



THE COUNCIL *of* THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Testimony of Council Member Crystal Hudson to the Charter Revision Commission

Queens Public Library Central Library
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Good afternoon.

My name is Crystal Hudson, and I am the Council Member for the 35th Councilmanic District, which includes the neighborhoods of Fort Greene, Clinton Hill, Prospect Heights, and Crown Heights.

I'd like to thank Chair Scissura and the entire Charter Revision Commission for the opportunity to testify today.

Last year, more than 4.5 million New Yorkers went to the polls to cast their vote and decide who should represent them in government, including their City Council member. Once elected, we were tasked with passing legislation to address major issues facing our communities, ensuring the city has a budget that prioritizes the needs of our most marginalized, and using the full powers of the Council to make our City a fair and just place for everyone. To date, we've done just that.

And every step of the way, we've been held accountable. We hold public hearings on legislation and the budget; host town halls; and field phone calls, emails, social media DMs & office visits from constituents (and that's all *without* an onerous & unnecessary form). Our constituents then go to the ballot box every few years to decide whether we get another chance at doing the job we love. That's true accountability and transparency.

Yet city agency commissioners — the individuals who run the complex bureaucracy that supports all 8.5 million New Yorkers — get to just walk in the door and stay as long as they're able. The only one who gets to decide on their credentials is one person: the mayor. If only one person picks who runs an agency, there can be no accountability. That's why advice and consent is so important.

Nearly every other jurisdiction does this already, including smaller cities like Los Angeles and Chicago. And even here, in New York City, we do this for about a dozen positions already. This proposal just expands it to another twenty. This isn't about one mayor, and this isn't the first time



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the Council has pushed to expand advice and consent. Simply, there's no reason the people who run our city agencies shouldn't be held accountable to the public they serve.

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

There's no need to rush. This Commission has the authorization to operate until Election Day 2025, when, notably, voters who are currently focused on a history-making presidential election, not the nuts and bolts of New York City government. Voters are already widely aware of advice and consent because my colleagues and I have spent months discussing it and fielding concerns. But any new proposal is one proposal too many. Next year, voters will be in a better position to decide on a number of new charter revision suggestions as they'll be focused on selecting who is best to run the city they call home. More time means more community input, better ideas, and more support.

Again, I urge you to allow the placement of the Council's advice-and-consent law on the November ballot and step back from interfering with the will of the people.

Thank you.