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NYC Council Member Carmen De La Rosa's Testimony to the Charter Revision Commission

July 12, 2024

Thank you Chair Scissura and members of the Charter Revision Commission for the opportunity to provide testimony.

The City Charter is a guiding document for our city's operation and future direction. To propose amendments is a great undertaking that demands attention and a high turnout of public engagement. This is our opportunity to create positive change that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of our administrations and builds public trust through transparency, above all in communities that have felt divestment and disengagement from government.

Public engagement is of the utmost importance, and we risk undermining the democratic process with rushed actions. Thus, we should take advantage of the opportunity to directly involve the public prior to and during voting for the expansion of advice-and-consent oversight and the overall revisions. The Commission should take as much time as granted until the next election year to fully revise, hold public town halls and hearings, and educate New Yorkers on the charter and ramifications of the changes proposed, but not deny the voters the opportunity to express their opinions at the ballot box regarding advice-and-consent.

For District 10, representing Washington Heights, Inwood, and Marble Hill, we understand how deeply we must communicate and engage with our constituents. There are linguistic, technological, and other accessibility barriers that can deter everyday New Yorkers from participation in the civic engagement process. It is completely necessary to provide them more than a surface or preliminary level of education and engagement, especially with a process as complex and significant as revising the City Charter.

We call on the members of the Charter Revision Commission to engage meaningfully with New Yorkers in the democratic process, not rush proposals, and allow the proposals to expand and strengthen advice-and-consent on the ballot for the 2024 General Election.