

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

HOSTOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

500 GRAND CONCOURSE

BRONX, NEW YORK 10451

APRIL 12, 2010

6:01 P.M.

CHAIR: DR. MATTHEW GOLDTSTEIN

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

JOHN H. BANKS, VICE CHAIR

ANTHONY PEREZ CASSINO

BETTY Y. CHEN

DAVID CHEN

HOPE COHEN

ANTHONY W. CROWELL

STEPHEN FIALA

ANGELA MARIANA FREYRE, SECRETARY

ERNEST HART

REV. JOSEPH M. McSHANE, S.J.

KENNETH M. MOLTNER

CATHERINE PATTERSON

CARLO A. SCISSURA

BISHOP MITCHELL G. TAYLOR

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Good evening. Good
2 evening, everyone. I'm Matthew Goldstein, Chair
3 of the New York City Charter Revision Commission,
4 and I'm pleased to welcome you to Hostos
5 Community College, one of CUNY's six community
6 colleges in the city.

7 I'd first like to begin by asking my
8 colleagues here, Commissioners of the Charter
9 Revision Commission, to introduce themselves, and
10 we'll start with Ernie Hart all the way at the
11 end of the table, work our way around.

12 COMMISSIONER HART: Ernie Hart.

13 COMMISSIONER CASSINO: Hi, Tony Perez
14 Cassino, from the Bronx.

15 COMMISSIONER COHEN: Hope Cohen.

16 COMMISSIONER SCISSURA: Carlos Scissura from
17 Brooklyn.

18 COMMISSIONER FIALA: Good evening, Steve
19 Fiala from Staten Island.

20 COMMISSIONER MOLTNER: Good evening, Ken
21 Moltner, Manhattan.

22 COMMISSIONER FREYRE: Angela Mariana Freyre,
23 from Manhattan.

24 COMMISSIONER BANKS: John Banks from
25 Brooklyn.

1 COMMISSIONER CROWELL: Anthony Crowell from
2 Brooklyn.

3 COMMISSIONER PATTERSON: Catherine Patterson
4 from Manhattan.

5 COMMISSIONER CHEN: Betty Chen from
6 Manhattan.

7 COMMISSIONER CHEN: David Chen from Brooklyn.

8 COMMISSIONER BISHOP TAYLOR: Mitchell Taylor
9 from Long Island City, Queens.

10 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you. Before we
11 begin this evening -- can you hear me now? Can
12 you hear me now? I'll try to speak up.

13 Before we begin our proceedings I'd like to
14 turn the microphone over to Anthony Cassino to
15 say a few things about the great Borough of the
16 Bronx. Anthony.

17 COMMISSIONER CASSINO: Thank you, Mr.
18 Chairman, and I'd like to welcome you and the
19 members of the Commission to the mainland --
20 otherwise known as the Bronx -- home of the World
21 Champions, New York Yankees, the best city in the
22 world and the best parkland in New York City.

23 The Bronx has 7,000 acres of parkland,
24 including three of the premier parks in the City:
25 Wave Hill, Van Cortlandt Park, which I've served

1 as chair of the Conservancy and Pelham Bay Park.
2 And of course we have some of the great colleges
3 and universities, including this institution, as
4 well as my alma mater, Fordham University, and
5 I'm very proud that the president of Fordham
6 University, Father Joseph McShane, serves on this
7 Commission as well, and he will be here shortly.

8 I grew up not too far from this campus, and
9 I think if you walk anywhere in the Borough today
10 I think the thing that you'll notice is that the
11 Borough of the Bronx has gone through a
12 tremendous revitalization. It's no more a
13 borough of abandoned buildings and urban blight.
14 This is really a place where families want to
15 stay, raise their families, and where businesses
16 want to invest. So it's a complete change from
17 when I was growing up in this area, and I think
18 that some of that brings some difficulties with
19 it. You know, all of that change and investment
20 has created many tensions, and you have things
21 like overcrowding in schools and battles over
22 rezoning and overdevelopment and lack of parking
23 in areas and the need for more city services.
24 And I think that our job here is to make sure
25 that our local government is going to be more

1 responsive and effective and representative
2 people.

3 When I served as chair of Community Board 8,
4 which encompasses Riverdale and Kingsbridge, we
5 worked to rezone that entire community to protect
6 it from overdevelopment, and we had a tremendous
7 experience working with the City. We really had
8 a model relationship in working with the
9 community and the City to get that done. And I
10 dare say that it's not always the case, and we
11 all know that that's not always the case, and I
12 think that many Bronxites feel left out
13 oftentimes in the decision-making process. And
14 we feel sometimes like our Borough is not always
15 heard. And I think we share a kinship probably
16 close with Staten Island in that sense.

17 So the work that we'll do here I think is
18 extremely important to bridge that gap and to
19 address the overall process that we have in
20 government. And I thank the Mayor for appointing
21 this Commission so we can look at those issues.

22 As you know, Bronxites are known to express
23 their opinions, and I think we're going to hear
24 some very important information here this
25 evening, and I look forward to that and some good

1 suggestions.

2 And I want to thank the members of the
3 audience who came here in a very large turnout.
4 I want to thank you for expressing your concern,
5 and I want to especially acknowledge our Borough
6 President Ruben Diaz Jr., who really has a
7 tremendous spirit in the Bronx and pride in the
8 Borough, and I think that he really represents
9 the future for our Borough.

10 Thank you. So thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
11 look forward to a lively discussion, as we all
12 do, and we look forward to the future of our
13 city.

14 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Commissioner
15 Cassino. This is the second of five public
16 hearings we will hold this month, one in each
17 Borough, with many more opportunities for public
18 engagement over the months to come. As I have
19 said before, this Commission is deeply committed
20 to an open and welcoming process of public
21 involvement.

22 A critical part of the Commission's work is
23 to ensure that the public is afforded extensive
24 opportunities to participate.

25 To that end, a comprehensive outreach effort

1 has been developed in order to gather input from
2 New Yorkers throughout the five boroughs. We
3 invite all New Yorkers to participate in this
4 very important review process.

5 The first public hearing was held in
6 Manhattan on Tuesday, April 6. After today's
7 hearings three additional public hearings will be
8 held in April. Tomorrow we will be in Staten
9 Island at McKee High School. That will start at
10 6:00 P.M. Following that on Monday, April 19, at
11 La Guardia Community College in Queens, that will
12 also begin at 6:00 P.M., and Tuesday, April 20,
13 at St. Francis College in Brooklyn at 4:00 P.M.

14 Members of the public are invited to attend
15 and share their views at the hearings. And I want
16 to again say that we don't have a particular
17 cutoff point for someone to participate. As you
18 come in, if you want to be heard, just sign in
19 and we will acknowledge you.

20 The public hearings in April will be
21 followed by a series of issues forums which will
22 be held throughout the City during the month of
23 May. These will be followed by additional public
24 hearings and other meetings throughout the
25 summer.

1 Information about the Commission and its
2 members can be found on its Web site,
3 nyc.gov/charter. Hearings schedules, transcripts
4 and videos are available on the site along with
5 downloadable copy of the current City Charter and
6 directions to hearing sites.

7 Translations are offered in Mandarin,
8 Korean, Spanish and Russian. Members of the
9 public may also send written communications to
10 the Commission via the Web site.

11 And tonight I'm pleased to inform you that
12 for the first time in the history of all Charter
13 Revision Commissions, we are making this meeting
14 and public hearing available to the public
15 through web casting at nyc.gov/charter. A link
16 has also been posted on the nyc.gov home page,
17 and I want to thank CUNY TV and the City's
18 Department of Information Technology and
19 Communications working with the Commission's
20 staff for making this possible.

21 All future notifications of hearings and
22 meetings will include a note about web casting.
23 Notice of hearings and forums can also be
24 accessed through the City Record. Commission
25 staff will continue to send notices of hearings

1 to major media, community, and ethnic news
2 outlets in appropriate languages, Community
3 Boards and community groups, civic groups,
4 elected officials, citizens and many others
5 across the City.

6 I'd also like to acknowledge that our staff
7 is here with us this evening. Lorna Goodman, the
8 Executive Director. Lorna, thank you for being
9 here. The Deputy Executive Director, Ruth
10 Markovitz. Joseph Viteritti, the research
11 coordinator; Rick Schaffer, our General Counsel;
12 Lisa Grumet, the Senior Counsel, Jeff
13 Friedlander, special advisor, Matt Gorton, who is
14 our Communications Director on day-to-day events
15 of the work of the Charter, and Jay Hershenson
16 who will be very closely working along with Matt
17 Gorton on other issues of communication. Our
18 Director of Administration, Lisa Jones, is with
19 us as well. And thank you all for participating
20 to ensure that the work of this Commission moves
21 effortlessly.

22 The Commission's work is also available, as
23 I mentioned last time, on Facebook at "NYC
24 Charter Revision Commission" and at Twitter at
25 CityCharterNYC." Links to the live web casts will

1 also be available here.

2 The Commission will continue to ensure that
3 its outreach is as broad and as deep as we
4 possibly can make it. We very much appreciate the
5 interest and involvement of all New Yorkers whose
6 input will be fully considered by members of the
7 Commission.

8 Before we get started with the hearing from
9 the public, I'd like to give an opportunity to
10 ask any of our Commission Members who wish to
11 make a comment or to ask a question?

12 Anybody want to make a comment or a question
13 before we hear from the public?

14 Hearing none, let's begin. Let me just
15 outline some operating guidelines for
16 participation.

17 I'd like to again remind you that anyone
18 coming in now or later in the process is welcome
19 to sign in. I will ask the members of the public
20 who have signed up to speak first. Please be
21 reminded that each of you will have three minutes
22 to speak. We will remind you when there are 30
23 seconds remaining.

24 Before we begin with the public I'd like to
25 ask our very distinguished Borough President,

1 Ruben Diaz Jr. He would like to come to the
2 podium and make some opening remarks. Mr. Borough
3 President.

4 BROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman. I just want to say that it is
6 fitting that you and this Commission are here
7 today at the beautiful Hostos campus. We have
8 our President, Felix Matos Rodriguez. Let's give
9 him a strong round of applause, ladies and
10 gentlemen.

11 I know you're the Chancellor of CUNY. I'm a
12 CUNY twofer, so it's only fitting that we're here
13 this evening.

14 Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of
15 the Charter Revision Commission, I want to
16 welcome you all to what I call God's country, the
17 Bronx. And I extend my wholehearted support to
18 you in the execution of this most serious of
19 missions, that is, the amendment of our City
20 Charter in order to better serve all of our
21 citizens.

22 In executing this mission it is imperative
23 that this Commission not serve as a vehicle to
24 implement a preconceived political agenda in a
25 hurry rush but that it truly seek out and listen

1 to the people of our great city in formulating
2 what is best for all of us.

3 As Borough President, I spend most of my
4 days listening to and working with my
5 constituents to help them solve real and serious
6 problems to better understand what our citizens
7 want and need. It is my hope that this
8 Commission will take its time in listening to the
9 people of the City of New York.

10 To that end, I am calling on the Commission
11 to ensure that all voices are heard in this
12 process and only then to schedule a vote on the
13 matters before this Commission. There should be
14 many more hearings, not just in the Bronx, but in
15 all five boroughs, or a longer period of time to
16 discuss the issues that face our City. Only then
17 will it be appropriate to schedule a vote on
18 these important matters.

19 I hope that this Commission will listen,
20 will also listen to the express will of the
21 people and not look to bring old, unpopular
22 proposals to the floor. There have been many
23 reports that this Commission will attempt to
24 bring a question on non-partisan elections to the
25 voters of this city.

1 In 2003, a similar question was defeated by
2 a wide margin with seven out of ten voters
3 rejecting the idea. This matter, in my opinion,
4 has been settled. And I hope the Commission will
5 use its time to discuss other more important
6 matters.

7 As for myself, the concerns and proposals I
8 will present to the Commission are significant in
9 stature and deserve measured consideration and
10 debate. The main point I want to convey today is
11 that Borough Presidents play an extremely
12 important role in the civic life of each of our
13 boroughs by providing an invaluable human
14 interface between our constituents and our
15 behemoth city service agencies. To serve the
16 public better I sincerely believe that the role
17 of the Borough President should not only be
18 protected but our offices should also be
19 enhanced.

20 First, in order -- that's three minutes
21 already?

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Go ahead.

23 BOROUGH PRESENT DIAZ: First, in order for
24 the Borough Presidents to properly do our jobs
25 the budgets of our office should be protected for

1 the year after year budget cuts that have
2 severely hampered our ability to serve the
3 people. For example, from fiscal years 1989
4 through 2009 the budget for our offices has
5 fallen from -- to my office has fallen from \$6.1
6 million to \$5.5 million, which amounts to a cut
7 of approximately 55 percent in real dollars when
8 adjusting for inflation as a result in staff
9 reduction and more than 50 percent since 1989.

10 No city offices other than the Borough
11 Presidents, the Public Advocate and Community
12 Planning Boards has suffered such a devastating,
13 long-term decline in resources. There is no
14 doubt in my mind that these offices which are so
15 important to providing services on the community
16 level are being slowly suffocated by design.
17 Ending this slow suffocation of our offices
18 should be a top priority of this Commission.

19 Accordingly, the Commission should prepare a
20 proposal to provide for a baseline budget
21 allocation similar in manner to the budget
22 allocation for the Independent Budget Office for
23 each of the Borough Presidents, the Public
24 Advocate and the Community Boards.

25 Second, I am calling for the office of the

1 Borough President to have a binding
2 recommendation for the Uniform Land Use Review
3 Procedure, or what's better known as the ULURP
4 process. As it stands today, a Borough
5 President's ULURP recommendations are merely
6 that, just recommendations, and can be set aside
7 by the City Council, the Mayor's office, when
8 it's time to make a decision on a particular
9 development. But few are more familiar with the
10 development needs of our neighborhoods and the
11 community concerns that proposed developments
12 bring to light than that of the Borough
13 Presidents.

14 For example, a negative recommendation by a
15 Borough President could, for instance, require a
16 super majority of nine members of the City
17 Planning Commission to override that "No"
18 recommendation. A more binding decision in the
19 ULURP process, such as this, is a much-needed
20 negotiating tool due to direct negotiations
21 between the Borough Presidents' offices and
22 developers and will help to greatly improve the
23 scope of development across the five boroughs.

24 The City's zoning and ULURP process should
25 also be changed to take into consideration not

1 only environmental and traffic impacts from new
2 capital projects, but also impacts on the
3 community as a whole. When 10,000 units of
4 housing are proposed to being built the effect on
5 the schools and the health services of the
6 community need to be accommodated. Furthermore,
7 to ensure objective impact analysis, the
8 consultants conducting the impact studies should
9 not be selected and directed by the developer but
10 rather chosen by the City from a pool of
11 consultants that have little or no private issue
12 with the developer.

13 Third, I am calling on the Borough
14 President's office to have a greater voice in the
15 decision on the Board of Standards and Appeals.
16 As it is currently contrived, the power of the
17 BSA rests entirely within the Mayor's office and
18 does not allow for any appeals process to address
19 the grievances of any interested party once the
20 BSA decision has been made.

21 Much like my aforementioned suggestion for
22 the ULURP process, adding a binding BSA decision
23 to the powers of our office would foster greater
24 negotiating between businesses and developers and
25 the communities their projects directly affect.

1 Borough Presidents should have an
2 appointment of their own on the BSA, and the BSA
3 should be required to accept comments from our
4 offices such as it is required to do so from the
5 Community Boards.

6 The Borough Service Cabinet is an important
7 forum to assure that city services are adequately
8 and fairly distributed throughout the boroughs.

9 Since the last Charter Revision, additional
10 agencies have been created. Some have been
11 merged and other agency responsibilities have
12 been expanded. These new agencies must be
13 required to attend Borough Service Cabinet
14 meetings.

15 In order for the Borough President to
16 fulfill his or her responsibilities, monitor the
17 quality of city services borough wide, it is
18 important that the Borough President have
19 authority to require the attendance of agency
20 commissioners of departments and agencies of the
21 City of New York at meetings for the Borough
22 Board, Borough Service Cabinet, and any public
23 hearings called by the Borough Presidents and
24 give testimony on issues raised at such meetings
25 and provide all requested information.

1 I'm almost done, Mr. Chairman. We also know
2 that there's a needed increase for transparency
3 of City government, or in City government, and to
4 eradicate even the perception of bias and
5 impropriety within our halls.

6 To that end, today I'm proposing that the
7 Conflict of Interest Board, which is currently
8 controlled by the sitting Mayor, be made
9 completely independent.

10 Under my proposal, no elected official would
11 be responsible for the selection of the members
12 of the Conflict of Interest Board or the members
13 there. Instead, the panel would be selected by
14 the criminal and civil administrative judges
15 representing the four judicial districts that
16 cover the five boroughs. Not only would this
17 method lead to a fair, balanced and impartial
18 panel, it would remove any appearance of bias
19 from the important work of the Conflict of
20 Interest Board.

21 Thank you for this opportunity. And I look
22 forward to many more hearings and many more
23 opportunities.

24 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: If you would give your
25 speech.

1 I would like to -- yes, sure.

2 COMMISSIONER FIALA: I have a few questions?

3 BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ: Sure.

4 COMMISSIONER FIALA: Thank you, first of all,
5 for your attendance and it's great to be in the
6 Bronx.

7 BOROUGH PRESENT DIAZ: Thank you for coming.

8 COMMISSIONER FIALA: I thought you made a
9 very thoughtful presentation and gave us a
10 laundry list of things to look at.

11 I want to speak directly about your
12 recommendation of enhancing Borough Presidential
13 powers in ULURP.

14 I heard you say, and correct me if I'm
15 wrong, you're looking at making the BP's
16 recommendations binding, and the mechanism that
17 you offer would be to return the decision to the
18 City Planning Commission, requiring a super
19 majority vote?

20 BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ: I've given you an
21 example, so it's up for debate. But yes, that's
22 one of the examples of the way we can look into
23 this.

24 COMMISSIONER FIALA: I think that's
25 thoughtful, but here's the question I have.

1 Look, a charter is a local constitution. In 1989
2 the people of New York City voted for the
3 existing Charter. I, in full disclosure, voted
4 against it as a Staten Islander. Since then I've
5 come to find the Charter to be a well-crafted
6 document that by and large serves this City well.

7 Power in city government is finite. We are
8 a municipal corporation. We're given our life by
9 the State. So if you put all that power in a box,
10 in order to grant additional authorities to
11 Borough Presidents and their offices -- I
12 concede, were eviscerated in the 1989 Charter --
13 but in order to enhance the powers now you've got
14 to take it from some of the other players. So --
15 and I don't want to put anyone on the spot
16 tonight. I would ask that you give some
17 consideration to this question and forward your
18 opinions to our staff. What role then does the
19 City Council play if we were to envision
20 enhancing Borough Presidential powers
21 specifically under binding recommendations of
22 ULURP? Because I suspect that the City Council
23 would come in, having been a former member, and
24 say, "We don't want to cede any ground." Because
25 again, power is finite. To give to one we have

1 to take away or subtract from another one.

2 You may have come up with a balancing act,
3 and I would like your office to provide us with
4 some further details, because that's a thoughtful
5 analysis of the situation, and it's worthy of
6 some intense discussion.

7 BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ: Well, thank you for
8 that, that inquiry, Commissioner. Well, this is
9 my thought here. When you look at the ULURP
10 process and you look at Borough Presidents, we're
11 the only elected officials, the five of us are
12 the only elected officials that represent a voice
13 for the entire borough. And when you look at the
14 ULURP process and the fact that my recommendation
15 is just binding, and as we work with the
16 Community Boards -- and by the way, let me be
17 clear now, I don't want to undermine anybody's
18 authority here, but what I would like is for my
19 recommendation to be taken seriously.

20 If you look at the City Council, if you look
21 at the process now, the Planning Commission, none
22 of them are elected. The City Council members, on
23 any particular project, of all the City Council
24 members in the City of New York only one City
25 Council person can possibly represent the area

1 where whatever project is up for discussion is.

2 The Borough President also represents that
3 area. So you could have the potentiality of the
4 Borough President, who is out there representing
5 the community where this development could be at,
6 you could have the potentiality of many City
7 Council members outside of even the borough where
8 the project is at make the decision of the
9 development going there or not without, you know,
10 and going totally against the actual Borough
11 President's recommendation.

12 So I believe that while many folks want to
13 say that the Borough Presidencies have been
14 reduced because of the '89 Charter, I don't
15 subscribe to that. And yet people will want to
16 take the shots at us, and they want to say that
17 we're just symbolic.

18 My office listens to people every single
19 day. We, with the Community Boards, are out there
20 day in and day out, and we're listening to the
21 actual neighborhood and the actual community. So
22 when a project is before me during the ULURP
23 process, I hope and I wish that you guys
24 seriously take into consideration that Borough
25 Presidents need to have a binding say so there.

1 And even then I'm saying that a super
2 majority should go back to a group of
3 individuals, a body of individuals, where not one
4 single one of them have been elected by the
5 people who will be affected by said project.

6 So I hope that as we move forward we could
7 explore perhaps this avenue of super majority, of
8 veto power, on the Planning Commission and see
9 how it could not only enhance the Borough
10 Presidencies in the area of the ULURP process but
11 also in other areas like I mentioned, for
12 instance, our budgets.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Borough
14 President. We're going to have ample opportunity
15 when we return to this great borough to get
16 involved in a discussion like this.

17 I want to acknowledge -- do you have another
18 question? I'd like to get to the rest of our
19 people who want to testify tonight.

20 I thank you very much for your informed
21 testimony, and we look forward to further
22 engagements with you at other times when we're
23 back here.

24 BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ: Thank you,
25 Mr. Chairman, and I just want to again welcome

1 all of the Commissioners to the lovely Borough of
2 the Bronx.

3 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you. I'd like to
4 call our --

5 BOROUGH PRESIDENT DIAZ: Don't, Commissioner,
6 don't forget to go to a restaurant or something
7 afterward and spend some of your money here.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: We may do that, thank
9 you.

10 Robert Press.

11 MR. PRESS: Thank you, Commissioner. The
12 City Law Department has said what this Charter
13 Revision Commission can and cannot do at your
14 first meeting on March 19. However, true to form,
15 the 15 of you were appointed by Mayor Bloomberg
16 and most likely will do whatever Mayor Bloomberg
17 proposes with one or two exceptions. Be careful
18 though as it is the public and each of us
19 represents thousands of people who will be voting
20 on whatever you come up with.

21 We know that the Mayor wants to do away with
22 the Public Advocate position, and I personally
23 would agree with that, but it was the leader of
24 the City Council elected by the people of the
25 City of the New York, as was the case before, to

1 change to the Public Advocate position. As
2 Borough President Diaz has said, the Borough
3 President's position needs to be amplified and
4 not cut back.

5 Community Boards, which there is word that
6 this Commission may try to eliminate or cut back
7 their powers, are the life-line of involved
8 neighborhoods. Community Boards again need to be
9 enhanced as several of local community boards.

10 As for the issue on term limits, we have one
11 Bronx City Council member say that he voted for
12 the term limit extension because he needs to have
13 10 years in office to get his pension. I think
14 that that's a good idea. There should be 10
15 years of a limit on a City Council member's
16 office, but it should be five two-year terms, not
17 four, four, and four, which is twelve. Two, two
18 two, two and two equals 10 and that's not the new
19 math.

20 Just about anything else that you propose
21 would be a negative to this Commission. As you
22 have seen in the past few Commissions have come
23 up with ideas that have been voted down, so I
24 hope that you don't come up with any ideas that
25 the public will vote down. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Our next presenter is
2 Joseph Garden.

3 RABBI GARBER: Garber.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: I'm sorry, did I
5 pronounce your name incorrectly?

6 RABBI GARBER: Garber, G-A-R-B-E-R.

7 Good evening, Chairman Goldstein,
8 distinguished members of the Commission. I'm
9 especially happy to be at a CUNY institution
10 since I attended CUNY at John Jay College many
11 moons ago for two degrees. And I want to give a
12 special greeting to my friend, Counselor Tony
13 Crowell of the Mayor's office, and greet Lorna
14 Goodman who is returning to government. I know
15 her for her stellar record at the Corporation
16 Counsel's office.

17 I was shocked beyond belief on Tuesday,
18 April 6, when I came home from Shul after
19 finishing Pesach, and put on NY1 to see a Charter
20 Revision hearing, which I had no knowledge about,
21 number one. And number two, even if I wanted to
22 go from Williamsburg, I had no idea when it would
23 end. I think it's a disgrace and a shanda with a
24 Jewish Chancellor and a Jewish Mayor and some
25 Jewish members, in general. CUNY's always been

1 respectful of all religious rights and liberties
2 that we had this. Therefore, I would humbly
3 suggest, Mr. Chancellor, that you ask the Mayor
4 to increase one further hearing with all of the
5 hearings you have in mind. Okay.

6 Let me get into the nuts and bolts of this
7 since this is a Charter Revision hearing and I'm
8 a public administration person. I'd like to get
9 in since 1961 the Mayor gave a mandate to review
10 the entire City Charter in how to recommend, how
11 to improve it. At the outset, let me suggest an
12 intellectual study which could be formed by
13 agency staff of graduate students at a CUNY or
14 non-CUNY school such as John Jay College, Hunter
15 College, the Wagner School of NYU, the Law of
16 Government and Public Law of Columbia. I suggest
17 a comparison be done analyzing the agency
18 functions enumerated in the City Charter, plus
19 the agency description in a Mayor's management
20 book or a pre-Mayor's management report, and also
21 looking at the functional analysis in the green
22 book. I've done somewhat a little of it in a
23 volunteer capacity. I think you'll find very
24 interesting as the Talmud said, "sirees." You'll
25 find many functions and a number of positions, et

1 cetera, et cetera.

2 Being that I'm very interested in research
3 methodology, I'd like to start off, start off
4 talking about chapter 72, page 348 of the
5 Charter, the Department Of Records And
6 Information Services, which the City Hall
7 Library, which is close and dear to my heart. I
8 started going to the City Hall Library when it
9 was known as the Municipal Reference and Research
10 Center on the 23rd floor of the Municipal
11 Building. And it's a shame at this moment that
12 there are only two employees working there.

13 Okay. On page 352 the term Municipal
14 Reference and Research Center should be changed
15 to City Hall Library as to page 285 of the green
16 book. In addition, the library currently is only
17 open two days a week. I will continue, God
18 willing, at the other sessions, thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Garber.

20 Now, Mr. Alonzo deCastro.

21 MR. DeCASTRO: Good evening, Commissioners.
22 My name is Alonzo deCastro, and I've been a
23 resident of the Bronx for over 50 years. My wife,
24 Lucia, and I have raised three daughter's, who
25 are all college graduates. But I'm here tonight

1 to address three items the City Charter that I
2 feel are critical to the needs of our community,
3 our borough and our city.

4 I am a co-founder and President of the East of
5 Laconia Community Association, an organization
6 that is celebrating its 35th anniversary this
7 year.

8 Over the past 35 years we as an organization
9 have fought to improve the quality of life in our
10 community. In almost every instance we have had
11 the support of the Community Board, its dedicated
12 Manager and our elected officials.

13 The Community Board is a place where an
14 ordinary citizen can go to request assistance on
15 any condition or situation dealing with city
16 agencies. The members of the Community Board, our
17 neighbors, who volunteer their time to serve on
18 these Boards and they have the best interests of
19 the community at hand.

20 Calling 311 and speaking to an unknown
21 person who listens and then either connects you
22 to someone else or gives you a number that you
23 can't call, cannot replace the Community Board.
24 There's a huge difference appearing at a public
25 meeting of the Board as opposed to calling 311.

1 For example, if residents petition the Board to
2 have streets repaired there's a process that
3 addresses the needs of the community to people
4 that we know and who understand the needs of the
5 community. There have been many instances that if
6 it was not for the Community Board our community
7 would have been destroyed.

8 I know I'm running out of time, so I'm going
9 to go on to the Borough President's Office. I
10 think the Borough President's Office performs a
11 great service to the residents of each borough,
12 and it's important that these offices remain
13 intact. The borough boards again are the places
14 where the residents know where their fight to
15 improve city services will be handled.

16 Term limits. It is my firm belief that term
17 limits should not exceed two terms of any elected
18 office in the City of New York. The Charter
19 should reflect that neither the Mayor or the City
20 Council should change what the people have voted
21 for. The voters of this city have the right to
22 determine how long the elected officials should
23 serve and this should not be left to the whim of
24 whoever is the Mayor. If it means that the state
25 legislature needs to change the City Charter so

1 be it, but the Charter should reflect the needs
2 and concerns of the community.

3 Thank you very much.

4 CHANCELOR GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr.
5 DeCastro.

6 The next speaker is John Rozankowski. Did I
7 pronounce your name correctly?

8 MR. ROZANKOWSKI: Yes, you did.
9 Congratulations.

10 Good evening, Commissioners, I'm John
11 Rozankowski, community resident. There are three
12 reforms which you can recommend to empower the
13 people in the city in the knowledge that they can
14 make a difference. The first is term limits. The
15 people tried to change things by voting for term
16 limits twice. Unfortunately, three years ago they
17 saw that mandate overturned by a simple majority
18 of the City Council, an action which
19 simultaneously destroyed the validity and
20 sanctity of the vote.

21 Vindicate the will of the people. Restore
22 the sanctity of the vote by including term limits
23 in the City Charter.

24 The second thing New York City desperately
25 needs is the legislative initiative. So many

1 cities and states have one. When the same
2 problems arise year after year with no solution
3 in sight, when our elected officials are clearly
4 reluctant to address difficult issues given to
5 the people, and solve the problem they will.

6 Number three, guarantee the independence of
7 Community Boards. In Ruben Diaz we have a Borough
8 President who respects Community Boards and the
9 people of the Bronx. This may not be the case in
10 the future and was certainly not the case in the
11 past. Some four years ago, when Bronx Community
12 Board 4 voted against the Yankee Stadium project
13 then Borough President Carrion removed every
14 single board member who voted against his pet
15 project. Even worse, when the press confronted
16 him he brazenly declared, "Board members must
17 carry out my vision." And worse of all, he got
18 away with it. An action that undermined the
19 viability of all Bronx Community Boards.

20 In Manhattan, Borough President Stringer
21 appointed an independent panel to reappoint board
22 members on the basis of board performance and
23 contributions to the community. This idea should
24 be incorporated for all New York City Community
25 Boards.

1 Thus, terms limits, the legislative
2 initiative and guaranteeing the independence of
3 Community Boards will go a long way to revive
4 civic activism, release the creativity and energy
5 of the people and make New York City better in
6 the future. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

8 Council Member Oliver Koppell

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Good evening,
10 Chairman and members of the Charter Revision
11 Commission. Welcome to the Bronx. It's good to
12 see you, and I'm pleased to testify this evening.
13 I hate to start with sort of a criticism. I want
14 to echo the feeling that there was really not
15 adequate notice. But I look forward to more
16 hearings so people can have more notice and come
17 before you with their ideas and their
18 suggestions. I also would suggest that I'm
19 surprised that we're having this meeting in this
20 relatively small room with a large number of
21 standees when right downstairs in Hostos College
22 they have a big auditorium. And I hope the next
23 time you come to the Bronx you'll take advantage
24 of better facilities. Not to say that Hostos is
25 a bad place, but this is not the best room.

1 Now, as some of you know, I'm a member of
2 the New York City Council representing the
3 Northwest Bronx. Incidentally, I have
4 distributed my remarks which are longer than what
5 I will read because I want to, you know, not take
6 too much time, so I've elaborated more on my
7 remarks that I've distributed than I will orally.

8 I served in the Council for eight years.
9 Previously I served for one year as Attorney
10 General of the State of New York. And prior to
11 that I served for 23 years in the state
12 legislature. I do recognize that one of the main
13 reasons for the creation of this Charter Revision
14 Commission was to reconsider the issue of term
15 limits.

16 As you may know, I've been a vocal opponent
17 of term limits for many years. I vocally and
18 publicly opposed the referendum which established
19 term limits. I was in the assembly at the time.
20 I vigorously supported the referendum which would
21 have expanded term limits had it passed. I also
22 voted in favor of the extension of term limits in
23 2008 and obviously ran myself for a third
24 four-year term -- it's actually a fourth term
25 because we had those peculiar two-year terms in

1 the middle, but I ran for another four years
2 after serving a full eight years in 2009 and was
3 overwhelmingly elected. My constituents
4 reelected me fully aware of my opposition to term
5 limits when I ran for the Council first, or the
6 three times, and certainly in 2009. If they
7 weren't aware of it before, your good colleague
8 on the Council, Mr. Cassino, made them well aware
9 of it when he was my opponent in 2009, and not
10 withstanding his vigorous campaign to deny me a
11 third term. If you will. I was pretty
12 overwhelmingly reelected.

13 I can say with considerable confidence,
14 therefore, that though there may be those who say
15 in the abstract they believe in term limits my
16 constituency has demonstrated pretty clearly that
17 they do not support term limits. And that's not
18 only the 11th Council District. The fact is that
19 of the incumbents who serve for eight years who
20 ran for re-election, 19 were reelected and only
21 four were not reelected, and the four who were
22 not reelected perhaps the term limits issue
23 played a role in their defeat. But if you look at
24 those elections you'll see there were other
25 factors as well. So in my view, a large number

1 of the citizens of this city indicate that they
2 do not favor -- at least do not favor -- two term
3 limits of four years each. And I have also done a
4 considerable work when I was considering my vote
5 on extension of term limits into the history of
6 term limits, and I'm going to tonight review the
7 literature and studies that have been prepared.
8 I hope in fact you will do so in connection with
9 your deliberations. It is clear, however, that
10 where term limits -- I'm just going to go a
11 little bit longer. It is clear however that where
12 term limits have been enacted substantial
13 disadvantages have emerged. Experience has been
14 sacrificed.

15 The role of the term-limited legislators has
16 been diminished. Term-limited legislators have
17 focused on the next opportunity rather than in
18 trying to do the most effective job possible in
19 their office, and responsiveness has been reduced
20 because so many legislators are serving in a lame
21 duck capacity. And I can tell you, and I can
22 tell you honestly that now that I look at my last
23 term. It's a somewhat different look than it
24 would have had I expected to be reelected. And
25 that doesn't mean people aren't responsive but it

1 changes responsiveness when you know you can't be
2 elected to the office.

3 In addition, one of the expectations with
4 respect to term limits is that there would be a
5 cadre of sort of citizen legislators created.
6 People who leave their job as doctors or farmers
7 or lawyers or businessmen and serve for a couple
8 of terms and go back. The history in other places
9 like California and other states where they have
10 term limits is not that. What happens rather is
11 people faced with term limits -- that is elected
12 legislators -- are thinking about running for
13 another office. That's certainly what happened
14 in the City Council here in New York. It wasn't
15 that people left politics and went back to there
16 old jobs. It's that people were looking forward
17 to some other political or governmental jobs. So
18 the fact is that what term limits was supposed to
19 accomplish has not been accomplished.

20 And I also would suggest the fact that
21 people serve in an office for a long or short
22 time does not have an impact on corruption.
23 Unfortunately, we've seen instances of corruption
24 by long-term legislators and short-term
25 legislators. We should not have any corruption

1 at all, but term limits doesn't solve that
2 problem.

3 So I strongly -- and the other thing I'd
4 mention is think about the people who you respect
5 as having really contributed to the legislative
6 process and to government. If you think about
7 people of recent vintage, the person whose name
8 comes to mind first perhaps is Ted Kennedy who
9 served for almost 50 years and is regarded by
10 many people as the outstanding United States
11 Senator of our generation. Or of several
12 generations. Similarly, in the Council people
13 like Peter Vallone and Stanley Michaels and my
14 predecessor, June Eiland. They made their mark
15 because they served for a lengthy time. They
16 would not have accomplished the same amount if
17 they had been limited to a two- or even a
18 three-year term. I think it's highly unlikely
19 that you're going to vote to eliminate term
20 limits altogether. I would vote that way if I was
21 in your seats. I don't think that's going to
22 happen. But I urge you in the most strenuous
23 terms don't go back to two four-year terms.
24 Eight years is not enough. Twelve years is
25 certain merited. It creates a better

1 legislature. It creates people who have more
2 experience. It does not enhance the power of the
3 staff. It creates a memory in the legislature of
4 things that have happened. Don't go back to
5 two-year terms. And I say the same for the
6 executive. I say exactly the same. The people
7 wanted Mayor Wagner for a third term, they voted
8 for him, they should have had that right. They
9 wanted Ed Koch for a third term. They voted for
10 him. When they didn't want Ed Koch any further
11 they voted him out. And similarly the people
12 last year kept Mayor Bloomberg in office and I
13 think that was entirely appropriate.

14 CHANCELOR GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much,
15 Mr. Koppell.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I just would like to
17 say one more thing on another --

18 CHANCELOR GOLDSTEIN: Please try to finish
19 up. We've a lot of people.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I'm going to
21 finish.

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Four term limits.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I am just going to
24 state in my prepared remarks I recommend the
25 creation of an independent Police Investigation

1 and Audit Board. It's something we tried to do
2 legislatively but failed. I think it be would an
3 important step forward. The recent New York Times
4 article, which pointed out how the IAB has not
5 met ITS mandate, appropriately indicates why we
6 need a permanent Independent Police Investigation
7 and Audit Board.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much,
9 Mr. Koppell.

10 Our next speaker is Cedric Loftin.

11 MR. LOFTIN: Good evening Commissioners, and
12 welcome to Bronx County. My name is Cedric
13 Loftin, and I'm the District Manager of Bronx
14 Community Board 1. I appear on behalf of the 12
15 Community Boards representing Bronx County. As
16 the Commission goes about its work, it's
17 important to remember the valuable role that
18 Community Boards play in the lives of this city.
19 The Boards serve over 1.4 million people
20 residing in the 64 neighborhoods of the Bronx.
21 According to the New York City Charter, Chapters
22 68 and 70, Community Boards have an important
23 advisory role in dealing with land use and zoning
24 matters. The city budget, municipal service
25 delivery, and many other matters related to the

1 communities' welfare. We are the advocates for
2 the community interacting with city service
3 agencies and providers, elected officials, the
4 general public, for the benefit of the
5 neighborhoods that we serve.

6 The Board's land use powers are of primary
7 importance to the future of our borough and in
8 the development plans that are offered not in
9 line with the needs of the Community Boards must
10 be continued to be consulted on the placement of
11 all municipal facilities in the community and on
12 other land use issues.

13 The Charter requires that any application
14 for change or in variance from the zoning
15 resolution to come before the Boards for review.
16 And the Boards' positions considered in the final
17 determination of these applications. Without
18 input from the Board the ill conceived
19 development projects will begin their inexorable
20 march across our borough's landscape, altering
21 street-scape's and sustainable environment that
22 was in existence for generations for here in the
23 Borough of Bronx. Director of City Planning,
24 elected officials throughout the City have
25 ensured grass root development and preserved the

1 character of communities.

2 Under the City Charter, Community Boards
3 comment on ULURP matters and are in a unique
4 position to offer city agencies such as the
5 Department of the City Planning valuable local
6 input concerning the proposal's effect on the
7 local neighborhood. Community Boards have been
8 instrumental in working with this agency in
9 increasing the number of parking spaces,
10 establishing height requirements for developers
11 of all of our residential structures, and
12 initiating community strategic development plans
13 such as the 197(a) plan adopted in Community
14 Boards 3 and 8.

15 An essential aspect of any Community Board
16 operation includes the provision of personalized
17 case management services to our constituents and
18 the residents of New York. These services can
19 range from mediating disputes between landlords
20 and tenants and assuring public safety with
21 approving street activity permits and liquor
22 licenses in conjunction with the New York City
23 Police Department and also providing information
24 paving the way for new programmatic issues.
25 Through the monthly District Service Cabinet,

1 city agencies, the Boards are able to articulate
2 the needs of our communities, facilitating and
3 often coordinating the expediting repair of
4 infrastructure. As we look toward the future,
5 Community Boards should be supported and continue
6 a meaningful and part of municipal government and
7 meeting the needs of our constituencies. We have
8 provided statements for all of the members of the
9 Commission and I thank you for your time.

10 CHANCELOR GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Loftin.

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Damian McShane.

12 MR. MCSHANE: Good evening and
13 congratulations to the Commission Members on
14 their appointment, and thank you for providing me
15 an opportunity to address you this evening.

16 My name is Damian McShane. I am the current
17 Chairperson of Bronx Community Board 8 which
18 represents the neighborhoods of Kingsbridge,
19 Marble Hill, Riverdale and Van Cortlandt Heights
20 here in the Bronx.

21 My purpose this evening is to impress upon
22 the Commission the need for local communities,
23 specifically the local Community Boards that
24 represent them, to play a significant role in any
25 land use and strategic development issues that

1 affect or impact upon them.

2 Currently, Community Boards are the lone
3 accessible avenue for local residents to
4 participate in the land use process. The history
5 and culture of our communities are captured on
6 the Boards, making them uniquely qualified to
7 participate in the land use review and approval
8 process. Some have argued that Boards impede
9 progress and obstruct development within our
10 city. In my experience in more than a decade in
11 service as a board member has shown me otherwise.
12 While my Board has certainly and correctly
13 opposed ill advised and irresponsible
14 development, more often than not we work closely
15 with developers, architects and city officials to
16 find right reasonable accommodations or
17 compromises that benefit all parties involved.
18 This is a role that only a local Community Board
19 can fill. Centralized city agencies
20 understandably lack the necessary familiarity
21 with the community to make informed decisions on
22 many land use issues. In a community such as my
23 own we have a Special and Natural Area District,
24 a Historic Landmark District, private, public and
25 parochial schools and colleges, public housing

1 projects within blocks of large swaths of
2 single-family homes and areas with dense
3 concentrations of low and high-rise apartments.

4 In a city of 8 million people, these unique
5 features and the needs of the diverse population
6 in our District are often lost on large,
7 overburdened city agencies. But they are
8 represented and championed by the thousands of
9 appointed volunteers and the limited staff that
10 serve on our Community Boards.

11 Boards not only serve as local guardians or
12 arbiters, we proactively work to shape the future
13 of our communities. Several Boards within the
14 City have developed 197(a) community-based plans
15 which are an urban strategic development plan or
16 a roadmap whose goals are to preserve the
17 character of the community while seeking to
18 enhance the economic, cultural and social
19 opportunity for the areas' residents.

20 In the case of the Board on which I serve,
21 our comprehensive 197(a) plan was developed in
22 conjunction with five institutions, the Borough
23 President and the Department of City Planning.
24 The Board initiated the process, conducted
25 extensive outreach within the community, and

1 engaged consultants to develop other things,
2 contextual zoning to ensure responsible
3 development in addition to long-term plans for
4 local schools, transportation and other critical
5 infrastructure. Our plan further ensured
6 preservation of historical and natural resources
7 from the Jerome Park Reservoir to the Hudson
8 River.

9 Having developed this 197(a) plan, we worked
10 extensively with various city agencies to
11 effectuate the process of 197(c) plan that
12 realizes zoning changes we proposed to address
13 the needs of our various neighborhoods, while
14 through consultation with City Planning also
15 reflected the realities of the city in which they
16 are situated. Without this plan, without the work
17 of the Community Board, within a few years my
18 District would have been adversely impacted by
19 overdevelopment, our needs as citizens pushed
20 aside in favor of the special interests and our
21 prized institutions adversely impacted.

22 In closing, I want to stress that while the
23 individual neighborhoods I represent may be
24 small, maintaining the viability of those
25 individual neighborhoods is critical in keeping

1 this city strong.

2 During your comprehensive review of the City
3 Charter, I urge you value and where necessary
4 strengthen the roles of Community Boards and City
5 government. In particular as a critical voice in
6 and integral part of the land use process. Thank
7 you very much for your time.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Mr. Fernando Tirado.
9 Welcome Mr. Triado.

10 MR. TIRADO: Thank you. Good evening,
11 Commissioners, and welcome to Bronx County. My
12 name is Fernando Tirado, and I am the District
13 Manager of Community Board 7, and I appear on the
14 behalf of the 12 Community Boards of the Bronx.

15 As my colleague earlier mentioned, it is
16 important to remember the valuable role that the
17 Community Boards play in the lives of the
18 residents of the city. I am presenting to you
19 today the decrease in services that directly
20 impact the day-to-day lives of our residents and
21 the interactions Boards have had with the City's
22 311, 911 systems. The Boards interact frequently
23 with 311 and are full partners in resolution of
24 service requests by our residents; however, the
25 Board's ability to interact with 311 has been

1 hampered since its implementation. Prior to its
2 inception, District offices received recorded
3 complaints about municipal service and reported
4 them to the respective agency. At that time
5 District offices had the ability to determine
6 when and where a complaint occurred providing
7 them with information to make better decisions on
8 how to address issues in the community. Because
9 311 does not collect geographic information about
10 inquiries or notify Community Boards of a
11 complaint, communities lose an advocate for
12 addressing not only the complaint but the
13 underlying issues of the complaint as well.

14 On March 1st of this year Mayor Bloomberg
15 announced a comprehensive plan to modernize and
16 consolidate the outdated and often incompatible
17 data infrastructure at more than 40 city
18 agencies. In addition, the Mayor required a
19 30-day review on recommendations on how to
20 improve the City's information infrastructure. A
21 key recommendation of that report was the Mayor's
22 Office of Operations were to assume oversight of
23 311 Customer Service Center and 311 Online, which
24 took effect on April 1st. The Mayor's statement
25 does not clearly affirm whether or not Community

1 Boards would be included as part of the overhaul
2 of the system; however, the Boards and
3 constituents strongly agree reporting of agencies
4 needs to generate value-driven data as it meets
5 the needs of the residents. Boards are local and
6 provide a unique opportunity to assist the
7 agencies in apprising them of resident-driven
8 complaints.

9 A mandate should be established to create a
10 mechanism that any complaint system report should
11 consist of value-driven data to the Community
12 Boards allowing them to pinpoint trends, identify
13 needs for additional services and strengthen
14 their roles as advocates for the community. This
15 is true not only for 311 but for 911 as well.
16 Crime complaints are better ways to measure the
17 incidence of crime than arrests, which are more
18 indicative of the activity and effectiveness of
19 Police Departments than incidents of crime.
20 Unresolved complaints or a lack of confidence in
21 complaint outcomes can be costly to the city as
22 frustrated citizens take their complaints to
23 high-level officials or seek legal remedies.
24 Residents must have confidence in the City's
25 response to complaints in an impartial, efficient

1 and timely manner.

2 In consideration of recommendations for
3 revisions of the Charter, I request that this
4 Commission recommend that all 311, 911 complaint
5 data be communicated to the Boards as
6 value-driven data. Remove the barriers to those
7 who need to make a complaint and supply the Board
8 and constituents with detailed information to
9 come up with true solutions to neighborhood
10 issues. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Tirado.

12 Is Hector Soto with us here this evening?

13 Professor Hetty Fox.

14 PROF. FOX: Good evening, ladies and
15 gentlemen. How do you. I'm Professor Hetty Fox.
16 I live on Lyman Place in the South Bronx for 70
17 years. I've seen six New York's in my life, and
18 I'm very, very concerned about the future of our
19 city. I'm more concerned that this Charter
20 Revision Committee and Commission take due notice
21 that if you do suggest that if we have a Charter
22 that you are suggesting to the world that we have
23 a future that we are saying we intend to actually
24 participate in. And as such, we should be taking
25 care of those guardians of the future, our

1 children. The children don't necessarily feel
2 that they have a vested interest in their city. I
3 can tell you that as a member of the community
4 that I live in as a homeowner since 1940, I have
5 felt that there are two few New York women who
6 carry the multinational culture of this city to
7 its logical conclusion to new energy and new
8 technology systems the way we should.

9 I've taught every grade of school,
10 kindergarten to college. Basketball champion,
11 jazz musician, dancer, artist. That is the New
12 York City that I grew up in. And we have that
13 kind of range in the City today except that we
14 are lapsing more and more into the fear reaction
15 of calling more and more police, spending more
16 and more money on punishment than in preparation,
17 and failing to understand the fantastic range of
18 some of the fastest children in the world.

19 I've designed a new education system. I
20 teach children how to count in Russian, Zulu,
21 Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Spanish,
22 Chinese, Korean, Hebrew and Urdu; started a
23 foundation called the Neo/Presearch Energy
24 Foundation, incorporating 40 years it has taken
25 me to save my block in the South Bronx. Not much

1 help. People don't really know where we are
2 going, so it becomes more and more difficult to
3 encourage and guide the children.

4 Our educational system is not working very
5 well. The more education people have the more
6 they disappear. So we are not getting much result
7 from what we are calling education. The Charter
8 must begin to support the women of our city and
9 start relocating dollars into the hands of New
10 York women who when they begin to distribute
11 those dollars they make more of an impression on
12 the future than scattering it.

13 I've gone to 30 thousand businesses walking
14 in 20 years because we do not get funding support
15 for the kind of work that I do. I run a play
16 street every summer for 33 years. And I found
17 that 90 percent of the businesses I walked into
18 are owned by individuals from another country.
19 Not a problem. But in any city in the world we
20 need at least 40 percent in the hands of the home
21 team. Otherwise we cannot keep money circulating
22 and being directed in the right area. I thank
23 you so very, very much. I have some information.
24 I'd like each of you to have one. I don't know
25 how to get it to you. These are books, "Jealousy

1 Be Gone," "Neighborhood Rules of Order." I just
2 want to know how to get it to you. This is not
3 about the testimony, I didn't have a chance to
4 prepare, just a few points. Thank you.

5 CHANCELOR GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.
6 Mr. Robert Bieder? Welcome, Mr. Bieder.

7 MR. BIEDER: It's "Beeder" but that's okay.
8 I represent Bronx Merchants Coalition,
9 several thousand small businesses who have
10 various business associations throughout the
11 Bronx.

12 We have found Community Boards to be a great
13 asset to our community associations, to our
14 business associations, and we have found that the
15 Mayor's office has actually been a place to stop
16 us. We're trying to get more and more done with
17 less and less, just like everybody else, and
18 we're running into road blocks all the time.
19 Simple things like street activity permits have
20 to go through the Mayor's Community Systems Unit
21 when they know nothing about our blocks.

22 I have a block party every year. One block
23 on my own neighborhood. And I've been in this
24 community my entire life. I'm a third generation
25 business owner. Our family business has been in

1 the Bronx for 86 years. Nobody knows our
2 communities better than our Community Boards.
3 Why we have to send applications to City Hall for
4 communities to the Community Assistance Unit and
5 they don't coordinate the services that we need.
6 We need police there on a block party or an event
7 that we're having, Mayor's office, Community
8 Assistance Unit does nothing but collect the fee
9 for that. And they're hiring a lot of people down
10 there when we have 45 volunteers and just a few
11 people in each of our Community Boards.

12 This is one of the most underutilized city
13 agencies there is. You've got all these
14 volunteers that commit all these hours that cost
15 the City maybe three dollars an hour when you
16 break it down and you keep taking away things for
17 them to do instead of giving them more to do. It
18 just makes no sense whatsoever.

19 In a fiscally tough time we should be adding
20 to Community Boards' responsibilities. Things
21 like student activity permits should go nowhere
22 but the Community Board. Community Board should
23 have a youth coordinator who can then in turn
24 apply for grants that we can't get the City
25 money; it's just not there.

1 The Office of the Mayor conducted a Youth
2 Needs Assessment a few years back. During that
3 assessment they determined that every dollar
4 spent on youth services the City gets back seven.
5 If they keep cutting youth services, well, I
6 understand there's no money in the budget for it,
7 but if we had youth coordinators who could apply
8 for independent grants we'd find that money
9 elsewhere. So we're asking that you strengthen
10 the Community Boards, strengthen them in the land
11 use process, give them a youth coordinator, a
12 business coordinator and a planner. You've got
13 45 volunteers who put in the hours month after
14 month, year after year, happy to do it because
15 they love their community. They don't have to
16 worry about getting reelected. They're not there
17 for any other purpose but to serve their
18 communities. This is something that every
19 community needs. Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you Mr. Bieder.

21 Howard Charles Yourow? Did I pronounce that
22 right? Youranow?

23 MR. YOUROW: That's close, Mr. Chairman,
24 thank you. And special thanks to Councilman
25 Cassino.

1 I'm a Bronx native. I was honored to be the
2 chair of the Friends of the Hall of Fame For
3 Great Americans at Bronx Community College, and
4 I'm now on the Board of Historic Districts
5 Council.

6 I just want to say briefly, speak in support
7 of the Borough President in spirit and substance
8 of the Borough President's remarks and those that
9 have preceded especially about the ground up
10 process, the importance of Community Board. And
11 on a general level speaking as a historic
12 preservation person, of course I want to draw the
13 attention of the Commission to the very important
14 vital work of the Landmarks Preservation
15 Commission, and hopefully in this process they'll
16 be able to look at and perhaps strengthen the
17 powers and the efficacy of the Landmarks
18 Preservation Commission, which is as we all know
19 the prime defender of the public architectural
20 history and heritage of this city.

21 So having said that, I hope that the
22 Commission will take a look at the LPC and at its
23 processes as well and add that to your other
24 important issues.

25 Thank you very much.

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

2 Allen Cox.

3 MR. COX: Thank you, Commissioners. My name
4 is Allen Cox. I'm the chair of the Bronx County
5 Independence Party representing just over 13,000
6 members in the borough, and I'm also a long time
7 independent.

8 I grew up for and became an activist and an
9 independent to develop ways for my people and all
10 people excluded from the process to be heard. I'm
11 a father and grandfather. My daughter, Tyema, is
12 here with me tonight.

13 I'm here to testify in support of
14 non-partisan elections. For me this is a simple
15 issue of democracy in opening up the political
16 process in our city to independent voters, now 20
17 percent of all voters in New York City.

18 I have listened to the critics of the
19 Charter Revision process even as the hearings are
20 just getting underway. They say that there's not
21 enough community participation, not enough people
22 know about the hearings. But these critics are
23 the same people who oppose a reform which is
24 designed to make it possible for more people to
25 participate in the primaries.

1 So, frankly, the people who are the
2 political gatekeepers want to have it both ways.
3 But with the Charter hearings just getting
4 started, they want to criticize the Commission
5 for not bringing people out and at the same time
6 they want to make sure that you don't put
7 nonpartisans on the ballot because they want to
8 limit the people who can vote in the primaries
9 where 90 percent of the decisions are made.

10 Now, I'm not a college professor and I'm not
11 a political scientist, but I have played a little
12 basketball in my time and I know a flagrant foul
13 when I see one. Not to mention un-sportsman-like
14 conduct that impedes the progress of our
15 community.

16 I think the issue of community participation
17 is key. And the reason that I support
18 non-partisan elections is that it would make
19 greater participation possible and that's the
20 bottom line. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Ramon Pena, P-E-N-A?

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: He's coming.

23 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Welcome.

24 MR. PENA: Hello. My name is Ramon Pena, and
25 I come in front of you to ask probably one of the

1 most simple things a person can ask for. I want
2 to have my right once again to vote. For many
3 years I was a Democrat and felt that they no
4 longer were representing my ideals. When I
5 reregistered I did not know that I was giving up
6 my right to vote in a primary. I never even
7 thought that this was possible. Not having the
8 right to vote in an election? To me it seemed
9 something out of the Twilight Zone. Isn't voting
10 a right and not a privilege?

11 Last year I approached a City Council it
12 Cabinet Member who was running for the first time
13 and running in the Democratic primary. I said I
14 liked his message and he said, quote, "Great. I
15 will expect your vote." I burst his bubble and I
16 said, "I cannot vote in a primary because I an
17 Independent." He said to me, "You register as a
18 Democrat."

19 It seemed like such a simple answer. I did
20 not take his advice because I'm not a Democrat
21 and why should I not be able to vote in any
22 election? He lost that election, by the way. Who
23 knows what the outcome would have been if
24 Independents could vote in primaries?

25 I can sit here and tell you endless stories

1 about my experiences when it comes to primaries.
2 I won't of course. I want the right once again to
3 vote in a primary.

4 Please put nonpartisan elections on the
5 ballot. Let me have a chance to once again to
6 vote in any election. Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

8 Ronni Colangalo:

9 MR. COLANGALO: Hello. I don't represent
10 anybody but myself. And hopefully the Community
11 of the Bronx and the people here.

12 Community Boards, the City of New York is
13 made up of communities, small communities, large
14 communities, and the Community Boards are very
15 important for the people that live in those
16 communities to get things done that need to be
17 done.

18 The second thing is term limits. I was down
19 at City Hall talking myself blue in front of the
20 entire audience and as here, people that are
21 elected officials came up and talk and talk and
22 talk and Mike got his way. He got his 29 little
23 friends together. Everybody went "yeah, yeah,
24 yeah, yeah." And the gentleman here was speaking
25 about how, oh, people that are elected for a long

1 time really know the way to run the country.

2 You look up in Albany. Now you got these
3 guys, they can't even make a decision on who's
4 going to be in charge, who's getting locked up,
5 who's doing this, who's doing that. And it's
6 just a shame.

7 And my other point I'd like to bring up is
8 the use of eminent domain for private gain. The
9 thing in Atlantic Yards is just a disgrace. How
10 they can force those people out and put up a
11 basketball arena because somebody with a lot of
12 money can walk in, dole it around to whoever, and
13 then throw everybody out is just a disgrace. And
14 these are things that need to be changed. And the
15 more you sit here and the more you listen, I know
16 all you people here were appointed by Mike.
17 You're all people that he knows. You have people
18 here that were even on the Board, what do you
19 call it? Whatever Board that was that said "oh
20 yeah, that's fine, Mike --"

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Conflicts of Interest
22 Board.

23 MR. COLANGALO: Conflict of Interest Board.
24 Now, how can somebody be on the Conflict of
25 Interest Board that was appointed by the Mayor,

1 find a conflict of interest for the man that's
2 paying their salary? That's totally insane. You
3 have this going on constantly in the City where
4 Mike just comes around "Okay, I'm making a
5 donation" and people just go "Oh, thanks, Mike."
6 They put the money in their pocket and Mike's
7 their best friend. Not to say anything bad about
8 people. But a reverend in Harlem said, "How can
9 I vote against Mike? He just gave me a million
10 dollars for my church. How do I say anything
11 about the man?"

12 I think that the power structure in this
13 city has gone to the rich. The people that vote
14 and work hard to make a living are getting kicked
15 to the curb. And you gentlemen here are here to
16 reform the Charter to make sure this doesn't
17 happen anymore, and I hope it doesn't. I mean, I
18 hope you put up a Charter that would be good for
19 everybody not just for a guy that's got 16
20 billion dollars and wants to be king. It's just
21 a shame, and this last election proved it. He
22 spent a hundred million dollars and got reelected
23 by 50,000 votes. It's just unbelievable. And I
24 hope it changes and I hope you gentlemen and
25 ladies change that. For the people of this city.

1 Not for the rich.

2 CHANCELOR GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

3 Frank Vernuccio.

4 MR. VERNUCCIO: Good evening. I'm Frank
5 Vernuccio. I am president of the Community
6 Action Civic Association. We have both
7 procedural objections to the Charter Revision
8 process as well as specific suggestions for
9 inclusion in any potential Charter Revision plan.
10 While I have a great deal of respect for the
11 members of this Commission, some of whom have
12 been colleagues in the past, it is completely
13 inappropriate that every member of this
14 Commission was selected by the Mayor. The City
15 Council, the Borough Presidents, and the
16 electorate themselves by voting process should
17 all have the opportunity to place representatives
18 on the Charter Revision Commission. Indeed, the
19 elitist nature of the selection process that
20 disenfranchises everyone in the City other than
21 it's chief executive in deciding the future of
22 our local constitution guarantees a result which
23 will overlook key challenges facing our city. We
24 propose that the work of the Commission be
25 temporarily suspended until this issue is

1 resolved.

2 There are numerous specific fundamental
3 problems which should be addressed in a Charter
4 Revision process. Two examples. The
5 centralization of power has not served the City
6 well. Following the Charter Revision of 1989 the
7 individual boroughs were largely deprived of any
8 meaningful role in City government. When the
9 Board of Estimate was abolished it was claimed
10 that one man one vote necessitated that act. That
11 was untrue. The structure of the Board guaranteed
12 the concerns of individual boroughs would be
13 taken seriously. A weighted voting procedure
14 could have been used to save the Board. We
15 propose that the Board be resurrected in a
16 weighted voting system and that Borough
17 Presidents be given an appropriate role in the
18 governance of their own boroughs.

19 The functioning of city agencies must become
20 more transparent and this transparency must be
21 mandated by the Charter. Two of the very many
22 examples. Far too often the issuance of fines is
23 used not to encourage compliance with the law but
24 merely to generate revenue. This is accomplished
25 particularly in regards of the treatment of small

1 businesses by the issuance of parking
2 regulations, parking violations, through a system
3 of quotas.

4 We recommend the employment of quotas in any
5 law enforcement capacity be strictly forbidden in
6 the Charter.

7 Two. Candidates for city office who run
8 without the backing of party leaders have had
9 difficulties navigating the complicated
10 procedures of the Campaign Finance Board. We
11 recommend that the Charter be amended to mandate
12 the CFB procedures and decisions to be codified
13 and evenly applied to all candidates.

14 This is just two examples of fundamental
15 reforms that if made would truly improve both the
16 daily lives and the governmental health of our
17 city.

18 It is our belief that a Charter Revision
19 Commission that truly reflects the makeup of New
20 York could make positive recommendations for
21 reform.

22 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Mr. Titikpina.

23 MR. TITIKPINA: Good evening. Thank you for
24 the opportunity. My name is Jounedou Titikpina.
25 I'm the president of African People Alliance,

1 which represent 23 African countries based here
2 in the Bronx.

3 I want to talk about three specific things:
4 About term limits, about census and also about
5 language.

6 Term limits is the face of democracy and
7 also allow the next generation to move forward
8 and achieve their goals. If seniors don't want to
9 move in more 30, 40, 50 years, what about next
10 generation? What about youths? It's very
11 important. Because American democracy is the face
12 of the entire broad democracy. If you are coming
13 from my country where I came from, Togo, West
14 Africa, people been living there about 50 years
15 now. The same party the same people, and don't
16 want to go away. So the same thing, and same
17 thing when I go everywhere and leaving the United
18 States especially, which is not good.

19 And about census. When you go to census
20 pole, the number 6, No. 6 you're going to see
21 "Black", "African-American" and "Negro." "Negro"
22 which is so offensive. And that's 6. No. 6 is
23 very important because folks have been calling me
24 to find that Africans, where we belong to?
25 Nothing is mentioned about African immigrants.

1 And also nothing is mentioned about those who are
2 mixed race. Somebody who have a father white, a
3 mother black or Latino or Jewish or whatever.
4 Nothing is mentioned. So we've been talking among
5 each other. It's very important that things like
6 that we get people involved. The right people
7 for the right job.

8 And number three is our language. The
9 African People Alliance, which represent 23 of
10 the countries, the majority of countries are
11 French-speaking countries. When I came here 11
12 years ago French was spoken. But now it's like
13 French is not existing no more. And Africans who
14 are trying to integrate ourselves but it's very
15 hard. Very hard on the economic level because
16 right now Africans, a lot of Africans are small
17 business owners. But how to talk to others, it's
18 not easy. So please, if you can take our
19 consideration and take French as another tool for
20 languages. And Census 2000 said that African
21 living in the United States was 92,435, which is
22 not accurate. So we asking the Commission also to
23 let us be part of it so that we're gonna be
24 well-known. Right now people are talking African
25 as second largest community in the Bronx. It's

1 not official but we want to know in accurate
2 numbers. So thank you very much.

3 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you,
4 Mr. Titikpina.

5 Bryan Puertas.

6 MR. PUERTAS. Good evening. My name is Bryan
7 Puertas, I'm 25 years old, and I'm here to talk
8 to you about young people. Young people like
9 myself are worried, worried about finding our
10 place in a troubled economy and uncertain time
11 and a broken government.

12 We see problems everywhere that can be
13 solved but instead we get Band-Aid measures and
14 gridlock. We see politicians more concerned with
15 the interests of their party than the interests
16 of the people they've been elected to serve. Even
17 to the point of not doing their jobs. What kind
18 of message is that supposed to send to us?

19 So young people, like myself, see this and
20 increasingly reject politics as usual. We have
21 become more and more independent. Not out of a
22 sense of childish rebellion but an intuitive
23 understanding that the Democratic and Republican
24 parties do not speak for us.

25 Young people, like myself, look at each

1 issue on its own, not as part of an overreaching
2 ideology, and young people, like myself, vote for
3 people, not parties.

4 But what are we told here in New York City?
5 That we should just get out and vote in November
6 for candidates that we don't believe in, that we
7 have no part in nominating, and are not
8 responsive to our needs.

9 If we go to vote in primaries we're told
10 that we're not wanted unless we join their party.
11 We're denied the right to vote even though we
12 paid for the primary elections. This is taxation
13 without representation. We fought a war over
14 this. What kind of message does that send?

15 It doesn't have to be this way, though. We
16 can have one primary election where everyone runs
17 regardless of the party they are. Everyone gets
18 to vote for whoever they like for the person, not
19 the party, the top two vote getters go onto the
20 November election.

21 The party machines can still support whoever
22 they like but they don't get to tell us, the
23 voters, who we can and cannot vote for. We can
24 give everyone an equal voice in nominating
25 candidates we believe in. We can send a message

1 that we want all voters to be a part of all
2 rounds of voting. And we can tell our young
3 people that we want them to be a part of a fair
4 and democratic future in the city.

5 So that's why young people, like myself, ask
6 you for you to put non-partisan municipal
7 elections on the ballot this November, thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Jennifer Herrera.

9 MS. HERRERA-ANDVIAR: Good evening, dear
10 esteemed Commissioners. Thank you for
11 considering my testimony tonight. My name is
12 Jennifer Herrera-Andviar. I am statistic of New
13 York City's if the education system. I am a high
14 school dropout, I am a GED recipient at Adult
15 Literacy -- at the Adult Literacy for adults in
16 CUNY, and I'm also a Lehman College graduate.

17 I would like to take this opportunity to
18 testify today on behalf of including the Mayor's
19 Office of Adult Education into the City Charter
20 as a person who has benefited greatly from the
21 initiatives and support of this office.

22 I had the opportunity to be an intern at the
23 Mayor's Office of Adult Education, and I have
24 seen on a systemic level the impact that it's
25 having not only in the Bronx but also in all the

1 boroughs of New York City.

2 A large percentage of the City's adult
3 residents have limited literacy skills either
4 because of lack of English comprehension or low
5 educational attainment. The future of the City's
6 growth and productivity will be hindered by the
7 many residents who are unable to maximize their
8 capacity to be in the workplace by getting and
9 keeping a steady employment that require literacy
10 skills and specific job skills or within the
11 civics sphere by not being able to understand
12 public health announcement or important city
13 service information. Or in the justice system by
14 not being able to effectively serve on juries and
15 falling into recidivism.

16 I'd like to offer you some key facts that
17 impact the voters that education has.
18 Achievement gaps of foreign-born parents' [sic]
19 education is bigger than black, white or Hispanic
20 white achievement gaps. If they earn no GED are
21 likely to be rearrested after they're released
22 into the community. People with limited literacy
23 skills have worse outcomes and earlier mortality
24 rates than people with higher levels of literacy.
25 And low literacy rates are driven by lack of

1 English proficiency and low educational
2 attainment.

3 Currently the adult education system is not
4 a unified one. It is the collection of services
5 run by the City University of New York, the Human
6 Resources Administration, the Department of
7 Education, the libraries and the community-based
8 organizations contracted by the Department of
9 Youth and Community Development. These programs
10 are doing an excellent job of serving
11 approximately 70,000 adults. However, we have
12 2.1 million New Yorkers who need adult education.

13 With a unified system we can serve more New
14 Yorkers with better results. We can better
15 prepare students for job training sectors with
16 career ladders; help student transition to
17 college after earning a GED and completing
18 English language proficiency courses.

19 And above all, I think leveraging the
20 potential of the many thousands of adults of
21 adult education alumni, such as myself, from what
22 we've seen as the future now, which is where I
23 work as a leadership coordinator. And the
24 Mayor's Office of Adult Education has created
25 with a lot of programs within the city has had a

1 huge impact. In closing, being a child of
2 immigrants from the Dominican Republic and a GED
3 recipient, I know firsthand one of the true
4 democratizing forces in our society is adult
5 education. In this city you can come from
6 prison, you can come from illiteracy, you can
7 come from not speaking the language and you can
8 get an education. So please consider my
9 proposal, thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

11 J.C. Polanco. Did I get that the right,
12 Mr. Polanco?

13 MR. POLANCO: Yes, you did. "J.C." is fine.

14 Good evening and welcome to the Bronx guys.
15 Isn't it exciting to be here? I feel the energy
16 back there. I think it's a great day to be a
17 Bronxite and have you here. My name is J.C.
18 Polanco, I'm a Commissioner here in the Bronx for
19 the New York City Board of Elections. I'm also a
20 Bronx Republican, one of the few proud, the only
21 I think 12-to-1 ratio. But I'm here today to
22 plead a case for non-partisan elections. You
23 know, you are key educator for the CUNY system,
24 Chairman, and I had an opportunity to be a
25 Commissioner and a professor at the same time. A

1 wonderful time of registering thousands of my
2 students. Never once did I ask them whether they
3 were Democrats or Republicans. I just registered
4 and saw excitement in their eyes that they were
5 actually going to participate in the democratic
6 process. And as I look around the room I know
7 that President Obama has a ton of supporters. And
8 when I go in my classroom, everyone had the
9 President Obama T-shirts, President Obama hats.
10 And would you believe that President Obama would
11 not have had the opportunity to be president
12 today had there not been states with nonpartisan
13 primaries so they could vote?

14 I don't ask whether they register Democrat
15 or Republican. Partisan elections turn a blind
16 eye to the reality here in New York City that we
17 have partisan redistricting in Albany. And every
18 ten years these districts get carved up to
19 pro-incumbent. We can have nonpartisan elections
20 coalesce around certain issues.

21 The Charter Commission has a unique
22 opportunity to call for non-partisan elections.
23 We had in 2008 2.6 million voters took the
24 opportunity to practice their democratic right
25 and to vote in the presidential elections. The

1 following year the number dropped dramatically
2 with almost close to a million.

3 I believe by having nonpartisan elections
4 we'll be able to encourage people to take the
5 democratic process, exercise it, and grab the
6 bull by the horns and participate in our
7 wonderful election process.

8 Partisan elections for municipal offices by
9 their very nature discriminate against people --
10 1.4 million people, as a matter of fact -- that
11 decide not to register as Democrats or
12 Republicans. And I say that as a proud
13 Republican. We have 1.4 million New Yorkers that
14 walk the streets today that don't have the
15 opportunity to practice their right to vote
16 because most of the decisions take place on
17 primary day here in New York City.

18 I beg you to open your eyes and realize that
19 partisanship in Albany creates partisan Districts
20 and these Districts are designed to protect
21 incumbents without giving very little opportunity
22 to either parties.

23 In addition, 23,000 new voters in 2008
24 because of the presidential election, and over
25 1.4 million of those voters today in New York

1 City^ ,no are Independents. It is so important
2 that we enfranchise these people and give them
3 the opportunity to vote. Listen to this number, I
4 think you'll find it interesting. In New York 63
5 out of the 64, 70 members by one party, the
6 Democratic party. And my mother's a Democrat, and
7 I love Democrats. But for purposes of full
8 disclosure, 47 of 51 New York City Council
9 members are members of one party. And only two of
10 over three dozen senators are members of one
11 party. I am pleading that for my students, for
12 the young people, and for so many people who want
13 to register as Independents, if you consider
14 nonpartisan elections because it would encourage
15 people to participate in the democratic right to
16 vote. Thank you so much.

17 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Bob Nolan.

18 MR. NOLAN: Chancellor Goldstein, members of
19 the Charter Revision Commission, good evening and
20 welcome to the Bronx. My name is Bob Nolan. I do
21 have several copies of what I'm going to speak
22 about this evening. I'd like to give to a member
23 of your staff.

24 My name is Bob Nolan and I served the people
25 of the Bronx under three Borough Presidents for

1 30 years, retiring in November of 2008. I
2 directed the Office of Economic Development,
3 spent four years reviewing, recommending various
4 Board of Estimate contract recommendations. I was
5 appointed Budget Director, a position I held
6 under Borough Presidents Ferrer and Carrion.

7 During those years, I was a liaison from the
8 Borough President's office to more than half a
9 dozen Community Boards across the Borough.

10 Although I can comment on many other areas on the
11 Charter, I'm going to confine my remarks this
12 evening to the Office of the Borough President,
13 the budget and Community Boards briefly.

14 I've lived in Bronx County my entire life.
15 I understand the mind-set of my neighbors who say
16 that "Manhattan gets everything" and the boroughs
17 are left to share the crumbs. An active, vigorous
18 fighting Borough President is in a position to
19 win concessions of the Mayor and the Council for
20 important Bronx priorities. The 1961 and 1989
21 Charter changes severely reduced the powers of
22 the Borough President and shifted most of those
23 responsibilities to City Hall and mayoral
24 agencies. Having a friend in City Hall can help
25 any Borough. Just ask our friends in Staten

1 Island since 1994. And good for them. We who
2 represent or live in those smaller counties in
3 the City need a little more help in getting what
4 we really need.

5 The Bronx received major assistance from all
6 levels of the government in the private sector in
7 successful efforts to rebuild our South Bronx.
8 But our government and private sector would not
9 have been successful without the leadership and
10 direction of Borough Presidents Ferrer and
11 Carrion.

12 I urge this Commission to (1) expand,
13 maintain and expand funding for the Office of
14 Borough President. Expand the powers of the
15 Borough President, providing them with a seat on
16 the City Planning Commission and (3) starting the
17 expansion of Borough President authority over
18 schools within the Borough.

19 Moving on to the budget. As Budget Director,
20 I recommended capital projects for both Borough
21 Presidents I mentioned earlier, and based on the
22 priorities that they established and ones I had
23 recommended, many projects that benefited
24 hospitals and schools and City University were
25 funded. I also recommended senior and youth

1 programs and cultural programs were funded.
2 These funds were capital expense, were awarded
3 to the Borough President as a result of the
4 Charter language providing each BP with 5 percent
5 of the expanded funding of Mayor in the
6 preliminary and executive budget.

7 I've always believed that the Office of
8 Management Budget correctly awarded the capital
9 funds to each borough. But since 1994, the
10 Borough President's expense funding turned from a
11 government decision to a political decision in
12 City Hall. BP youth funds were cut and then
13 restored in 1996. But the administration, some
14 on their own, went ahead and changed the formula
15 and reduced funding to the Bronx by 50 percent.

16 So I would ask you to take a look at these
17 issues to expand the funding of the Borough
18 President so this office can carry out the duties
19 and responsibilities stated in the Charter and
20 look at the options of not letting OMB but the
21 Independent Budget Office determine the 5 percent
22 amount awarded to the Borough President's office
23 on the expense line.

24 Finally, I would just like to take another
25 10 seconds to say to you that I've been a liaison

1 to Community Boards. They do terrific work.
2 They've made excellent recommendations. I
3 believe they need to be not only be maintained
4 but expanded. I've established a baseline of
5 funding for every Community Board in the City.

6 Number two, I would start the expansion of
7 board powers in the areas of land use and budget.
8 And finally, I would review the possibility of
9 providing each board with \$250,000 each year in
10 capital funds.

11 I urge this Board to take these
12 recommendations seriously and look forward to
13 talking with every member of the Commission or
14 their staff who would like to. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

16 Eddie Bautista.

17 MR. BAUTISTA: Good evening my name is Eddie
18 Bautista. I'm Executive Director of the New York
19 City Environmental Justice Alliance. It's a
20 citywide network of community-based organizations
21 across the City that fight against the
22 discriminatory environmental practices an afford
23 environmental equity in the Bronx, Community
24 Development Corporation, Nos Quedamos, and Youth
25 Ministries for Peace and Justice.

1 Tonight I want to call attention to two
2 provisions of the Charter that were actually
3 initiated in the '89 Charter Revision. These two
4 provisions, I dare say, were not just sold to New
5 Yorkers, to government groups, civil rights
6 activists, but I believe the Justice Department
7 as well, since the Justice Department has the
8 preclearance authority since three of the five
9 New York counties are protected by the Voting
10 Rights Act.

11 The two provisions are Fair Share and
12 197(a). And in particular, Fair Share reflects a
13 special resonance for the Bronx. Two of the
14 Community Boards in the Bronx handle 30 percent
15 of the city's solid waste. One community Board in
16 the Bronx handles the sludge for the entire city,
17 and there are a host of other environmental
18 burdens that impact the Bronx, which also suffers
19 from some of the highest childhood asthma rates
20 in the nation.

21 Section 203 of the City Charter of the
22 revised Charter of '89 reads as thus: "A Fair
23 Share criteria shall be designed to further the
24 fair distribution among communities of the
25 burdens and benefits associated with city

1 facilities consistent with community needs for
2 services and efficient and cost effective
3 delivery of the services and with due regard for
4 the social and economic impact of such facilities
5 upon the areas surrounding the sites."

6 The Fair Share criteria was supposed to work
7 in conjunction with Charter Section 204, which is
8 the citywide Statement of Needs, that's supposed
9 to identify all city facilities slated for siting
10 expansion or closure as well as the atlas of
11 city-owned property which is supposed to map
12 these facilities. However, Fair Share was gutted
13 by the regulatory rule-making that followed the
14 1989 Charter Revision. As a result, Fair Share
15 has failed New Yorkers, particularly those in
16 environmentally overburdened communities.

17 The 2010 Commission can restore the broken
18 promise of the 1989 Charter Revision by some of
19 the following mandates. 1. Mandating that City
20 facilities, siting's expansions, of reductions,
21 be properly identified in the annual Statement of
22 Needs without exception. The post Charter
23 regulatory loophole allows the City to propose
24 any facility siting or expansion whenever it
25 chooses by filing amendments to Statement of

1 Needs, making the process meaningless and
2 nontransparent. The City decides to site a
3 facility after the Statement of Needs is
4 produced, it should wait for the following year.

5 Secondly, Fair Share should include all
6 polluting infrastructure facilities in the atlas
7 of city-owned properties, not just city-owned
8 facilities. And finally, it should include true
9 indicators of burdens. Relative health data,
10 numbers of brown fields. Technology advances
11 since 1989 make indicators readily available and
12 vital in assessing burdens.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

14 Hillary Nemchick. Did I get the that right?
15 Nemchick?

16 MS. NEMCHICK: I'll be presenting testimony
17 on behalf of Manhattan Borough President Scott
18 Stringer.

19 Good evening, Chairman Goldstein, and
20 distinguished Members of the Charter Revision
21 Commission.

22 For the past month, since March 3rd, when
23 Mayor Bloomberg announced the formation of this
24 Commission, I've argued that developing Charter
25 amendments for this year's election on November

1 2, 2010 would be a costly mistake.

2 In the recent days I've been critical of the
3 public notice provided for these hearings. The
4 notice for the Manhattan hearing, six days, was
5 far too short. And in the effort to call the
6 public's attention to the hearings has been much
7 too quiet. I have voiced these concerns because I
8 believe that New York City is long overdue for
9 the broad civic debate about City government that
10 only a Charter Revision Commission can lead.

11 You hold the power, after a 21-year break,
12 to once again engage New Yorkers in re-thinking
13 our municipal constitution. It is time to have
14 that discussion. And tonight we face a choice.
15 Down one path is a broad conversation about the
16 shortcomings of New York City's government and
17 structural reforms that will help us meet the new
18 challenges we face in the years ahead. Down that
19 path this Commission can show a real
20 determination to learn from New Yorkers about
21 where city government is succeeding, where it is
22 failing and how it can be improved. And down that
23 path this Commission can determine the creation
24 of new City Department of Food and Markets, hold
25 the promise of making New Yorkers healthier,

1 energizing our economy and improving our urban
2 environment. You can decide if a new Office of
3 Inspection could end the decades of corruption
4 and dysfunction at the Department of Buildings,
5 making New York City a safer place for residents
6 and visitors alike.

7 You can explore whether an independent
8 authority other than the Department of
9 Education -- such as the City Planning Department
10 and the Comptroller -- would help us avoid the
11 terrible school overcrowding crisis that is
12 threatening to tear neighborhoods apart all
13 around the city.

14 You can study the long-term value to New
15 York City of transforming Community Boards into
16 true Community Planning Boards with the
17 resources, the expertise, and the mandate to
18 inject the neighborhood voice into the discussion
19 of our city's future.

20 You can consider whether a new Independent
21 Planning Office, mirroring the Independent Budget
22 Office, would tamp down politics in our
23 development decisions and enhance this vital
24 function of city government.

25 A more serious concern voiced by many is

1 that if this Commission's proposals are placed on
2 the 2011 ballot to accommodate the broader view.
3 I recommend the result will be fewer New Yorkers
4 voting -- I'm sorry. I'm recommending the result
5 would be fewer New Yorkers voting on the
6 proposals. People are worried about low voter
7 turn out in a so-called off-year election. Well,
8 here are the facts. Back in 2002 and 2003 Charter
9 amendments appeared on the ballot in successive
10 years. Those two elections closely matched the
11 elections we are heading into now.

12 In 2002 Democrat Carl McCall challenged
13 incumbent Republican George Pataki in the
14 governor's race. In 2003 the Supreme Court races
15 topped the ballot. Not usually the biggest draw
16 for voters. So it may surprise you to learn that
17 the Charter amendment in 2003, an off-year
18 election, received more total votes than the
19 Charter amendment that accompanied the
20 gubernatorial candidates on the ballot.

21 494,000 total votes cast for the nonpartisan
22 election in '03 versus 200 -- 470,000 total votes
23 cast for the mayoral succession proposal in '02.

24 I want to emphasize that my call for a
25 comprehensive public debate about city government

1 is not for abstract reasons. It's to take the
2 Mayor at his word and to take advantage of the
3 unique opportunity to make a difference in the
4 lives of New Yorkers.

5 Let me remind you that New York City is a
6 city of over 8 million people. How many learned
7 of this hearing? How many saw the hearing notice
8 when it was posed on the Commission Web site?
9 How many will make their voices heard if your
10 outreach is limited to only a few more hearings
11 over a few more weeks? No one knows things have
12 to be improved in the city's government better
13 than the people who it's supposed to serve. The
14 Commission stands a far better chance of learning
15 from New Yorkers about where it should focus its
16 attention if it conducts its work over a period
17 of 17 months instead of five.

18 You have been charged with a great
19 responsibility. This Commission has an
20 opportunity to point the way to a brighter future
21 for New York City. I urge you to face up to that
22 responsibility with the courage and the ambition
23 that it demands. Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you. I'd just
25 like to comment because of the very good work of

1 our staff, we had a very, very successful
2 outreach for this Borough Hearing and we intend
3 to do it at all of the others. So just on behalf
4 of the Commission I just want to acknowledge the
5 very good work of our staff in really getting an
6 awful lot of people out tonight.

7 And consistent with that, because we have a
8 long list of people that want to speak, I'm going
9 to call three names so that you're ready when the
10 person before you testifies and you can get up to
11 the microphone so we can speed the process along.

12 We'll start with Roberto Garcia, followed by
13 Sherry Scanlon and then Anthony Green.

14 Roberto Garcia? Welcome, Mr. Garcia.

15 MR. GARCIA: Thank you very much, Chairman
16 Goldstein and members of the Commission. Welcome
17 to our wonderful and great Borough of the Bronx.
18 I'm Roberto Garcia. I serve as the chairman of
19 Bronx Community Board number 2 which covers Hunts
20 Point, Longwood and parts of Morrisania here in
21 the Bronx.

22 Contrary to popular belief, Community Boards
23 in New York City are the most local form of
24 government. Unfortunately, Community Boards day
25 after day are bypassed and are not included in

1 the decision-making process of everyday
2 government. Who better than the residents and the
3 members of our community to work together in a
4 volunteer capacity with the leadership of the
5 District Manager and with the input of a Borough
6 President and great City Council members? Who
7 better than they to make decisions and plan for
8 the future of their communities?

9 Time and time again Community Board
10 recommendations on budget requests and land use
11 and other planning issues are overlooked. Many
12 city agencies, like the New York City Department
13 of Homeless Services, just to name one, currently
14 utilize loopholes in RFP and non-inclusionary
15 tactics to push the City's agenda and bypass the
16 communities' voices. We cannot continue to run
17 this city as a business without considering the
18 people's business. In particular, Community
19 Boards continue to have concerns with the lack of
20 transparency. Community Boards are hurting
21 because of lack of budgetary support, financial
22 support, and we consistently recommend through a
23 process, yearly process, of putting out our
24 requests for capital campaigns and capital
25 funding for our projects in our Community Boards

1 and most of them are overlooked and never funded.

2 Another important factor is that we need to
3 preserve the role of the Borough Presidents and
4 the Public Advocates who work with Community
5 Board and the Council members time and time again
6 to preserve this great Borough and this great
7 city. Please consider the power and input of
8 Community Boards and the transparency that this
9 city should continue to demonstrate as we move to
10 the next level. Please consider our communities'
11 voices and concerns when you prepare your
12 recommendations.

13 Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

15 Sherry Scanlon, followed by Anthony Green.

16 MS. SCANLON: Good evening, everyone. My
17 name is Sherry Scanlon. I'm here to appeal to
18 everyone on this Board, Community Board 10, and
19 all the Community Boards in the Bronx in New York
20 City. The Community Board represents and is
21 very -- it's a great asset to the small
22 businesses and all the residents. I have a small
23 business. And myself and my husband is a small
24 business owner in Community Board 10 District,
25 and they're a great asset to us, they're very

1 informative. Anything we need from the Parks
2 Department, Traffic Department, any government
3 department, we can call on they Community Board
4 and they have information for us and be there to
5 help us. So please consider them and don't cut
6 the Community Boards. They need more help. They
7 need more people to work there so when we call on
8 the phone we will have two lines, two people
9 picking up the phone instead of one. And we can
10 have more help there. I myself, my husband and I,
11 have a small business in Pelham Bay. I'm also
12 pleading to you guys to help the small
13 businesses, to keep the small businesses going.
14 They're dying, the mom and pop stores are dying
15 slowly, and that's not good for the community.

16 The gentleman spoke about the census, about
17 the race, mixed race and single race, and
18 African. I have six races in me. There's nothing
19 that covers that in the census. So I can't see
20 you guys fixing that at all, but please do
21 something to fix the problems with the small
22 businesses to help them and help the Community
23 Boards stay strong.

24 Thank you for your time.

25 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Miss Scanlon.

1 Anthony Green.

2 MR. GREEN: Hello, everyone. Good evening,
3 and thanks for coming. I have no speech. I'm
4 just going to speak from the heart and present.

5 Well, first of all, I want to say that I
6 love technology. It's a little bit off the
7 subject but it is related. I'm a Bronx Net
8 producer. I'm also a long-term, longstanding
9 member of the community in the Bronx, and most
10 notably I'm a proud father of a six-year-old
11 daughter. And we make use of technology all the
12 time. And the reason I'm mentioning that is
13 because I think that we should continue to
14 developing programs with technology, using public
15 access, such as Bronx Net, so our local areas can
16 continue to grow, within the Charter, continue to
17 allow access to the people of the community, to
18 create and incorporate the community. And the
19 secondary is with fathers -- and families, first
20 families. And fathers, we do have innovative
21 ways that we may be able to use some of the
22 technology that we have. For instance, I'm
23 developing ideas to bring fathers and families
24 together through virtual visitation centers by
25 somehow creating a center where a family can

1 experience a visitation via online, possibly with
2 3-D animation and graphics and holograms, that
3 can bring people in remote places and keep them
4 together. This is going on in the Bronx where
5 especially with the African-American community
6 that fathers get a bad rap. And I want to be able
7 to do something to keep the families and the
8 fathers together whether they have been
9 incarcerated, contact and ties with their family.
10 They could be overseas serving our country. To
11 keep them together, or whatever situation, just
12 to be able to engage and interact, create some
13 kind of center resource where we may be able to
14 do that.

15 So basically what I'm asking for somewhere
16 in the program to have an outlet or mechanism to
17 be able to have the voices of the community heard
18 and also empower them by giving them the tools
19 necessary via funds to incorporate the technology
20 that we use everyday. There are people here that
21 are updating their statuses, they're using
22 Twitter -- you mentioned Myspace, Facebook -- and
23 different mechanisms that we're able to use. I
24 find out what's going on in the Bronx through the
25 Borough Facebook. So, you know, I'm not alone,

1 and a lot of younger generations are using these,
2 continue to do so. They're live streaming.
3 You're doing all the right things. Let's just
4 continue to develop and promote that kind of
5 activity. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Green.

7 The next three speakers will be Michael
8 Meyers, Arthur Richardson and Bree Smith. We'll
9 start with Michael Meyers.

10 MR. MEYERS: Unlike Council Member Koppell,
11 I will do my best to respect time limits and term
12 limits.

13 My name is Michael Meyers. I'm the
14 president of the New York City Civil Rights
15 Coalition. I testify at this hearing because I
16 did not have knowledge in advance of the hearing
17 in Manhattan. I only read about it afterwards in
18 the New York Times. Notwithstanding that, I had
19 sent the Commission through its Web site that I
20 be sent a notification of all public meetings.
21 That Web site is decidedly unfriendly. It has no
22 telephone number . There is no E-mail address to
23 contact the Commission or its staff. The contact
24 page seems to be in the form of a form. A form
25 that it seems nobody reads immediately inasmuch

1 as no one ever, ever responded to me to this
2 date.

3 Secondly, I'm dismayed at the composition of
4 this Commission. It appears overly weighted in
5 the direction of persons with ties to City Hall
6 and/or public officials. That does not give me
7 any confidence in this Commission's independence.
8 I do not question any one person's integrity but
9 I do wonder about the integrity of purpose of a
10 City Charter Review Commission that is so top
11 heavy with Commissioners who are organically
12 connected with if not appendages of City Hall and
13 the elected officials' apparatus.

14 The chair is the CEO of a University wholly
15 dependent on governmental funding and private
16 philanthropy who are wealthy, some of whom are
17 the friends of New York's wealthiest citizens.
18 Others on this Commission serve on governmental
19 bodies such as the City's Conflict of Interests
20 Board, or fall under the command influence of
21 public officials. Two of you served under the
22 Civilian Complaint Review Board, a mayoral
23 agency. Others may be dependent on governmental
24 funding for their not-for-profits and on good
25 government relations which is the portfolio of

1 the vice president of government relations of
2 Con Edison.

3 I suggest that each member of this
4 Commission state for the record his or her ties
5 and funding connections to government or
6 governmental officials and/or the Carnegie
7 Corporation.

8 As I was trying to get information about the
9 Commission's schedule of hearings and meetings, I
10 saw no announcement or postings on its Web site
11 of job openings. Yet, I also read in the New
12 York Times that there have been staff
13 appointments made, including a spokesman for
14 Charter Review Commission, the very same person
15 who serves as spokesperson for the City
16 University of New York. I had no idea whether
17 that presents a technical or other conflict of
18 interest. But any appointment of staff without
19 notice on its Web site and without due
20 consideration to each of your principles without
21 due consideration to the affirmative action
22 process seem to be to me like a violation of the
23 spirit of equal opportunity and accountability.
24 It feeds the appearance and the stench of
25 cronyism. The same sort of stench that we

1 smelled when we read in the press that recently
2 departed commissioners of Mr. Bloomberg landed
3 plum, high-paying jobs within of the City
4 University of New York.

5 Finally, I am not convinced that another
6 City Charter Revision Commission is at all
7 necessary. Unless a single purpose is to propose
8 a correction of the politically wired and
9 outrageous change to the City Charter that was
10 orchestrated by Mayor Bloomberg and his allies in
11 the New York City Council who, breaking their
12 promises to the voters, on their own changed term
13 limits law from two to three successive terms in
14 order to allow Mayor Bloomberg to be eligible to
15 run for a third successive term, and to allow
16 Christine Quinn, and the other personally
17 affected term-limited City Council members, like
18 Oliver Koppell, to be eligible to run for a third
19 successive term.

20 Two terms are enough. Two four-year terms
21 are quite enough for all of them. This Commission
22 is operating in a climate of enormous distrust
23 and disrespect for the people, and we are the
24 people, look at this process as suspicious. Some
25 like to disinfect it. I'm going to find out what

1 happened at CUNY in terms of those landing those
2 plum jobs with the Mayor's cronies.

3 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Mr. Arthur Richardson.

4 MR. RICHARDSON: Good evening, members of the
5 Commission. My name is Arthur Richardson, and
6 I'm the Executive Director of Black United
7 Leadership of the Bronx. I welcome you to the
8 Bronx. Not just the Bronx, but I welcome you to
9 the South Bronx.

10 I speak tonight on three issues. First, I
11 speak regarding the Office of the Borough
12 President. We who have lived in the Bronx for
13 the past 40 years know what the Bronx was during
14 the '70s and the '80s. We also know that if it
15 was not for the efforts of our Borough President,
16 the redevelopment that we have seen throughout
17 the last 10 years would not have happened. Those
18 of us that are old enough to remember the days of
19 the Board of Estimate.

20 Since the new Charter Revision of 1989, the
21 Office of the Borough President was decimated. As
22 a result of that, we now have issues that
23 confront our Borough being decided by others that
24 do not know the real needs of our Borough. No
25 City Council members serving on the Land Use

1 Committee can make decisions affecting our
2 Borough. No unelected City Planning Commission,
3 many of whom have probably never been to the
4 Bronx, can make decisions affecting the Bronx. It
5 is a decision that should be left in the hands of
6 the Borough President who knows the area better
7 than anyone.

8 Second of all, I speak tonight on behalf of
9 Community Planning Boards. I first served on the
10 Planning Board in the 1970s when I was a very
11 young man. Since then I have been actively
12 involved in Community Planning Boards. My
13 Planning Board, Planning Board 3, was the first
14 Planning Board to exercise the 197(a) provision
15 of the law establishing the Community Planning
16 Boards. We did that at the time when even the
17 City Planning Commission, Bronx office, and the
18 general office in Manhattan, including HPD, was
19 saying that the Borough areas in our Planning
20 Board should have been set aside for industrial
21 parks. We were able to turn that around through
22 our 197(a) plan. No one has an opportunity to
23 speak to the powers that be other than through
24 their Planning Boards. Planning Board members
25 not only serve as members but they serve as the

1 eyes and ears of their communities. They bring
2 back to the Planning Boards the needs of their
3 neighborhoods.

4 Planning Boards need not to be considered
5 for elimination; they need to be considered for
6 strengthening. Planning Boards need to receive
7 monies to engage a plan to decide on the issues
8 of the Planning Boards.

9 And my last statement. We have talked about
10 this issue of nonpartisan elections. I say to you
11 tonight you came -- it came before the City for
12 decision and the City voted down. To those that
13 claim an independent cannot vote, there's an
14 election in November where anyone can vote. All
15 A primary does is select members of their party.
16 And if anyone thinks that the non-partisan
17 election be will be any more fairer than
18 primaries, they are majorly [sic] disillusioned.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: The next three
21 speakers: Julia Geronimo, Angela Vega and
22 Kerri-Ann.

23 Let's start with Ms. Geronimo. Is it Julian?

24 MR. SMITH: I thought it was Bree Smith.

25 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Pardon?

1 MR. SMITH: Bree Smith?

2 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Oh, I'm sorry,
3 Mr. Smith. I apologize.

4 MR. SMITH: No problem, sir.

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: My mistake.

6 MR. SMITH: No problem. I'm going to be very
7 brief.

8 I want to thank you for the opportunity to
9 speak. And I just want to mention as I start, my
10 name is Bree Smith, and I am a resident as well
11 as businessowner and homeowner in the LoSoBro,
12 Lower South Bronx, area. LoSoBro is primarily the
13 custodial neighborhoods for the Bronx's three
14 most visited structures: Yankee Stadium, Gateway
15 Mall, and the newly opening Family Intake Center
16 on 151st Street and Walton Avenue.

17 I'm the President of the South Bronx
18 Community Association, the Acting Co-Chair of the
19 LoSoBro Business Council, a group of over 50
20 businesspersons in the area, as well as the
21 Executive Coordinator for the LoSoBro Homeowners
22 Association.

23 I'm here today to voice the support for all
24 the organizations I represent for the Offices of
25 Borough President, we're here to support the

1 Borough President, Public Advocate, as well as
2 our Community Boards.

3 I have seen too many development initiatives
4 pushed through to the detriment of our
5 neighborhoods and against the will of our Boards
6 and elected officials. The organizations I
7 represent in having good faith access to proper
8 channels to participate in the process of voicing
9 our opinions. But even when agreement is reached
10 with our local Board and political advocates,
11 they have shown to be pretty much impotent to do
12 anything to help us. And I could name quite a
13 few examples but I won't in the efforts to move
14 along and give someone else the opportunity to
15 speak. My point is that the community has lost
16 faith in the process. We are not being heard and
17 we are growing more and more apathetic. Because
18 of the trend, the Charter Commission should not
19 be looking to abolish or continue to dilute the
20 offices and Boards mentioned, but instead should
21 look to strengthen them. And the cost of doing
22 so should not be measured only in cost but more
23 as being lost than can be quantified.

24 Lastly, I would personally differ with
25 Councilman Koppell on his stands on term limits

1 with the examples of our State Assembly and
2 Senate as a warning. I would hope that we
3 preserve term limits. I would also hope that in
4 deference to the courageous stand made by the
5 Borough President in the Kingsbridge Armory
6 community to hold out for a living wage, I hope
7 we can codify on a referendum for a living wage
8 for all workers and employers who work on and in
9 city-subsidized projects.

10 I thank you for the opportunity to speak.
11 And I hope we have more opportunity to meet in
12 the Bronx to discuss the issue again. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Mr. Smith.
14 Berkis Cruz-Eusebio.

15 MS. CRUZ-EUSEBIO: Good evening, Chairman,
16 and everyone. I'm standing before you as a
17 private citizen. As the mother of a 16-year-old
18 growing up in one of the poorest sites [sic] in
19 the nation. I'm a city worker, educated
20 immigrant who's teaching other children of poor
21 parents how to make a living, how to go to
22 school, and how to conduct themselves in a
23 business environment.

24 I was never a fan of Community Boards, and
25 I'm not going to be a hypocrite and say so, until

1 it affected me and my family. And then I needed
2 to be heard. And my complaint needed to be
3 acknowledged and my voice and my integrity and my
4 values needed to be respected. So far, that was
5 the one place I found support. When I was able to
6 say "I'm here because something is wrong."

7 The elimination of Community Boards really
8 have created for me an additional bureaucratic
9 step to go through processes that are really
10 difficult. And if for me as an educated woman, I
11 can only imagine what other people with a less
12 educational level can go through.

13 I happen to be a trilingual individual, but
14 the language that I was speaking was not
15 understood. I don't know if it was because they
16 were not willing to hear me, or they lacked the
17 capacity to understand me.

18 I really stand here to ask you to please
19 don't become another deaf ear in the bureaucracy
20 of the city for our children. They are our
21 future. And I'm concerned about mine. I'm not
22 sure I can guarantee them a loyal, honest and
23 fair one. And that's a concern that is as a
24 parent I have to struggle before every day.

25 I don't know how many of you have families.

1 But tonight I'm thinking how many kids here in
2 the Bronx may go without an after-school program.
3 How many teenagers will not have a summer school
4 program to go this afternoon with the elimination
5 in the budget cuts. And then we complain that
6 our children are roaming the streets, they are
7 getting mistreated by the cops. But if we don't
8 offer them the opportunity to take advantage of
9 those resources, how can we turn around and have
10 to face the question? Please help us raise our
11 children the right way. At this point you are our
12 only hope. Thank you so much.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

14 The next three speakers will be Julia
15 Geronimo, followed by Angela Vega and then
16 Kerri-Ann.

17 MS. GERONIMO: Good evening. My name is
18 Julia Geronimo. I'm the Community Advisor for
19 the Community Coalition, Throggs Neck Community
20 Partnership, also known as TNCAP.

21 I'm here to speak about the preservation of
22 the Community Board structure and adequate
23 funding for them to fulfill their mandates in
24 their Charter.

25 TNCAP has been in existence for over 12

1 years. Our job is to make Throggs Neck a safe
2 place for youth, adults and the elderly. We work
3 to prevent underage drinking and drug abuse and
4 reduce graffiti.

5 Our coalition first consists of leaders
6 throughout the community and Community Board 10
7 has been an active and invaluable member since
8 TNCAP's inception. Without their support we
9 cannot do our job to keep the community safe.
10 TNCAP has implemented several projects,
11 implementing several media campaigns in alcohol,
12 creating a community resource guide, and creating
13 the first non-supervised skate park in New York
14 City and continuing to monitor it to keep it
15 safe. All of which could not have been done
16 without the help of Community Board 10.

17 In order to sustain our efforts, we rely on
18 Community Board 10's support on completing and
19 compiling community data. CB10 is a viable source
20 of information. They are our access to the
21 community and help us get information and our
22 mission out. They help open channels and get data
23 from the police and other city agencies.

24 Community Board 10 outreaches many community
25 groups and connects us with helpful resources and

1 organizations.

2 Community Board 10 and TNCAP collaborate on
3 many projects that benefit the community. Most
4 currently they're working on connecting youth
5 service organizations in our community.

6 Without the help and support of Community
7 Board 10, TNCAP would not be able to support new
8 funding opportunities and grants in the community
9 which would prevent us from continuing our work
10 to make this a safer community for everyone.

11 Please preserve Community Boards. They are
12 our valuable resource in all of our communities.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Miss
15 Geronimo.

16 Angela Vega.

17 Keri-Ann?

18 The next three speakers will be George
19 Spitz, Carl Lungren and then John Reynolds.

20 Mr. Spitz.

21 MR. SPITZ: Yes. Thank you. I don't want to
22 criticize the Commission, but Mr. Meyers did say
23 something. You should have a telephone number on
24 the Web site, and since I am attending all five
25 hearings, but I have more than five suggestions,

1 there should be a way of submitting suggestions
2 to the Commission directly, and I'm making two
3 proposals tonight.

4 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Mr. Spitz, we're going
5 to make --

6 MR. SPITZ: I beg your pardon?

7 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: I said your statement
8 was noted and we will seek to include that in the
9 Web site.

10 MR. SPITZ: Thank you. The Commission's
11 always been responsive to me. They adopted one of
12 my proposals in the last Commission, Video
13 Voter's Guide.

14 Honorable Commissioners, my testimony
15 concerns tuition in the City University system
16 and providing religious and other nonpublic
17 schools with the same government subsidies as
18 charter schools. That is approximately \$8,500
19 per pupil.

20 I submit the tuition in the City University
21 is illegal. Free tuition was established by
22 referendum in 1847 and continued through war and
23 depression, notably the 1930s. Ironically, New
24 York City could afford free tuition in the '30s
25 despite massive unemployment and only a 1 percent

1 sales tax. There were attempts to extend free
2 tuition to the state University by Governor
3 Rockefeller, but New York Mayor Robert Wagner and
4 Assembly Speaker Anthony Travia lead fights to
5 protect free tuition. In the 1967 constitutional
6 convention Chairman Travia and Vice Chairman
7 Wagner pushed through a proposal making free
8 tuition mandatory at all public higher education
9 institutions. The New York Times September 9, '67
10 said, "Bankers and investment brokers failed to
11 bid on state notes allegedly forcing withdrawal
12 of a constitutional free tuition proposal."

13 In 1976 Wagner was out of power, and Travia
14 had been kicked upstairs to Federal Judge after
15 bipartisan attempts to defeat him in his East New
16 York District failed. Then, more pliable
17 Democrats, Governor Hugh Carey and Mayor Abraham
18 Beame, took advantage of a so-called fiscal
19 crisis and did away with free tuition by rigging
20 the trustees.

21 Let me read June 2, 1976. "The New York City
22 Board of Higher Education voted 7 to 1 last night
23 to impose tuition at the City University next
24 fall." That was illegal because it was
25 established by referendum.

1 Now, with respect to state subsidies of
2 nonpublic schools, opponents generally site the
3 Blaine Amendment, which Frank Macciarola, the
4 previous Chairman, says is the last vestige of
5 bigotry in New York State. And it should be
6 repealed by the New York State legislature, but
7 it's subsumed by court decisions. It has no
8 legal standing. And I've explained that, and I
9 proposed that religious schools and other
10 nonpublic schools get the same \$8,500 subsidy
11 that charter schools get. That's equity. And
12 I'll give you all this and you'll put in the
13 record. Thank you very much. I'll see you
14 tomorrow.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Okay. We all look
16 forward to that. Thank you very much.

17 Carl Lungren. Carl Lungren.

18 MR. LUNGREN: This is what we think is going
19 to happen if Community Boards are eliminated. My
20 right to have a place to redress my grievances
21 will be seriously curtailed.

22 One of the things that -- oh, by the way,
23 may I introduce myself. My name is Charles
24 Lungren. I'm Chair of the Bronx County Green
25 Party.

1 One of the things I've been doing lately is
2 participating with our Community Board. This is
3 something that a lot of Green Party members have
4 not done in the past because our opinion is
5 usually that these Boards are run by the
6 Democratic Party, particularly in this city, and
7 we don't have much of a say. But in the year
8 that I have been participating on the Community
9 Board as a community resident, and also on a
10 couple of committees, I found that it is a way to
11 get our ideas to the public, and it's a forum
12 that somebody like the Green Party would have
13 over other alternative parties. So we,
14 therefore, say that this is our introduction to
15 the political system.

16 We're not a ballot status party right now.
17 We are not going to be one for quite a while. We
18 have an opportunity this year if we get 50,000
19 votes for our gubernatorial candidate. However,
20 this is one of the few ways that people in the
21 community have a way to participate in the
22 decisions that affect their lives.

23 For New York City, the Community Boards are
24 the equivalent of our village square or our town
25 hall. There is no other place where people in a

1 large, fairly large group are able to assemble
2 peacefully to discuss these matters. Doing it,
3 you know, hearings like this that happen
4 occasionally, that's not participating in the
5 day-to-day life of the community. Going to our
6 elected officials is not practical. You can't go
7 there in large groups and they're usually too
8 busy -- at least in our experience in our area of
9 the Bronx. Things don't get done. But I see now
10 on a Community Board level things are discussed,
11 issues are raised. Even if we're right, and this
12 is all run by partisan politics, at least I'm
13 learning about the issues in my community and I'm
14 able to have a say in them and able to
15 communicate this to other people. One of the
16 other things I'd like to mention, too, this has
17 come up with some of the issues around the
18 nonpartisan elections, we're definitely against
19 that idea of nonpartisan elections. As a couple
20 of people said, if you register for a party then
21 you have the opportunity, if it's a ballot status
22 party, to vote for your candidate there and
23 vote -- if they get on the ballot you'll be able
24 to vote in the general election.

25 What I'd like to say to people here right

1 now, since we are not a ballot status party, if
2 anyone is considering running for office and
3 understands that they're not going to win the
4 Democratic primary, come to the Green Party. We
5 will get you on the ballot, we guarantee it. I'm
6 running for the 82nd Assembly District in the
7 Bronx, Zerega, Co-Op City, Castle Hill section.
8 We're running seven candidates this year in the
9 Bronx November one. This is the most we've ever
10 run. We are serious about this, and we are going
11 to continue on and we're going to grow bigger and
12 please support us.

13 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: John Reynolds. Is John
14 Reynolds here? Okay, take your time,
15 Mr. Reynolds.

16 MR. REYNOLDS: Good evening Mr. Goldstein,
17 members of the Commission, elected officials and
18 guests. I'm a lifelong resident of the Bronx of
19 the Cambridge section, and I'm here to support
20 the Community Boards even though they're flawed.

21 Community activists and concerned citizens
22 have very limited means of communicating and
23 airing their views to the decision-making
24 apparatus of the City of New York, their
25 covenant. Many are the local Community Board

1 meetings. Even though Community Boards are not
2 truly democratic or representative of the
3 communities, since their members are appointed
4 mainly by the Borough President with some seats
5 filled by City Council persons, they do offer a
6 means for community involvement. They are a
7 means of top down governance rather than popular
8 democracy, so they need to be democratized, made
9 more independent and strengthened.

10 Furthermore, as a member of the Green Party
11 we also call for preserving the Office of the
12 Borough President, of the Public Advocate, and we
13 are opposed to term limits. Although we support
14 term limits. Furthermore, to develop some of the
15 decentralized power to the communities and
16 Community Boards, we also are calling for elected
17 Community Boards.

18 Finally, I'd like to say something about
19 non-partisan elections. We and a number of other
20 political parties won a case in Federal Court in
21 2003/2004. We had ballot status and lost it, and
22 a Court case was acquired, sponsored by the
23 (inaudible) Center to help us preserve our
24 freedom under the First Amendment to associate
25 politically. We have 24,000 in the Borough of

1 Queens in the State of New York minor parties,
2 so-called minor parties. We also have
3 significant numbers of enrolled members. We are
4 unable to hold a primary when we lose ballot
5 status. We are unable to communicate among
6 ourselves. And so the answer is not non-partisan
7 elections. An answer is outside of the purview of
8 this Commission, unfortunately. It's a matter
9 that needs to be addressed in the state
10 legislature of reforming the election law, of
11 lowering the threshold for parties to become
12 ballot status parties, and also to allow
13 non-ballot status parties to exercise their First
14 Amendment rights and freedom of association.

15 Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

17 Our next three speakers are Frank Morano,
18 Chauncey Young and Frances Tejoida.

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Mr. Morano.

20 MR. MORANO: Good evening. First, I passed
21 Council Member Koppell in the hall he wanted me
22 to let you know he's almost done with his
23 remarks. If you want, you can catch the tail end
24 of what he's about to say.

25 But I was also dismayed to once again to see

1 Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer give
2 verbatim the exact same testimony which he gave
3 to you the other day, and it's still incredibly
4 misleading, and for all the same reasons that I
5 cited the other day, it's wildly inaccurate.

6 So in order not to do the same thing and be
7 redundant, I'm not going to itemize each of the
8 instances that he says were inaccurate, but I
9 believe that they were.

10 Also, I want to commend Chairman Goldstein
11 and the Commission for its selections thus far in
12 terms of the Executive Director and the staff. I
13 think that it shows exactly what kind of
14 Commission this is. Independent-minded
15 Commission that's not beholden to any public
16 official, or to any city agency, or any group of
17 public officials. And I think it's so
18 interesting that so many people, both elected
19 officials and so-called "good government groups"
20 that criticize this Commission as being in
21 lockstep with City Hall or a task force for the
22 Mayor, after it was clear with your staff
23 selections, who have done an incredible job, as
24 you pointed out, with outreach, that that's not
25 the case, that they haven't come forward. And I

1 would urge the Commission to keep in mind that
2 that's probably more of an indication that when
3 they object to procedural matters they're not
4 really objecting to procedural matters, they're
5 objecting to any excuse to upset the status quo.

6 As I mentioned, I and others have spoken in
7 favor of proportional representation. I have in
8 detail prepared written remarks for you to review
9 at your leisure about what exactly my
10 proportional representation proposal is, because
11 when I use the term "proportional representation"
12 it might not mean the same thing as when George
13 Spitz or someone else uses it. But I couldn't
14 agree more with everyone who spoke in favor of
15 non-partisan elections. But as Mr. Scissura, who
16 participated in a nonpartisan special elections,
17 or Commissioner Fiala, who saw his chief of staff
18 elected in a nonpartisan election, can attest
19 they are still very, very flawed primarily
20 because of the system of partisan redistricting,
21 which creates the lines and the so-called "wasted
22 vote effect" that voters feel beholden to. So I
23 would urge you to go one step further and review
24 my proposal for non-partisan choice voting which
25 preserves all the advantages of non-partisan

1 elections and minimizes any disadvantages there
2 are.

3 Thank you very much, and I'll look forward
4 to seeing with great interest the rest of the
5 Commission's work.

6 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

7 Chauncey Young. Is Chauncey Young with us?
8 Frances Tejoida.

9 Chauncey Young is not here and Francis
10 Tejoida is not here.

11 Kenny Agosto.

12 MR. AGOSTO: Good evening, Chairman
13 Goldstein, Mr. Cassino, the other members of the
14 distinguished members of the New York City
15 Charter Revision Commission. My name is Kenny
16 Agosto. In addition to being a lifelong resident
17 of the beautiful Borough of the Bronx, I served
18 four years as a member of Bronx Community Board
19 11. Currently, I represent the neighborhoods of
20 Allerton, Bronxdale, Ford Independent, Indian
21 Village, Morris Park, Norwood, Pelham Bay
22 Gardens, Parkway, Van Cortlandt Village, Van Nest
23 and Westchester Square. It represents the
24 second oldest -- I mean the oldest District in
25 the Bronx. It represents the second largest

1 Jewish District in the Bronx, and we're not
2 Judea, and City Hall isn't Rome. And Emperor
3 Honorius is not looking for the Visigoth to come
4 over the seventh hill. We need our Community
5 Boards. Our Community Boards are the eyes and
6 ears to City government. In 1898, when the county
7 of the Bronx was established, one of your
8 predecessors a century ago said it was important
9 to give pride to the local municipalities. It
10 was important that services are rendered to the
11 people that pay their taxes and live their lives.

12 I urge you when you consider revisiting our
13 Charter to protect the office of the Borough
14 President, because although the U.S. Supreme
15 Court struck down, the Supreme Court struck down
16 the Board of Estimate, the function of the
17 Borough President is very important. He is the
18 Mayor's eyes and ears of budget, of the Borough
19 Boards and the Community Boards. These draconian
20 cuts, the things, the ridiculous stuff that's
21 happening in the Department of Education, all the
22 other things that are happening cannot go. It
23 can't go. We cannot sit by and let by these
24 things happen.

25 We live here. We represent the Bronx. We

1 are happy to live here. But if we don't do
2 something this is going to be one-person city.
3 I'm sorry, I'm not going to bring it back, but
4 200 million dollars went to an election, eight
5 million the opponent had, the Democrat, 4 points
6 did the difference. 66 percent of the residents
7 of this city are Democrats. We have two parties
8 in the United States and other parties, but we
9 have two major parties. We elect the President,
10 we elect the Governor, we elect the Mayor.
11 Please preserve this, the Borough Presidency, as
12 it is. Please preserve the Community Boards.
13 Actually, you should add to their budgets. Thank
14 you very much.

15 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

16 Next can we have Alex Diaz.

17 MR. DIAZ: Good evening, members of the
18 Charter Revision Commission. My name is Alex
19 Diaz, Chief of Staff in the Bronx for New York
20 State Senate Majority Leader, Pedro Espada, Jr.
21 Senator Espada cannot be here this evening
22 because he is in Albany. He thanks you for
23 allowing me to represent him at this public
24 hearing.

25 I will now read a statement into the record

1 from the New York State Majority Leader Pedro
2 Espada, Jr.

3 As someone who began my political career on
4 the grass roots level as a tenant organizer
5 invested in their community, I am a strong
6 proponent of residents being fully invested in
7 their community. It is not enough to make them
8 feel invested or create the perception that the
9 they are involved in the decision-making process.
10 Residents must have a strong voice and active
11 participation on a level in which they can impact
12 change. To that end, I would recommend the
13 following changes to the City Charter.

14 The abolishment of the Office of the City
15 Public Advocate and the Office of the Borough
16 Presidents -- not for any political motivation or
17 agenda but as a way to reduce the City budget
18 and, most importantly, to redirect funds to local
19 community elections as a way of engaging and
20 empowering citizens to take responsibility as
21 well as have accountability and a real voice in
22 how their neighborhoods are run.

23 Create civic Boards or empower existing
24 Community Boards by making these elected
25 positions rather than appointed positions. At

1 present, those who serve on Community Boards are
2 appointed and, therefore, are beholden to those
3 who appoint them. In addition, their authority
4 is merely in an advisory capacity. I say let's
5 provide teeth to these Boards that represent the
6 citizens in their neighborhoods.

7 By electing Community Board members, they
8 would serve beyond the traditional advisory role.
9 They would have fiscal oversight and be
10 intimately involved in the decision-making
11 process and in the services that their
12 neighborhoods receive from city agencies. Their
13 constituency truly would be the people they
14 represent. In an elected capacity, this is the
15 only way citizens can have a real voice and
16 involvement in how their community is run. And
17 with that voice and involvement real
18 accountability. As a result, our neighborhoods
19 will thrive and receive the services they need.

20 Again, funding would come from the
21 abolishment of the Offices of the Borough
22 Presidents and Public Advocate. This would be
23 real empowerment of the people and the democratic
24 process at its best. When citizens have ownership
25 they also have accountability to the community

1 they serve. When they have power, when their
2 voice counts to recommend legislation to the City
3 Council, members of the City Council will do
4 their jobs more effectively because they too will
5 be held to a higher accountability. The winner of
6 this process is the collective citizenry.

7 These types of elections of citizen Boards
8 should be non-partisan. Voters should be given
9 the opportunity to select the best and brightest
10 of citizens without party affiliation.

11 In 2003 I was involved in a non-partisan
12 election that allowed for the full community
13 participation, providing the voters with the
14 unique opportunity of choice not based on party
15 or politics, but on performance and credentials.

16 The Primary Election process in and of
17 itself limits the number of individuals who can
18 participate and certainly limits the choices of
19 voters.

20 In non-partisan elections voters would come
21 from all party lines and this would make the
22 process more democratic and provide real
23 participation in an electorate that is clearly
24 changing.

25 In closing, I reiterate that the abolishment

1 of the Office of the Borough Presidents and
2 Public Advocate and redirecting taxpayer dollars
3 to support local community-elected Boards will
4 empower the citizenry and neighborhoods in all
5 five boroughs. This is the only way citizens can
6 truly have a voice and high level of involvement
7 in the services that their community seeks.

8 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much,
9 Mr. Diaz.

10 That exhausts all of the people that have
11 signed up this evening. I'd like to thank
12 everybody who attended this very robust session
13 today in the Borough of the Bronx. We look
14 forward to seeing some of you, if you wish,
15 tomorrow in Staten Island.

16 Before we adjourn, I'd like to give any of
17 the Commissioners an opportunity to be heard.

18 I'll start with Commissioner Cohen.

19 COMMISSIONER COHEN: Thank you. I actually
20 have a comment that I'd like to address in
21 response to some things that we heard from the
22 public tonight, and I'd like to make a suggestion
23 to my fellow Commissioners.

24 There were one or two witnesses tonight who
25 said something about the appointment -- made

1 comments about the appointment process for this
2 Commission. This is actually a mayoral Charter
3 Revision Commission. The rules of the Charter
4 Revision Commissions allow for a Council Charter
5 Revision Commission to be appointed by the City
6 Council, and in our year of existence, the
7 Council has chosen not to appoint one. So I
8 think it's a little bit unfair to argue that the
9 appointment of a mayoral Charter Revision
10 Commission is somehow an unfair set of
11 appointments. And then I do want to say, echo the
12 Chairman's comments being a very robust session
13 tonight. It was an extremely, I thought,
14 illuminating session, and it may be even sorrier
15 that last week's session in Manhattan was
16 relatively sparsely-attended and actually largely
17 by one or two particular interest groups, and
18 that we didn't hear quite the range of topics
19 that we heard discussed tonight. And so I would
20 urge that we do add back another
21 information-gathering hearing in Manhattan for
22 this round since there was really very short
23 notice for the first one, and all of those
24 problems, I think we really need to give
25 Manhattanites a chance -- although they certainly

1 have within their power to travel to other
2 boroughs, and I will it urge people to do so,
3 that we might want to consider adding another
4 hearing.

5 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Thank you, Commissioner
6 Cohen, for that.

7 Any other Commissioners would like to speak?

8 Yes, Commissioner Freyre.

9 COMMISSIONER FREYRE: I am a member of the
10 Commission that is also a member of the Conflict
11 of Interest Board. And I wanted to address this
12 because it's come up twice this evening.

13 First of all, under New York State law there
14 is no incompatibility in serving on the Charter
15 Revision Commission as well as on the Conflict of
16 Interest Board at the same time. And I made sure
17 to review that and made sure that it was the case
18 before serving on the Board.

19 And secondly, I have no personal or
20 professional connection with the Mayor. None
21 whatsoever. I'm a private citizen. I have
22 private employment. I do no business with the
23 City and I do no business with the Mayor's
24 office. I'm happy to answer any questions that
25 anyone may have on that.

1 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Let me say that as
2 Chairman of this Commission, I'm very privileged
3 to be associated with all of these Commissioners.
4 These are an extraordinary group of people, women
5 and men, who serve on this Commission, are
6 independently minded. They are intelligent. They
7 are highly skilled and experienced in matters of
8 issues connected with all of the testimony
9 tonight. So I thank you all for being part of
10 this.

11 It was a stimulating evening. And I just
12 echo what you said as well, Commissioner Cohen.

13 There being no further business -- Ernie,
14 did you have -- there being no further issues
15 that we formally have to deal with, I'll call for
16 motion to adjourn. And it's been seconded. All in
17 favor?

18 (A chorus of ayes.)

19 CHAIRMAN GOLDSTEIN: Aye. Thank you all.
20 We'll see you next time.

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(Whereupon, at 8:52 P.M., the above
Public Hearing concluded.)

I, NORAH COLTON, CM a Notary Public for and
within the State of New York, do hereby certify
that the above is a correct transcription of my
stenographic notes.

NORAH COLTON, CM