER: How do we not have residents
16 from NYCHA?

17 MS. JAMES: Exactly.

18 MALE SPEAKER: There are some districts that
19 have large business districts. How do you not
20 have a small business owner or two or three or
21 four?

22 MS. JAMES: Right.

23 MALE SPEAKER: So I think that is something
24 I know I am personally very interested in, not
25 abolishing community boards, not changing them,

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1 not making them independent because they are
2 actually independent, but how do you make them
3 better and I think your two suggestions interest
4 me a lot.

5 MS. JAMES: Because I know that when it's
6 time to get voters, people like to vote to large
7 institutions, residential complexes. You go to
8 NYCHA, right, but some of the residents don't
9 have political education, right? So if the
10 community boards can be an outlet and educate,
11 this is my politician or, like you said, if the
12 representative is not for that community or not,
13 how would they know, you know, so, and another
14 thing that I stumbled across is that we -- I've
15 been trying to get youth to be on the community
16 board, right? And there's not a space for youth.
17 You have an education for youth committee, but
18 there is no youth on the committee. When we got
19 some youth to apply, you know, because you just
20 want to see how the meetings were, they had to
21 stay until, like, 9 to 10 o'clock, and their
22 parents are not playing that, you know? So is
23 there a timeframe -- I mean, maybe this is a very
24 precedent question, but is there an outlet of
25 youth, especially with all of this happening in

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1 the school system?

2 MALE SPEAKER: So I can tell you that the
3 Manhattan Borough President has done a good job
4 in including members of younger people, but
5 there's definitely something to look at there.

6 MS. JAMES: That's just my suggestions.

7 MS. CLARKE: I think that all of what you
8 said made sense, because community boards should
9 reflect the community, and the residents of the
10 community including our younger people because
11 they also have a lot of understanding of the
12 community. And I am interested in how we get a
13 youth on and how you would, you know, make it --
14 make sure that that young person can be at a
15 board meeting and get home on time to do
16 homework.

17 MS. JAMES: That's right. That's right.

18 MS. CLARKE: You know, so if you have this
19 recommendation --

20 MS. JAMES: I do.

21 MS. CLARKE: -- and you want to put it in
22 writing, please send to us and we will be very
23 interested.

24 MS. JAMES: I will. Thank you (applause).

25 MR. PERALES: Gaflinda Dowling?

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1 MALE SPEAKER: Good afternoon, ladies and
2 gentlemen. I have a little bit of an accent, but
3 if you listen to me carefully you will understand
4 what I'm saying. I'm here about Uber and Lyft,
5 to testify to that Uber and Lyft, they -- we work
6 for them now. We are the one that are doing the
7 job, but we not getting the money. They were the
8 one getting the money. It takes a lot of
9 commission out of our money. We should make it
10 difficult for us to live in this City that we
11 love to live in, and it takes their Uber fee or
12 Lyft fee and they take the blank out form and
13 also take the sales tax which I don't have a
14 problem with because I want to pay my tax, but
15 the blank out form, that is like a white
16 conversation when something happens to you, the
17 term you're now working that you use that money
18 to pay you while you are working. If something
19 happen, you don't get that money, and on top of
20 that too, what about if you drive for one, two,
21 three years, you don't got into an accident, what
22 happened with that money? Why you the driver,
23 that money is kept for you just in case something
24 happen to you, you should get some of that money
25 back. You drive for many years and don't get

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1 into no trouble, is there any way the City can do
2 something about that? So then the drivers can
3 get some of this money back?

4 MR. PERALES: With all due respect, let me
5 cut you off and tell you that we as a commission
6 have no involvement with Uber or Lyft, or even
7 the Taxi and Limousine Commission. I would urge
8 you to talk to your City Council representative
9 where you live. I don't know who it is, but it's
10 the City Council that can pass legislation, would
11 you say that's true?

12 MS. CLARKE: Mm-hmm, that's true.

13 MR. PERALES: You want to say something?

14 MR. CARRION: So are you referencing the --
15 I know there's a bill that has been brought up in
16 the City Council -- is that what you're
17 referencing, regarding the fee that Uber and Lyft
18 drivers would have to pay? The yearly fee.

19 MALE SPEAKER: Yes.

20 MR. CARRION: Okay. That is a City Council
21 -- a City Council matter. I know there was a
22 hearing on that today.

23 MALE SPEAKER: Okay.

24 MR. PERALES: But I do appreciate you coming
25 here.

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1 MALE SPEAKER: Yes, and I also want to talk
2 about housing. I don't know if you guys have
3 something to do with the housing, so.

4 MR. PERALES: You know, we constantly hear
5 about housing and the need for more housing and
6 affordable housing, but we in the City Charter
7 doesn't speak directly to the issue of housing.
8 So that's, again, something that your City
9 Council representative could help you with.

10 MALE SPEAKER: Okay.

11 MR. PERALES: We all agree?

12 MS. CLARKE: Yes.

13 MALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

14 MR. PERALES: Thank you for coming. We
15 appreciate it.

16 MALE SPEAKER: You're welcome.

17 MR. PERALES: Engado Aboiuz from the African
18 Advisory Council.

19 MR. ABOIUZ: Yes.

20 MR. PERALES: Since I mispronounce
21 perhaps --

22 MR. ABOIUZ: Yes, yes, yes. Couple of
23 things. I'm not sure if this going to fall into
24 this commission, but I got to mention it anyhow.
25 One is the car insurance. The south Bronx in the

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1 70's was considered to be the high risk area,
2 meaning, to buy a car, even in the 90s, when I
3 bought my new Pathfinder, the insurance was
4 \$4,000. That was fine, because there was a lot
5 of crime at that time. We have changed. Things
6 things have gone better. There's no crime but no
7 one ever went to revise the fee. Somebody living
8 up on Fordham Road, about \$500 different than
9 somebody who lived on 149th Street. I think this
10 is something that we should really, that we
11 should look into, as to the City Council, anybody
12 I spoke to said it's a state issue but someone's
13 going to have to --

14 MR. PERALES: It is a state issue. The
15 State Insurance Department. I am afraid we have
16 absolutely nothing to do with it, even less than
17 housing. So.

18 MR. ABOIUZ: I'll move on to my next thing.

19 MR. PERALES: Okay.

20 MR. ABOIUZ: We have also the Board of
21 Education. There is a problem that I think it
22 should really be considered. Given an example,
23 the Bronx has the largest concentration of
24 African descent. The schools in the Bronx do not
25 have a teacher -- African teacher. Now -- and

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1 there is a problem of culture in the school,
2 which will always go on -- the teacher always
3 pull our kids. They don't listen, disobeying our
4 orders, because in Africa the child don't look
5 the parent in the eye when talking to him. Just
6 because a student is not looking at the eye of
7 the teacher while talking to him, you consider
8 that the child is not listening. In our culture
9 you will never see a child -- I'm talking to my
10 son. Things have changed here but in Africa the
11 child will look down. That does not mean that he
12 is not listening to you. He is listening with
13 his ears. I don't know if in America the kids
14 listen with their eyes. We listen with the ears.
15 So you're talking to your child, and for that
16 reason, teachers get upset, send the kid to the
17 office, and that creates a problem. Our kids
18 always getting detention just because of that
19 matter, and I think that the school -- the board
20 of education should consider those things.

21 On the second thing, in terms of health. A
22 couple of years ago we had Ebola. In America we
23 hear -- people hear about Ebola but it was
24 happening over there, across the river, across
25 the pond, so nobody bothered until it started at

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1 home. People went like, somebody dropped a bomb
2 in our country. We travel -- Africans travel to
3 Africa very often. It take a vaccination to go
4 there. The vaccination, the insurance company
5 don't cover. It takes about \$400 for a parent to
6 get all the shots to go vacation in Africa. So
7 now, if a parent does not do that and find a way
8 to get to travel without it, goes there and
9 catches malaria and comes back here, goes to
10 public hospital, and get treated for free.
11 That's about \$10,000 about there. You don't have
12 to be a rocket scientist to understand that
13 \$400 --

14 MR. PERALES: Again, I'm going to have to be
15 a terrible person and tell you that that's really
16 an insurance question. Health insurance.

17 MR. ABOIUZ: Well, HHC isn't part of the
18 City?

19 MR. PERALES: Yes, but HHC can't determine
20 whether or not you're going to get reimbursed
21 money from your insurance company to pay to get
22 your immunization.

23 MR. ABOIUZ: Well, again --

24 MR. PERALES: HHC is taking care of whoever
25 gets sick.

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1 MR. ABOIUZ: Under public funding, do we not
2 pay for that?

3 MR. PERALES: Yes, but --

4 MR. ABOIUZ: That could be prevented if we
5 admit that into the coverage which is --

6 MR. PERALES: I understand, but we have
7 nothing to do with that.

8 MR. ABOIUZ: All right. I'll move on to my
9 next thing.

10 MR. PERALES: I'm glad you have a long list.

11 MR. ABOIUZ: There's not that many, but I'm
12 trying to see. I think we should have an African
13 commission in the City here to deal with our
14 population. We have too many issues that nobody
15 listens to us. I think that if we can have a
16 commission, because nobody can look into your
17 problem and put it on yourself, so I think we
18 should be able to address our own issues and we
19 can include that, the communication. For
20 instance, if you look into a cab driver for
21 instance, we have tons of Africans that drive cab
22 in this City. I can pretty much say 40 percent
23 of them. But we have no representation. So I
24 think communication can be clear, we can all --
25 when it comes to the TSE -- when it's time to

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1 vote for the situation, we're not included. So I
2 think this is going to make a difference than
3 just keep jumping on the stuff if I may have, it
4 can be better.

5 MS. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, my name is Una
6 Clarke, and I'm just going to give you advice.
7 I'm an immigrant from the Caribbean, and when we
8 wanted to import ourselves, we went to every
9 church and every place that we could go to get
10 our people to become citizens, and register and
11 vote. So when the time is right, somebody can
12 advance a person from your community who would
13 run for office, because there's no way somebody
14 is going to give you a commission and a voice and
15 a mouth unless you can vote.

16 I just want to let you know that citizenship
17 and those who can -- those who can vote should
18 vote for those who cannot vote, because at this
19 point when we look at all of what's happening in
20 Washington, we have to educate people who are
21 immigrants. Diversity in the classroom and
22 diversity in the teachers. We can look at that,
23 but this is not the forum in which all of that is
24 being addressed. But you should -- since you
25 have African organization, you need to be able to

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1 speak to the chancellor of the board of education
2 about cultural diversity and what it means, what
3 your customs and traditions are, and how they're
4 to be respected. We do that and if we didn't do
5 that in the Caribbean-American community, we
6 wouldn't have a voice today.

7 Out of my trial and error, my daughter is in
8 Congress. So organize, organize, educate and
9 educate. Don't complain, just work.

10 MR. ABOIUZ: No, this is not a complaint,
11 again --

12 MS. CLARKE: You're doing a good job, but
13 I'm just saying, part of what you need to do now
14 is organize your community. Those who are
15 registered to vote, you make sure that they get
16 out and vote, and those who are eligible to
17 become citizens, let them know they're not going
18 to go back to the motherland, as I call Africa.
19 They must stay here and make their contribution
20 to the community of which they are a part. And
21 if you need me to come, I'll surly.

22 MR. ABOIUZ: Sure, I invite you.

23 MS. CLARKE: If you want me to come, I'll
24 come. Because I'm an immigrant and I just love
25 immigrant communities. I just want to empower

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1 communities, and you are on the right track, but
2 you are in the wrong forum.

3 MR. ABOIUZ: But at least somebody heard me.
4 I wouldn't have got you if I didn't come here, so
5 thank you.

6 MR. PERALES: I think we all heard you.

7 MR. ABOIUZ: Thank you.

8 MR. PERALES: I'm having a little trouble
9 reading this name, but it's someone from the
10 African People's Alliance. There you are. So
11 you're going to come and pronounce your name for
12 me, will you.

13 FEMALE SPEAKER: Yes, the guy with the
14 golden crown on. I guess I'll just allow you to
15 come.

16 MR. DECIPHINA: (Indicating).

17 MR. PERALES: And your name, sir?

18 MR. DECIPHINA: My name is Jemaine
19 Deciphina. I am the president of the African
20 People Alliance. I'm glad that my predecessor,
21 Mr. Ambrose, has already tackled my main concern,
22 which you were positively answered, which is to
23 have African community part of the commission.
24 You know, our community is getting huge, and
25 especially with youths, we are so concerned about

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1 them, we push them to school and eventually that
2 we went to schools, that we want them to have
3 role models. This is important. We want them to
4 see some folks in front of them that they can
5 look up to. So one way or another, we need your
6 help. And I'm glad that the previous
7 commissioners, which I was there too. So I hope
8 that all I've said today is taken into
9 consideration and get updated for the good cause
10 of everybody.

11 And I also want to touch on the case of the
12 police brutality.

13 I travel a lot, and I end up here. But all
14 I have been seeing when police want to do
15 something with individuals, they just kill. Why
16 not talk to somebody and then later take the
17 person to the justice? What -- I remember when
18 my junior brother wanted to join law enforcement
19 in my country, my mother told him never care. At
20 least just finish him and arrest that person,
21 never care. So I'm here. Easily, police just
22 care -- police protect themselves more than the
23 citizens. That's why I'm surprised. So I wish
24 you could look at that and let police, you know,
25 whether shot in the arms or legs, to just

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1 stabilize the criminal, instead of killing people
2 like animals. That's one thing.

3 And another one is City ID. The -- how you
4 call it?

5 MALE SPEAKER: NYCID.

6 MR. DECIPHINA: NYCID. That is so limited.
7 As the president of the second largest community
8 in the Bronx, I will give you if you could help
9 us make that City to become, you know, driver's
10 license. It can be driver license, one way or
11 another. Most of our people when they come here
12 are already over 18 years old. They already
13 driving a car. So when they come here, they come
14 with their driver's license. If that driver's
15 license can be converted, that's another thing.
16 So I'm urging the commission to also look upon
17 that, and I think Mr. Ambrose already tackled the
18 issue which I'm so proud of. African People
19 Alliance is an organization that most likely
20 works on our culture position and make our
21 culture exhibition as well. We have youth, you
22 know, help youth to do sports, play soccer, and
23 all legal assistance we can give to our
24 community. So we need your help, we need to
25 shape up so we can be a better community.

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1 Thank you very much.

2 MR. PERALES: Thank you.

3 Denise Green?

4 Denise may have left us.

5 Michael Beltzer?

6 MR. CARRION: Beltzer. Like bouncer.

7 MR. PERALES: All right. Come on down.

8 MR. BELTZER: Good evening. My name is
9 Michael Beltzer. I'm a community advocate and a
10 former candidate for City Council, and today, I
11 am -- let me just get this going, sorry.

12 Today, I'm here to speak about the New York
13 City Charter. The New York City Charter,
14 especially since New York City moved to a
15 strong-term mayor governance in 1989, has left
16 large gaps of power and large gaps in the amount
17 of power and input on how the tax dollars are
18 spent and how their City is run. And in our
19 current environment, this is exasperating
20 inequality by giving developers a leg up on our
21 community, not seizing every opportunity for
22 civic and political engagement, and gives the
23 administration too much control on how to
24 allocate our resources.

25 I have trust that the members of this

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1 commission will seriously examine the following
2 chapters and sections of the charter and change
3 accordingly.

4 Section 197A. Amendment to require each
5 community district working with the respective
6 borough president and community board to present
7 a district-wide community plan with the help of a
8 dedicated planner once every ten years.

9 Section 197C. A man to mandate a more
10 accountable precertification process. The name
11 of an applicant shall be made public if multiple
12 major revisions have occurred. Plans that a
13 well-rounded character, even as a right should
14 also enter the public realm.

15 Sections 102 and 211. We're told to take
16 new development to generate tax revenue, but the
17 formula to set these sections uses preset
18 calculations and allocates expensive capital
19 funds on population and size, not on economic
20 activity.

21 I suggest either a percentage of total
22 receipts to the general fund from each borough be
23 remitted back, or a new tax levy charge that
24 would go to a dedicated borough fund.

25 Section 1052. Amendment to have the

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1 chairperson of the Campaign Finance Board picked
2 by the speaker in consultation with the council.

3 Section 2800. Make all board meetings
4 transmitted via live stream. I'll also have more
5 testimony and be back at a later date on
6 community board reform.

7 Chapter 10. Amend appropriate sections to
8 mandate PBNYC for each council district and a
9 similar program at the borough or City-wide
10 level.

11 We also have Chapter 1, Chapter 12. Looking
12 at the possibility of establishing a service
13 drafted transit seeking fund. I don't know if
14 it's possible.

15 And also Chapter 71. Establishing a
16 standard for equitable street allocations for
17 arterial and secondary roadways.

18 And I didn't have enough time to parse
19 through the charter on electoral reform, but I
20 stand for, and many people do stand for
21 nonpartisan elections, instant runoff voting, a
22 lift on the cap for matching funds from
23 55 percent to 100 percent of the spending limit.

24 And I thank you for your time today.

25 MR. PERALES: I for one appreciate that you

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1 took the time to identify the particular parts of
2 the Charter that you want us to look at, as you
3 make these recommendations.

4 MR. PERALES: Anyone else want to make a
5 comment?

6 MS. CLARKE: I -- I think that as a former
7 candidate for City Council, that you understand
8 the politics of it all.

9 MR. BELTZER: Right.

10 MS. CLARKE: And because you understand the
11 politics of it all, that you know, your
12 recommendations are in keeping with your beliefs
13 and in how you think that the City Council will
14 be more effective and then Charter would then, in
15 many ways certify or agree with all of what
16 you've just put in.

17 MR. BELTZER: Well, it's not just I. It's
18 also, you know, a lot of the work and different
19 -- over the years of what people have expressed,
20 different community groups, different people in
21 the community. That really informs my position.
22 And I don't know if the commission could look at
23 something, but we have council candidates and
24 people running for office, and there's one winner
25 and everyone else is the loser. In that process,

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1 the losers learned a lot of information about the
2 community, they learned the different issues and
3 what people really want to prioritize, and I
4 don't feel like the City does anything with that
5 information. You know, why is it that only the
6 winner is the one who gets to make that community
7 better or like, you know, that that -- there --
8 the -- their issues that they're going to
9 champion are the only ones that are heard. Like,
10 we're -- in the race that I was in, I mean
11 there's over half a million dollars spent. And
12 that's a lot of people engaged. What is the City
13 doing to extract any value out of that? I mean,
14 we're giving out all this money in public funds
15 and then, you know, most of the people never get
16 heard from or nothing is acted on from all that
17 energy again. So I really challenge you all to
18 think about how that could happen. Maybe there
19 could be some kind of debriefing or review
20 process that could occur, so that there could be
21 better alignment of the needs and priorities of
22 the community regardless if the candidates won or
23 not.

24 MS. CLARKE: And because -- and because
25 we're looking at how to deepen the democracy and

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1 to get more participation. As a former
2 candidate, I hope you will stay engaged and
3 educate the community about what the democracy is
4 all about, why one wins and the other loses, and
5 that we support your community --

6 MR. BELTZER: Right.

7 MS. CLARKE: -- after the fight, but then,
8 we participate in all of what happens in the
9 community and that is in educating voters.

10 MR. BELTZER: Right, right and I think the
11 live streaming, this is on my page, going to
12 about 2,000 people in the district. So you know,
13 this -- that's what I hope the community boards
14 and every single City agency and public meeting
15 can turn into and you know, we definitely need to
16 keep engaged and stay involved, and that why I'm
17 here. And I really appreciate everyone's
18 involvement in this.

19 MS. CLARKE: Thank you for coming.

20 MR. SIEGAL: I have a question. Your
21 presentation had so much in it that I probably
22 missed a lot, but one line that you had and I
23 wanted to see if you had thought about in any
24 more detail, was the notion that there should be
25 disclosure to community boards of major

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1 developments that are being planned or built,
2 right?

3 MR. BELTZER: Right.

4 MR. SIEGAL: Do you have any further
5 thoughts on what would trigger that? How it
6 could be mandated or how that could be done?

7 MR. BELTZER: So to me, you know, the
8 developers are building within the guidelines
9 that are set before them and the zoning specs and
10 -- but when there's a project as of right that's
11 just, like, so far outside of the scope of
12 anything surrounding it; I think something like
13 that would be helpful if the community, or if it
14 was -- it was brought to the public that hey,
15 this is, like, a real large project that's coming
16 in, where we're in the process of getting them
17 into certification, but we wanted to let you know
18 the name of the -- the developer or the group
19 that's managing the project. So that
20 conversation can be started. I know some council
21 members would like this process so they could put
22 in their own user to possibly down zone.
23 I don't really have an opinion on that. I just
24 like that -- if we're making -- that if a
25 developer is coming in and really going to alter

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1 massively, even within the as of right, but
2 there's nothing really around it, I feel like the
3 community should give it -- be given a heads-up
4 so that they can -- the developer and the
5 community could be like, "hey, we're going to
6 start with a project that's more in line with the
7 community," because right now, as you all know,
8 when it goes to certification, it's usually the
9 biggest project that can possibly happen, and
10 then we get this short amount of time to whittle
11 it down. I think when we have, you know, these
12 much larger projects than anybody would ever
13 imagine, just having left it as of right coming
14 in, that the public deserves to know.

15 MR. PERALES: Anyone else?

16 Thank you very, very much. I appreciate it.

17 I think that exhausts the list of people who
18 wanted to speak to us. I do want to affirm our
19 continued commitment to hear from the public and
20 I really want people who have not had an
21 opportunity yet, or who are thinking about
22 questions, to communicate them to us at your
23 earliest convenience. It is important to us.

24 I don't know if anyone else in our panel
25 would like to say anything else about this

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1 evening's hearing? If not, I will entertain a
2 motion to adjourn.

3 MR. SCISSURA: Motion to adjourn.

4 MR. PERALES: Do I hear a second?

5 MS. WEISER: I second.

6 MR. PERALES: All those in favor?

7 THE BOARD: I.

8 MR. PERALES: Opposed?

9 Hearing none, motion is carried and we're
10 adjourned.

11 (Whereupon, at 8:16 P.M., the above matter
12 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF NEW YORK)
 : SS.:
COUNTY OF NASSAU)

I, KEVIN HAGHAZARI, a Notary Public for and within the State of New York, do hereby certify:

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

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of May 2018.



KEVIN HAGHAZARI

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