

DISTRICT OFFICE
37-04 QUEENS BOULEVARD, SUITE 205
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY 11101
(718) 383-9566

CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, ROOM 1749
NEW YORK, NY 10007
(212) 788-7370

jwon@council.nyc.gov



THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
JULIE WON

COUNCIL MEMBER, 26TH DISTRICT, QUEENS

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Testimony of Council Member Council Member Julie Won

New York City Charter Revision Commission

July 22, 2024

Queens Public Library Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Boulevard, Jamaica, NY 11432

Good evening, my name is Julie Won and I am the New York City Council Member for the 26th District, representing the neighborhoods of Sunnyside, Woodside, Astoria, and Long Island City.

The Charter Revision Commission should not stand in the way of the democratic right of New Yorkers to vote this year on the Council's advice and consent proposal and determine whether it should be the law of the land.

This past June, the City Council overwhelmingly voted to place a measure before voters that would require the advice and consent of the Council as part of the appointment process for 20 additional city agency commissioners. This would add new roles to the more than one dozen the Council currently has advice and consent power for, such as the Department of Investigations Commissioner and TLC Commissioner. This item is currently on the ballot for the November general election.

The Charter Revision Commission must choose: to undermine the will of the people and block their vote this fall or to uphold the tenets of representative democracy, oversight, and our system of checks-and-balances.

"Advice and Consent" is crucial for safeguarding democracy. Without it, the power of a government goes unchecked in the hands of one person or entity. City agency commissioners play a critical role in ensuring New Yorkers receive their city services as efficiently as possible. Advice and consent ensures commissioners are scrutinized in the public eye and approved based solely on their qualifications and dedication to serving the public. Following this bill's passage, Council Members, myself included, shared information about the proposal with their constituencies and informed them it would be on their ballot this fall.

Rushed revisions to the City Charter undermine this. Adding potential items on the ballot that have been raised during a handful of sparsely attended public meetings that lacked robust

outreach and without input from elected officials or community groups undermines the good governance foundation of a Charter Revision Commission's mission. Language inclusive, culturally competent outreach must be done in communities like the many I represent to hear their voices, collect their feedback, and later to educate them about potential ballot proposals.

Simply put, there's no need to rush. You have the authorization to operate until Election Day 2025, when voters will be laser focused on New York City government and decide on their pick of a number of city officials, including the mayor, comptroller, public advocate, and council members. More time means real community input, better ideas, and more education that New Yorkers deserve.

I urge you to honor the will of the people and to hold off adding any new items to the ballot until November 2025.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Julie Won', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Council Member Julie Won
26th District
New York City Council