



*THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF DANIEL DROMM*

37-32 75TH STREET
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY 11372
(718) 803-6373

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Contact: Alex Florez (646) 831-9835 aflorez@council.nyc.gov

**Dromm Calls on Charter Commission to Expand
“Advice and Consent” Role of City Council**

Jackson Heights, NY, April 20th, 2010 -- City Council Member Daniel Dromm called upon the Charter Revision Commission to expand the advice and consent role of the New York City Council to include all high-level commissioners, including the Schools Chancellor, appointed by a Mayor to serve in an administration. Dromm spoke before a large crowd at the Queens public hearing of the Commission on Monday.

The Charter Revision Commission is charged with reviewing the entire Charter of the City of New York, holding hearings in all five boroughs to solicit public input, and issuing a report outlining findings and recommendations to amend or revise the Charter. The Charter acts as the 'constitution' of the City of New York establishing the various roles and obligations of City agencies and elected officials.

During his testimony Dromm stated, “A well-organized nomination process can be very revealing and useful as an accountability instrument. It can also help the legislative branch engage the executive branch on a range of interests from narrow constituent concerns to broad city-wide policy issues. Filling a position for a second or third time in the same administration provides opportunities during the confirmation process to seek changes in the administration's policies and practices.”

Below is Dromm's full testimony:

*Testimony of New York City Council Member Daniel Dromm
New York City Charter Revision Commission April 19th, 2010 LaGuardia College, Queens*

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER DANIEL DROMM: "Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak tonight. Although there are many areas that require extensive examination by the Charter Revision Commission, tonight, I am going to focus on a proposal which I believe will have a significant positive impact on City governance -- advice and consent of all major Mayoral appointments.

In order to strengthen our City's structure of government, we must enhance our system of checks and balances. With the rare exceptions of a few positions in a Mayor's administration, the City Council, as the legislative branch, has no ability to examine an individual's qualifications for executive positions within an administration. I urge this Commission to consider a proposal to have all Commissioner-level appointments, including the Chancellor, in a Mayoral administration be made with the advice and consent of the New York City Council. I firmly believe that having our legislative body integrated into the appointments process will apply a standard of competence and allow for more local input into the decision-making process.

A confirmation process will add a better balance to the power dynamic between the City Council and the Mayor. I would advocate for new rules requiring (1) a detailed questionnaire completed by the nominee, before the hearing, designed to shed light on the nominee's background, experience, relevant views on policy issues, and potential conflicts of interest; (2) a hearing with the nominee testifying under oath; and (3) a written committee report that recommends giving or refusing the "consent" of the City Council.

I would also recommend incorporating what is common practice on the federal level, that once the Mayor submits a nomination; the normal practice is for the nominee to visit personally, prior to a formal hearing, with each member of the committee that will be considering the nomination.

These visits and later formal hearings allow for the City Council to ask penetrating questions and probe the nominee's policy views and previous activities that could establish a firm basis for deciding on qualifications and specific future oversight by the committee.

The benefit of citizen confidence from this process is significant. The public needs their administrators to be vetted vigorously. The City Council can, through a nomination process, determine whether an individual can provide effective leadership in a highly complex and vital area of municipal government. The confirmation process can also serve to establish certain performance expectations.

A well-organized nomination process can be very revealing and useful as an accountability instrument. It can also help the legislative branch engage the executive branch on a range of interests from narrow constituent concerns to broad city-wide policy issues. Filling a position for a second or third time in the same administration provides opportunities during the confirmation process to seek changes in the administration's policies and practices.

The process of 'advice and consent' will provide, at a minimum, for a public illumination of the nominee's record and character. New York City needs a more complete system of checks and balances between branches of government. I urge you to consider a proposal to institute a process for City Council advice and consent on Mayoral appointments of Commissioners and other significant executive department heads.

Thank you for this opportunity and thank you for your public service."

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