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**NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION APPROVES PROPOSALS RELATING
TO CAMPAIGN FINANCE, COMMUNITY BOARDS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Ballot Questions Will Be on the General Election Ballot in November

Vote Follows Extensive Public Outreach and Input Across all Five Boroughs That Included Hearings, Expert Issue Forums, a Twitter Town Hall and a Tele-Town-Hall

NEW YORK—Today, following extensive public discussion across the five boroughs, the New York City Charter Revision Commission voted to approve three ballot questions for the voters to consider in November. Features of the proposals include:

- **Campaign Finance:** Reduce contribution limits for all candidates for City elected offices, and increase public matching funds for candidates who participate in the public financing program. Contribution limits for participating candidates would be cut by more than 60%, while the matching rate on the “small dollar” portion of contributions to such candidates would increase from 6:1 to 8:1.
- **Civic Engagement:** Establish a Civic Engagement Commission whose mission includes expanding language access at polling sites, developing a citywide participatory budgeting program and supporting and partnering with community organizations in their civic engagement efforts.
- **Community Boards:** Establish term limits on Community Board members and standardize the appointment process to make the Boards more representative of their communities. Boards would also receive additional resources, particularly in urban planning.

Chair Cesar Perales said: “This Commission set out to identify proposals designed to improve civic life in New York City and, through an extensive and thoughtful process, that is just what we have done. The proposals approved by the Commission today will provide

the voters with an opportunity to weigh in on changes that would impact several important aspects of civic life. I'd like to thank the members of the public who came to testify; good government groups and others who provided critical input; and the members and staff of the Commission who put in the hard work needed to do the job."

Commission's Final Report Approved

The Commission also today approved a Final Report discussing the proposed ballot questions. The Final Report's Executive Summary is excerpted below:

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

The Commission proposes to amend the City's campaign finance system in order to address persistent perceptions of corruption associated with large campaign contributions, boost incentives for campaigns to reach out to small donors, and create more opportunities for candidates to run diverse types of campaigns without the need to rely on large donors.

If adopted by the voters, these amendments would:

Significantly lower contribution limits for City elected offices. The maximum total amount a participating candidate (i.e., a candidate who chooses to participate in the City's public financing program) may accept from a contributor per election cycle would be reduced from \$5,100 to \$2,000, for candidates for Mayor, Public Advocate, or Comptroller; from \$3,950 to \$1,500, for candidates for Borough President; and from \$2,850 to \$1,000, for candidates for the City Council. The maximum total contribution to a non-participating candidate (that is, a candidate who does not participate in the City's public financing program) would be reduced from \$5,100 to \$3,500, for candidates for Mayor, Public Advocate, or Comptroller; from \$3,950 to \$2,500, for candidates for Borough President; and from \$2,850 to \$1,500, for candidates for the City Council.

Strengthen small dollar public matching for candidates who participate in the City's public financing program. Currently, participating candidates, who meet certain qualifying thresholds, are eligible to receive public matching funds at a rate of \$6 in public funds for every \$1 in matchable contributions, up to the first \$175 per contributor. The proposed Charter amendment would increase the match to \$8 in public funds for every \$1 in matchable private contributions, up to the first \$250 per contributor to candidates for Citywide office and up to the first \$175 per contributor to candidates for Borough President or City Council. The amendment would also ease a requirement that candidates for Mayor, Comptroller, or Public Advocate must meet to qualify for matching funds.

Increase the total amount of public matching funds available to such candidates. The proposed amendment would increase the cap on the total amount of public matching

funds that a participating candidate may receive, per election, from 55% to 75% of the expenditure limit for the office being sought.

Allow such candidates to access public matching funds earlier in the election year.

Under current law, ... the vast majority of public funds are not disbursed until ... early August of the election year, about five to six weeks before the primary. The proposed amendment would allow qualifying candidates to receive public matching funds [earlier] in the election year ... and would remove monetary limits on the pre-August distribution of funds. However, in order to receive any disbursement of public funds prior to August of the election year, qualifying candidates would have to attest to the need for the funds and demonstrate that they have a viable opponent, or that they are running against an identified opponent in an open election.

All of these amendments would apply to participating candidates who choose to have the amendments apply to their campaigns, beginning with the 2021 primary election. The amendments would then apply to all candidates beginning in 2022.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Commission proposes establishing the Civic Engagement Commission, a new Charter entity dedicated to enhancing civic participation and strengthening democracy in New York City. The Civic Engagement Commission would consist of 15 members: eight appointed by the Mayor, including at least one member from the largest political party and at least one member from the second largest political party; two appointed by the Speaker of the City Council; and one appointed by each Borough President. The Mayor would designate a Chair from among his or her appointees, who would also serve as the Executive Director and be charged with the organization and staffing of the office.

The Civic Engagement Commission would be authorized and directed to implement a Citywide participatory budgeting program established by the Mayor, no later than the City Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2020; establish a program for providing language interpreters at poll sites in New York City, to be implemented for the general election in 2020; support and partner with community-based organizations, institutions, and civic leaders in the public and private sectors in their civic engagement efforts; consider the language access needs of limited English proficient New Yorkers in developing and implementing its programs and services; and partner with City agencies to increase awareness of and access to City services, assist them in promoting civic engagement initiatives, and develop strategies to centralize public information about opportunities for civic engagement.

The Mayor would be authorized to transfer to the Commission, by executive order, any directly related powers and duties currently being performed by the Mayor's Office or any department whose head is appointed by the Mayor.

Finally, the Civic Engagement Commission would be required to annually report on participatory budgeting, poll site language assistance, and any other information it deems relevant.

COMMUNITY BOARDS

The Commission proposes the following amendments to the Charter, in order to help make community boards more reflective of the communities they represent and more effective in that representation:

Term limits. The Commission proposes term limits for community board members, who currently serve for two-year terms without limit, to create opportunities for new voices and leaders on all community boards. Members appointed or reappointed on or after April 1, 2019, would be limited to serving four consecutive two-year terms. However, members appointed or reappointed for a term commencing on April 1, 2020, could be reappointed for up to five consecutive two-year terms, in order to prevent a heavy turnover of community board membership in 2027 and 2028. Appointments made for terms commencing after April 1, 2020, would be subject to four consecutive two-year term limits. These term limits would be prospective only; terms served before April 1, 2019, or April 1, 2020, would not count toward the term limits that start on those dates. Members who have served for the maximum number of consecutive terms would not be barred from re-appointment after one full term out of office.

Appointment process. The Commission proposes several changes intended to bring more uniformity and transparency to the process of appointing members to community boards and to encourage diversity in appointments. The proposed amendments would require Borough Presidents to seek out persons of diverse backgrounds for appointment to community boards and make applications available on their websites. The proposal would also add new application and reporting requirements related to these appointments, including an annual report disclosing information about membership and the recruitment and selection process.

More resources. The Commission proposes requiring the Civic Engagement Commission, if the voters approve creating such an entity, to provide additional resources to community boards, including access to urban planning professionals and language access resources, in order to enable the boards to more effectively meet their Charter responsibilities.

About the Charter Commission's Public Engagement Efforts

The 2018 Charter Revision Commission worked hard to ensure all New Yorkers had opportunities to speak directly to the Commission. Through this outreach, more than 1,000 ideas to revise the City Charter were submitted to the Commission for consideration.

In August, the Commission held “Charter Week,” a series of public hearings and public engagement events across all five boroughs. “Charter Week” built on the Commission’s extensive public outreach campaign to ensure all of New York City’s communities have access to the Charter revision process. Throughout the process, New Yorkers have submitted hundreds of ideas for changes to the Charter. Issue forums provided the Commission with more in-depth information related to focus areas.

All events were open to the public and live streamed over the internet. Language translation services, American Sign Language interpreters, and L.O.O.P devices were provided. All events were held at accessible spaces. Public comments have also been submitted at tabling events and additional community forums focused on youth, immigrant New Yorkers, and veterans.

The public was alerted to the Commission’s hearings through advertising in community and ethnic papers and messages through organizations with large distribution lists. Notice was given to every Community Board— as well as City, State, and Federal elected officials. Media advisories were issued to a list of more than 3,000 people at least twice per public hearing. Public notices for each hearing were published in the City Record and on the Commission’s website, nyc.gov/Charter. Notices were translated into several languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese), French, Haitian Creole, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Urdu.

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