



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

FOR THE RECORD

Good morning Chairman Kallos and members of the Governmental Operations Committee. I am Marco Carrión, Commissioner of the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit. Thank you for accepting my testimony today in regards to Intro 585, legislation that would institute term limits for community board members allowing them to serve a maximum of six consecutive two-year terms, and Intro 732, which would make urban planning professionals available to community boards.

We would like to commend the City Council's commitment to thinking of new and progressive ways to improve the transparency and professionalism of the Boards. We look forward to working with the Council on the important issues raised by Intro 585, along with Intro 732.

Community Boards play an important role in strengthening New York City's diverse and varied communities, serving a number of functions that allow the City's government and its many agencies to best serve people and communities. They play a valuable role in addressing community concerns, monitoring services, and act as respected resources and points of contact for the City's various agencies. Community boards provide important local perspective, advice, and recommendations to the City on land use questions, the budget process, and long term planning.

We share the Council's commitment to providing Community Boards with the best tools to serve every New Yorker. As an administration we are committed to supporting and improving the Community Boards' abilities in ways that allow them to function and perform more efficiently and effectively. We rely on Community Boards to act as the institutions with the finger on the pulse of our neighborhoods, and as an important point of contact for residents. We believe it is crucial that our Community Boards are diverse and open and that they are as representative of the communities they serve as possible, at a time when many of the City's neighborhoods are undergoing rapid transformation.

Introduction 585 addresses term limits for Community Board members. We understand the critical need to preserve the experience and knowledge of local issues of experienced Community Boards members who have helped communities for years as they undergo a wide variety of changes. It is also important that Community Board membership shifts to represent changing communities and include new and innovative ideas and fresh perspectives. These qualities need to be balanced to best serve the City's communities.

Borough Presidents, working in conjunction with local Council Members, have the authority to appoint Community Board members. We believe the existing requirement that all board members apply to be reappointed every two years, with the possibility of not being reappointed, acts as a check on the performance of community board members and gives Borough Presidents, with Council Members, the right tools to achieve this balance.

Further, Community Boards establish their own internal rules and practices, including the ability to set term limits for Board leadership positions, and preserving their ability to govern and regulate their own leadership structure is important.

Regarding Intro 732, we have concerns regarding the advisability and appropriateness of amending the Charter to include a staffing mandate for urban planning professionals. The budget adoption process, which includes the annual development of policy priorities by the City's elected officials, is the process where overall personnel budgets are established. Further, both Borough Presidents and Community Boards determine their own staffing. City planners provide valuable knowledge and expertise regarding complex land use and planning issues. However, Borough Presidents and Boards have varied needs and priorities, and how they use their budgets for staffing is a matter for each to decide. Each Community District faces different planning needs over the course of time. We are committed to working with Community Boards and with the Borough Presidents to improve access to the tools and expertise necessary to fulfill their mandates, both through the annual budget process and throughout the year.

We would like to thank all of the Community Board members across the five boroughs for their commendable service and the time they spend working to make our communities all that they can be. Without their assistance government could not perform as effectively as it does.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to the Council today, and thank you for your leadership in the reform of Community Boards.



# COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

1291 ST. MARKS AVENUE • BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11213

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Eric Adams  
Borough President

**FOR THE RECORD**

Nizjoni Granville  
Chairperson

Robert Matthews  
Chairperson Emeritus

Michelle T. George  
District Manager

April 28, 2015

## Testimony of Brooklyn Community Board 8 to provide comments on Intro 0585-2014

Hon. Ben Kallos, Chair  
NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations

Dear Chairman Kallos,

Applying term limits to volunteer community board members will only serve to undermine the ability of those volunteers to provide their expertise. We ask you to stand with us in rejecting this proposal. We, as a city, would be ill-advised to support the jettison from the Board, members that have gained 12 valuable years of training and experience solely on the passage of time. Our committees' functions require in-depth knowledge of the rules and regulations governing the committees' areas of concern: zoning, landmarking, liquor licenses, education, sanitation, etc. Such knowledge takes time and focus to acquire as volunteers, most of whom still work day jobs and have little time leveraging home life, work life, and volunteer services. Imposing term limits will also eliminate those seasoned members who know the history of the neighborhood and the history of particular projects in the community. We have come to rely upon such knowledge.

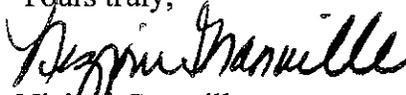
It is imperative to ask: Are extended terms of service by Community Board members a real problem? The bill text contains no preamble explaining the necessity of this legislation. If the point is to make sure new voices get to be heard on Community Boards, this might seem to be a worthy goal. However, on the one hand, twelve years seems like a reasonably long time, but on the other, it is not always easy to find people interested in serving on a Community Board, and it might be a bad idea to limit the pool of willing volunteers by forcibly removing dedicated members who have reached expiry.

Naturally occurring turnover of CB members and our own methods of removing non-performing members is more than sufficient to obtain new members for the Board yearly. Current members also have the opportunity not to reapply if they feel they can no longer be of service on the Board. Each CB has a set of By-Laws, most of which address the issue of member performance to help aid in weeding out non-performing members. If the goal of your legislation is to prevent the face of the Community Board from becoming stale or stagnant, your legislation will ultimately fail because it has the potential to forcibly remove well performing members with much needed expertise and add, just for the sake of adding fresh faces, members that might not be as well versed in the role and function of Community Boards or proven in their dedication to

serve. This will merely further hamper the Boards in doing their Charter mandated responsibilities.

Furthermore, members are appointed by term limited entities in City Councilmembers and the Borough President; thusly, any potential favoritism shown to specific members will be rendered moot when new electeds are sworn in. This creates checks and balances at each level: the appointment level and the Community Board level. If this legislation seeks to create new interest in the function of Community Board and participation from new members of the community, we suggest granting a greater role to Community Boards in helping to determine who should be appointed to the Board. After all, we are indeed the keepers of records and know who is active or not and who has the makings of a good member. Too often, members are appointed that have no history of community activism and those are ones with the worst performance and attendance records. If we could keep individuals like that off the Board, there would never be a need for term limits.

Yours truly,



Nizjean Granville  
Board Chair

cc: Hon. E. Adams  
Hon. R. Cornegy  
Hon. L. Cumbo  
Hon. D. Mealy  
E. Tyus, CB 8



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

**Testimony of Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Hearing of the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations  
April 30, 2015**

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Good afternoon Chair Kallos and Members of the Committee on Governmental Operations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the issues of term limits for Community Board members and urban planners for Community Boards.

Int. No. 585-2014

Int. No. 585 would set a 12 year term limit – or six two year terms – for members of New York City’s Community Boards. I am not a fan of term limits and believe that robust elections and appointment processes are the best way to balance the competing interests of having experienced public officials with ensuring new blood in elective or appointive positions. This is especially true on community boards where members are unpaid, yet spend an enormous amount of time dealing with what are often extremely complicated issues.

In Manhattan, some of our longest serving community board members are the best and most knowledgeable. Let’s take the critical area of land use as an example where community boards play a Charter-mandated role in the ULURP process. It takes time for a non-land use professional to develop the expertise needed to function at a high level as a community board leader on zoning and land use issues. In fact, it could be that for an initial term a newer community board member may not serve on the land use or planning committee. When a member gets on a committee such as this, it could take several years to develop significant expertise. At this point, under the conditions proposed by Int. No. 585, the member would be term-limited out. I have real concerns that this would lead to an over-reliance by community boards on their members who work professionally in the land use and development worlds.

Now there are some individual cases of less active appointees who seem to be continually reappointed by virtue of inertia or habit. A robust appointment process can and should deal with that issue and it is up to the Borough Presidents to ensure such a process. Since becoming Manhattan Borough President, I have established an extremely rigorous process in which both current and new applicants are vetted for approximately two months. There is an extensive application process and applications are reviewed and scored by a team in my office as well as panels of outside experts. Then every applicant is brought into the office to participate in a series of exercises which demonstrate knowledge, ability to grasp important issues and most importantly – the ability to work with others. Finally we speak to board chairs and Council Members to get their input on applicants.

We received 729 applications for the 300 Community Board available appointments. Over the last few months we completed a round of appointments with 91 new community board members, five of whom were 16 and 17 year olds. Just as I have championed 16 and 17 year old service on community boards, I try my best to search for and appoint community board members who will bring demographic and geographic diversity to the boards. I believe my office's efforts are a better way of dealing with what may sometimes be the inertia of an appointment process rather than a strict term limits requirement.

#### Int. No. 732 of 2015

Int. No. 732 would amend the Chapter of the City Charter relating to urban planning professionals. Currently the Borough Presidents are required to maintain a planning office and the planning office is required to provide technical assistance to community boards. Int. No. 732 would require the Borough President to provide in our office “within appropriations therefor, the services of at least one professional planner.... for each community board in the borough.” I fully agree with the sponsors' intention that community boards should be provided with

additional resources. However, I have serious concerns that providing those resources through planners at the borough presidents' offices will not prove an effective way of assisting community boards.

In my office, urban planners are assigned to cover all community boards in the borough. These planners attend all of the land use or planning committee meetings of the community boards to which they are assigned, are in regular touch with the boards they cover, and are always available to assist the boards with land use issues. However, they work for the Borough President and are responsible for furthering the Borough President's land use and development goals. To the extent that this is what the law requires, it is already being done. But I assume that the law is designed to supplement the community board's resources by providing additional planners to assist them with their work. While I agree that additional resources should be provided, these resources should be provided directly to the community boards and should be available to the boards for their most pressing needs. In some Manhattan districts, years can go by before the board sees a ULURP, much less the same type of action on a regular basis in which board members can develop expertise. Some boards would be better served by hiring a housing expert or an additional person to assist with constituent services.

Another consideration is that a requirement to house, pay and manage urban planners from the borough presidents' offices could lead to a host of unintended consequences. Budgetary concerns aside, in the land use context the borough president functions as a bridge between community concerns and the borough's development needs. It may be hard to function in this manner if a borough president employee is supporting a community board position that may be contrary to the borough's priorities.

I urge the Council to support the goals of this legislation but to do so by providing increased direct and unencumbered financial support to the Community Boards.



**Testimony of Lauren George**  
**Associate Director, Common Cause New York**  
**before the New York City Council Committee Governmental Operations**  
**April 30, 2015**

Common Cause NY is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization founded to serve as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process. Accordingly, ensuring that our Community Boards—the most local level of government we have in the city—are the most effective and representative of all New Yorkers aligns with our core mission to promote civic engagement and accountability in government.

At the national level, Common Cause has long opposed term limits for elected officials, based on the position that the ballot box is where terms should be limited. The learning curve for new Members is often quite steep, and when representatives need to spend years learning the rules and customs of a legislative body, the public suffers. If there are going to be term limits, they should be long enough for individuals to build expertise and to prevent the body from being completely staff driven. Common Cause has supported term limits for Committee Chairs and Speaker roles in legislatures. Because Community Board members are appointed rather than elected, we support term limits for them.

**Intro 585-2014**

Council Member Dromm's bill, Intro 585-2014, places a reasonable 12 year limit on Community Board member terms. The bill would only apply this limit to new Board members appointed after April 2016, but we believe term limits should be phased in for existing members as well to promote fairness. Term limits could even help spur the recruitment of new talent. Community Board members should be representative of the diverse communities they serve, and change as neighborhood dynamics change. Members should be free of conflicts of interest and they should hold community priorities, rather than political concerns, paramount. Additionally, Common Cause recommends that Board and Committee Chairpersons be limited to 3 consecutive terms, giving them a total of 6 years to serve in those roles, so the community can benefit from the multiplicity of ideas and approaches that comes with rotating leadership.

Community Boards serve a vital role in our city as the most local level of government, provided for in the city charter to improve the delivery of city services, review and plan for land use in the community, and make recommendations on the city's budget. Unfortunately, there is a real disparity among Community Boards. Each of the five boroughs has a different set of rules and procedures for appointing and reappointing Community Board members. As communities change over time, very often new residents are underrepresented, especially when experienced members are continually reappointed. Common Cause/NY supports Intro 585 because we believe it will help the Boards better reflect their district's ethnic, age, and gender diversity, and should help balance the representation of tenants and homeowners.

**Intro 732-2015**

Community Boards need adequate staff and resources to do their charter mandated job of land use review. Providing adequate resources and technical assistance to the Boards is essential, and Intro 732 would greatly increase their effectiveness and functionality. Notwithstanding their key role, there is often a wide disparity of staff and ability to research issues among Boards across the city. Providing each Board with the services of a



professional planner would help equalize capacity and performance among the Boards - and greatly increase the ability of each Board to meaningfully participate in technical planning debates.

Additionally, with a professional planner on the team, Community Boards could re-allocate staff time to increase their outreach and public involvement. Limited staff curtails Boards' ability to properly outreach to, and seek public comment from, a broad array of community members. Many Boards fail to properly craft recommendations because of short staffing or lack of planning expertise. With a professional staff and guidance, inadequate or late recommendations are less likely to occur and each opportunity for local public comment can be met with a meaningful response.

### **Role of Community Boards**

Arguably the most important job of Community Boards is their role in the land use review process, including making key recommendations for all ULURP matters and zoning variances before the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA). In this role, Community Boards provide guidance to the Planning Commission, Council Members, Borough Presidents, and BSA Commissioners. Community Boards often serve as the "eyes and ears" on the ground and provide a critical source of information about community character. For the Planning Commission - a part time body that typically is not able to visit neighborhood locations - Community Boards are also an integral part of intelligence-gathering for Special Permits and rezonings heard by the Commission. For Council Members, the Boards provide a key source of local priorities at an early stage of ULURP - helping form consensus and flush out issues. Council Members look to Community Boards to provide support for their votes on rezonings and Special Permits, so their role should not be underestimated.

It is our challenge to create an environment of greater openness and public responsibility so that the *public* interest prevails over narrow interests. Boards are constantly forced into defensive ULURP battles. Ironically, the more Community Boards remain unequal partners in the land use process (due to their being under-resourced and their solely advisory ULURP vote) the less likely they are to act in the broader public interest.

We have seen worthwhile reforms to improve the functionality of Community Boards adopted in Manhattan, but reforms should be citywide. Strengthening the recruitment and application process should be the priority. Applications should be the same across the city, and there should be a standard set of criteria by which board applicants are assessed. The Borough Presidents, in conjunction with the City Council, should jointly issue a statement of best practices and expectations for Community Boards to help drive selection. Additionally, Board Members should no longer be permitted to be removed on an ad hoc basis, which has been perceived as punishment for taking unpopular political positions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Common Cause NY supports both Intro 732 and 585 as positive steps to help strengthen and empower our city's 59 Community Boards. Strengthening Community Boards is a crucial endeavor, as our neighborhoods so rapidly change and community planning becomes more important than ever in the face of a rapidly growing population, a frothy real estate market, constrained budgets and increased privatization of public assets. We welcome Intro 732 and 585 as important first steps in what we hope will be a sustained re-examination and reform of our City's Community Boards and hope that this legislation will move forward and be approved by the full Council.



The City of New York

# Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

**New York City Council Committee on Government Operations  
Public Hearing on  
Int. No. 732-2015,**

**A Local Law to amend the New York City Charter in relation to making urban planning professionals available to community boards**

**Testimony by Diana Switaj, Director of Planning and Land Use  
Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.  
250 Broadway – Committee Rm., 14<sup>th</sup> Fl.**

My name is Diana Switaj, I am Director of Planning and Land Use at Manhattan Community Board 1. I began my work at Community Board 1 as an urban planning graduate student through the Fund for the City of New York Community Planning Fellowship Program. Over time, I have also served as Planning Consultant before taking over as Director of Planning and Land Use in 2013.

Working as a planner for a Community Board, I am able to assist on a wide range of issues ranging from land use and zoning matters, traffic and transportation, historic districts, community facilities and infrastructure, housing, population, employment and economy, and senior services. I work primarily with the Planning Committee, but also assist each other committee as needed in dealing with planning issues. This work includes special planning projects as well as standard operations including but not limited to: Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) actions referred by the Department of City Planning; procedure actions referred by the Department of City Planning; Board of Standards and Appeals actions; applications for approvals from the Landmarks Preservation Commission as well as any and all other discretionary actions.

Institutional knowledge and history developed over time have proven to be critical in dealing with the planning issues outlined above. It has been especially important in regards to major projects such as the development of the World Trade Center and the South Street Seaport. However, knowledge developed over time on local parks and buildings, relationships formed with local government agencies and representatives, the local business improvement district and other prominent organizations or individuals have proven to be just as important in working on the day-to-day planning issues that face our district. The importance of institutional knowledge and history makes it imperative that any existing urban planning professionals at Community Boards be grandfathered in and allowed to remain.

We believe it is essential that through this new law, planners be assigned by Board rather than by project. It is critical that urban planning professionals assigned to Community Boards have the opportunity to develop a relationship with their Boards and knowledge of the areas over time. We also believe that to ensure this, there must be a low Board-to-planner ratio to allow the relationship and knowledge to develop.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



The City of New York

# Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

**New York City Council Committee on Government Operations**

**Public Hearing on**

**Int. No. 732-2015,**

**A Local Law to amend the New York City Charter in relation to making urban planning professionals available to community boards**

**Testimony by Catherine McVay Hughes, Chairperson  
Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.  
250 Broadway – Committee Rm., 14<sup>th</sup> Fl.**

My name is Catherine McVay Hughes, and I represent Community District 1 in Lower Manhattan where I am Chair of Community Board 1 (CB1). Our district includes most of Manhattan below Canal Street and south of the Brooklyn Bridge. Thank you for holding this important hearing today on Introduction 732 and inviting our testimony.

A multitude of planning issues affect Lower Manhattan ranging from the rebuilding of the World Trade Center site, dozens of simultaneous public and private construction projects, recovery and resiliency issues and quality of life matters. Community Board 1 is unique in that we have two part-time dedicated urban planners, one serving as Director of Planning and Land Use and the other as Planning Consultant. In addition, each year we receive an urban planning graduate student through the Fund for the City of New York Community Planning Fellowship Program and this year for the first time we brought on two students through the CUNY Service Corps program partnered with the Manhattan Borough President's Office. This team, comprised of our staff and consultant planner as well as our Fellow and interns has been instrumental in working on planning projects and reports that assist in our advocacy as a Community Board.

One of the most crucial components of this work has been demographic analysis. Using these planning resources, we have been able to independently compile data and publish several reports on our district's total population, child population and senior population. Between 2000 and 2010, our district nearly doubled in population and continues to grow rapidly. These studies and reports are invaluable in our advocacy for community facilities and amenities. For example, the data we have compiled on youth population have been contributory to Assemblyman Silver's School Overcrowding Task Force, and allows us to assist and collaborate with other community groups working on this issue.

Other such projects that have been completed range from reports on affordable housing and rent stabilization, mapping of vendor-restricted areas, the inventorying of energy “green” spaces, analysis of lot area within flood zones, reports on open recreation space and an analysis of sidewalk café zoning. Not only are these projects used in the advocacy of various issues such as those affecting quality of life and the public realm, but they are also all posted on our website in an effort for transparency and data-sharing.

Community Boards are the foundation of democratic, community-based planning in New York City and it is imperative that they have the resources that allow them to independently conduct analysis and projects for their own districts. We have found that these resources and capabilities allow us to more effectively work with other government agencies and community organizations, and to better understand and work to serve our district.

Urban planning professionals are a vital asset for Community Boards, and there is a great need for this type of assistance throughout New York City. We are therefore supportive of the concept of Int. 732, but have concerns regarding how it would be funded and implemented, how many Boards would be assigned to each planner, the process in which planners would be assigned to Boards, and oversight.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



The City of New York

# **Manhattan Community Board 1**

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

**New York City Council Committee on Government Operations**

**Public Hearing on**

**Int. No. 732-2015,**

**A Local Law to amend the New York City Charter in relation to making urban planning professionals available to community boards**

**Testimony by Michael Levine, Planning Consultant**

**Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.  
250 Broadway – Committee Rm., 14<sup>th</sup> Fl.**

Good Afternoon Chair Kallos and members of the Committee on Governmental Operations.

My Name is Michael Levine. I am a Planner Consultant to Manhattan Community Board 1 and the Director of the Community Planning Fellowship Program of the Fund for the City of New York. I am pleased to testify today in favor of the proposed local law making urban planning professionals available to community boards.

The New York City Community Planning Fellowship Program was created to improve the capacity of community boards to undertake planning activities. A secondary goal for the Program is to develop the next generation of urban planners. By participating in the program, community boards receive professional assistance in addressing planning concerns in their districts. Fellows get invaluable experience with real-world community planning issues from the perspective of community boards.

The Program provides Fellowship opportunities for selected second-year graduate students in urban planning programs in New York City. The Fellows bring with them skills in socio-economic analysis, database management and geographic information mapping that Community Boards usually lack. Projects are developed by the boards for the Fellows to complete over the course of an academic year. They are placed in offices based upon the skills they offer, the interests they have and the specific needs of each Community Board. Projects vary from land use regulation to historic preservation to delivery of social services.

The Program has been extremely successful in meeting the needs of both the community boards and the Fellows. The proposal to place urban planning professionals in community board offices will perfectly compliment the Community Planning Fellowship Program by providing additional

planning expertise. We have learned over the years that the most successful Fellowships are those that provide collaborative integration into the community board office, direct supervision and regular feedback for the Fellows. Not all community boards have been able to provide this level of support. A sustained urban planning professional presence in the community board offices will provide this vital ingredient to improve the urban planning capacity of Community Boards and build upon the experience of the Community Planning Fellowship Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

COMMUNITY BOARD #1 – MANHATTAN  
RESOLUTION

DATE: APRIL 28, 2015

COMMITTEE OF ORIGIN: PLANNING

COMMITTEE VOTE: 12 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused  
BOARD VOTE: 35 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained 0 Recused

RE: Int. 732 – a Local Law to amend the New York City Charter, in relation to making urban planning professionals available to Community Boards

WHEREAS: New York City Council Members Kallos, Cabrera, Eugene, Lancman, Mendez, Rose and Rodriguez have proposed Int. 732 to amend subdivision nine of section 82 of the New York City Charter; and

WHEREAS: This subdivision of the City Charter currently states that the Borough President’s Office must establish a planning office and “provide technical assistance to the Community Boards within the borough;” and

WHEREAS: Int. 732 would expand this clause by adding the following: “by providing within appropriations therefor, the services of at least one professional planner within such office for each Community Board in the borough;” and

WHEREAS: CB1 is a unique Board in that they have an urban planning professional on staff and another as a consultant, each on a part-time basis. However, this is rare and most Community Boards throughout New York City do not have dedicated urban planning staff; and

WHEREAS: These CB1 urban planning professionals have brought invaluable expertise in dealing with Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), Board of Standards and Appeals, Landmarks Preservation Commission and other discretionary actions, as well as demographic, geo-analytical mapping and other skills that have proved instrumental in advocacy initiatives; and

WHEREAS: In addition to these skills brought by CB1’s existing urban planning professionals, institutional knowledge developed over time has proven to be critical in dealing with planning projects; and

WHEREAS: On April 30, 2015 at 1:00 pm the New York City Council Committee on Government Operations will hold a public hearing on Int. 732; now

THEREFORE  
IT BE  
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 acknowledges that urban planning professionals are a vital asset for Community Boards, and that there is a great need for this type of assistance throughout the City; and

BE IT  
FURTHER  
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 is supportive of the idea of Int. 732, but has concerns regarding how it would be funded, how many Boards would be assigned to each planner, the process in which planners would be assigned to Boards, and oversight; and

BE IT  
FURTHER  
RESOLVED

THAT: CB1 has experienced the benefits of institutional knowledge in dealing with urban planning issues and urges that there be a grandfathering for any Boards with existing urban planning professionals, and that under Int. 732 planners be designated by Board rather than by project to allow the development of institutional knowledge by newly assigned planners.



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK COMMUNITY BOARD SIX

Eric Adams  
Borough President

Gary G. Reilly  
Chairperson

Craig Hammerman  
District Manager

TESTIMONY TO CITY COUNCIL GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
ON INTRO 585-2014 AND INTRO 0732-2015

APRIL 30, 2015

GOOD AFTERNOON. MY NAME IS CRAIG HAMMERMAN AND I AM THE DISTRICT  
MANAGER OF BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 6. WE'RE HERE TODAY TO OFFER  
YOU SOME THOUGHTS ON INTRO 585 AND INTRO 732, BILLS THAT WOULD  
CREATE TERM LIMITS FOR COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS AND INCREASING<sup>ING</sup>  
<sup>THE</sup> ~~OUR~~ BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S PLANNING STAFF.

THESE PENDING LEGISLATIVE PIECES WILL HAVE THE UNINTENDED  
CONSEQUENCES OF ALIENATING LARGE AND DIVERSE GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO  
COULD INSTEAD BECOME VALUABLE AND ENTHUSIASTIC ALLIES IN OUR  
EFFORTS TO RAISE THE PROFESSIONALISM, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF  
NEW YORK CITY'S COMMUNITY BOARDS. THERE'S NO TURNING BACK ONCE  
TRUST HAS BEEN BROKEN.

THE LEGISLATION AS WRITTEN IS PREDICATED UPON PREMATURE AND SCANT  
RESEARCH AND AN INCOMPLETE THOUGHT-PROCESS. WE SUPPORT THE GOAL  
OF CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS TO SERVE THEIR  
COMMUNITIES—THE EXECUTION PROPOSED HERE IS MISGUIDED AND

DAMAGING. INTRO 585 IS A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION SET TO DETONATE IN 2028, LONG AFTER EVERY SINGLE SITTING COUNCIL MEMBER IS OUT OF HARM'S WAY, SAFE FROM THE ENSUING CARNAGE AND COLLATERAL DAMAGE. THE DAMAGES IT WOULD CREATE WOULD GREATLY OUTWEIGH THE TEMPORARY SATISFACTION OF AN EXPEDIENT BUT MISGUIDED ATTEMPT TO SOLVE A GENUINE ISSUE. THE SUCCESS HERE LIES IN THE EXECUTION—NOT IN SIMPLY COMING UP WITH A WELL-PACKAGED THEORY.

IN INTRO 732, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS A BILL WHO'S STATED INTENT IS SOMETHING WE UNTIL NOW HAVE ONLY DREAMED ABOUT. WE HAVE ADVOCATED FOR OUR OWN PLANNERS SINCE THE 1989 CHARTER REVISIONS INCLUDED IT AS AN UNFUNDED RESOURCE FOR THE COMMUNITY BOARDS. WE CURRENTLY MAKE DUE WITH PLANNING FELLOWS PROVIDED BY THE FUND FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK. WE ALSO HAVE OBTAINED PROJECT-SPECIFIC GRANTS WHICH ENHANCE OUR CAPACITY GIVING US ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL PLANNING RESOURCES. STILL, THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR HAVING FULL-TIME PLANNERS ON STAFF IN OUR OFFICE.

THIS BILL, AS CURRENTLY DRAFTED, WOULD NOT GIVE US FULL-TIME PLANNERS. WE WOULD NOT BE HIRING THE PLANNERS AND THEY WOULD NOT BE WORKING FOR US. THEY WOULD BE HIRED BY AND STAFF TO OUR BOROUGH PRESIDENT, WHO UNDOUBTABLY WOULD BENEFIT FROM HAVING MORE PLANNING RESOURCES TOO. IF THE COMMUNITY BOARDS' BUDGETS WERE

INCREASED DIRECTLY SO THAT WE HAD THE MONEY TO HIRE A PLANNER, THAT WOULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM. AND INCREASING THE BUDGETS OF THE COMMUNITY BOARDS IS SURELY WITHIN THE POWERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL WHEN IT NEGOTIATES THE CITY'S BUDGET WITH THE MAYOR.

EXPEDIENCY SIMPLY CANNOT BE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO FUNDAMENTALLY EMPOWER CITIZENS WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO TRULY PARTNER WITH CITY GOVERNMENT. HOLDING A GUN TO OUR HEADS AND TELLING US THAT IN 2028 YOU WILL KILL OFF EVERY MEMBER OF OUR COMMUNITY BOARD FAMILY IS NO WAY TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE FEEL SAFE AND RESPECTED AND CAN WORK WITH YOU. WHILE WE AGREE THAT A TIME-SENSITIVE PLAN SHOULD BE DESIGNED AND PROFFERED—A POOR PLAN IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN HELPFUL.

IN SHORT, WE GREATLY RESPECT THE VISION OF A MORE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY BOARD WHICH VALUES AND BREEDS BEST PRACTICES. HOWEVER, THE METHOD OF EXECUTION IN THESE BILLS IS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND DOES NOT MIRROR THE RESPECT AND COLLABORATION OUR COMMUNITIES DESERVE.

# 30 #



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK COMMUNITY BOARD SIX

**Eric Adams**  
Borough President

**Gary G. Reilly**  
Chairperson

**Craig Hammerman**  
District Manager

April 22, 2015

Hon. Daniel Dromm  
City Council Member  
250 Broadway, Ste 1826  
New York, New York 10007

Hon. Ben Kallos  
City Council Member  
250 Broadway, Ste 1738  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Council Members Dromm and Kallos:

I am writing to advise you that at its March 11, 2015 general meeting Brooklyn Community Board 6 resolved by a vote of 31 in favor, 0 against and 2 abstentions, to oppose City Council Intro 0585-2014, a local law to amend the New York City charter in relation to establishing term limits for community board members, and urges instead that the City Council work to make community boards more effective in their community planning role.

In considering the suggestion of imposing term limits on community board members we must first note that the appointment process as currently outlined in Section 2800 of the City Charter provides appointing officials sufficient authority and flexibility to make appointment and reappointment decisions. From that alone we concluded that this legislation is "a solution in search of a problem."

Community board members are not appointed to lifetime terms; they are appointed to serve for a two-year term. Appointing officials have a responsibility to consider whether to reappoint and extend a board member's service beyond two years. They certainly should not be acting as a rubber stamp in this regard. Our communities deserve a community board with a composition that "fairly represents all segments of the community." (*City Charter, Section 2800(a)*)

If your intent was to open new slots on the community board to allow for a broader influx of new members, you should know that attrition already creates ample opportunity for new appointments. A quick review of our own records for the last decade shows an annual membership turnover rate which ranged from 12% to 24%, with the average being 16.1%, or 8 new board members per year. Attrition, especially when coupled with aggressive attendance monitoring as we have in place, provides a natural ebb and flow of members.

Placing an artificial limit on community board service would mean that members who are still willing and able to serve would be prevented from doing so. If there were lines out the door of

volunteers clamoring to serve on community boards and their natural turnover rate was somehow insufficient to provide an opportunity for the most qualified among them to become appointed, that would be a problem. Creating new opportunities for service on the community board must be balanced by the need to preserve a sense of institutional memory and recognize the value of veteran service.

If your intent was to create a turnover of leadership positions within the community boards, there are far less damaging mechanisms to accomplish that. Each community board has its own set of by-laws which govern how they operate. Our community board, for example, has within its by-laws term limits to provide for a turnover of officer positions. Every incoming chairperson has the right to appoint their own committee chairs and other board representatives. No one has a lifetime position whether elected or appointed within our community board. We actively cultivate and nurture new leadership for the good of our organization.

Rather than pursue damaging legislation like Intro 0585-2014, we would encourage you instead to engage us in a broader conversation about our Charter mandates, the resources available to community boards, and the challenges we face to be as effective as possible in representing our community's interests. We have no shortage of interest and energy to devote to such conversations. We stand ready to work with you. In the meantime, we ask that you reconsider Intro 0585-2014 and withdraw it at your earliest opportunity. Instead, let's spend our energies coming up with real solutions to our real problems.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Gary G. Reilly  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio  
Hon. Eric Adams  
Hon. Stephen Levin  
Hon. Carlos Menchaca  
Hon. Brad Lander  
All Community Boards

**Testimony Theresa Scavo, Brooklyn Community Board 15**

**Re: Int. No. 585 in relation to establishing term limits for community board members**

**April 30, 2015**

Good Afternoon, Chair Kallos and the members of the  
Governmental Operations Committee

I am Theresa Scavo, Chairperson of Brooklyn

Community Board 15. I have been Chairperson of CB 15

for 10 years. Prior to that, I was a Board Member for 6

years - for a total of 16 years of dedicated voluntary

service. I know firsthand the importance of having

experienced, seasoned members on Community Boards.

Senior members of Community Boards represent a true snap-shot of community memory. They provide a history of community development and needs. They can also serve to mentor rookies on established procedure, protocol and operations.

A big negative to term limits is the loss of continuity and the history of the Community Board when involved, experienced, members leave the board. You also lose the expertise of that board member and any know-how or community connections that person may have developed through the years working with various city agencies to

ensure the community has a strong voice in government and its needs are not only heard, but addressed.

If large numbers of new members constitute a community board you run the serious risk of having them spend a majority of their crucial time developing new procedures.

That is less time devoted to serving the community in which they were entrusted to represent.

Not to mention the disruption of the various committees that comprise a community board. When a “change - over” of members ultimately occurs, you lose the cohesive nature of that particular committee which normally has a history of working together to see that the goals and functions of that committee are met.

Many boards are challenged to find enough people to serve on Community Boards in the first place, and term limits could dramatically reduce the number who may be

eligible or willing and dedicated to serve and make that commitment.

By placing term limits on Board Members, we wind up in actuality denying ourselves of some truly talented people and in doing so ultimately deny ourselves the capacity to have members who not only serve our communities, but do so extremely well. You may be swapping out a committed member for one who barely shows up. I have seen this happen time and time again.

My other concern with establishing term limits you may be creating an even bigger issue with existing “active” board members, who may begin to lose interest if they know their term is reaching an end and become complacent. “Why should I show up or continue if I am ending in a month or two?” “They don’t need me; my term on the community board is ending.” “Let the new members handle it.”

The truth is serving on a community board is voluntary, people eventually retire or relocate. There is a natural progression and turnover that occurs. Limiting a person's capacity to serve will prove more of a deterrent to those who truly care, and want to make a positive impact.

Longtime board members can be a strong asset to a community association. If someone is doing a good job, there shouldn't be anything standing in the way of that person serving as long as needed. You will lose that person's passion and interest in bettering our community.

In conclusion, at our General Board Meeting on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, Community Board 15 (Brooklyn) voted to oppose, City Council Intro 0585.

Community Board 15, Brooklyn believes that having long-term Board Members with knowledge of the District on the Community Board plays an important and vital role with Zoning and Budget issues.

It is the opinion of this Board that it is unfair to remove Members willing to serve in a volunteer position.

I hope you will take all of the concerns I presented here today into consideration.

Thank you for your time.



# COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 8

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Eric Adams  
Borough President

**FOR THE RECORD**

Nizjoni Granville  
Chairperson

Robert Matthews  
Chairperson Emeritus

Michelle T. George  
District Manager

April 28, 2015

## Testimony of Brooklyn Community Board 8 to provide comments on Intro. 0732-2015

Hon. Ben Kallos, Chair  
NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations

Dear Chairman Kallos:

Brooklyn Community Board 8 (Bk CB 8) has long bemoaned the lack of an urban planner on its staff to provide the training, critical insights and the support that Bk CB 8 needs. We greatly appreciate the City Council recognizing the importance of Community Boards' contributions to the long-term planning contemplated under City Charter Chapter 8.

With the expertise and training that a city planner on staff will provide to the Community Board, the various committees' decisions will be more informed and informative than what is otherwise currently possible. Having more informed decisions will, in turn, assist City agencies in meeting the goals of creating more housing that is affordable at the area median income of BCB 8, as well as increasing employment and business opportunities in this Community District.

We also request a concomitant increase in Bk CB 8's capital and expense budgets for related office space, equipment, and the sophisticated software required to make this legislation more than just lip service. The authority for Community Boards to have input into city planning has been on the books for years as an unfunded mandate. We applaud this legislation.

Yours truly,

  
Nizjoni Granville  
Board Chair

cc: Hon. E. Adams  
Hon. R. Cornegy  
Hon. L. Cumbo  
Hon. D. Mealy  
E. Tyus, CB 8



**CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**Testimony to the Council Governmental Operations Committee**  
**On Proposed Community Board Reform**  
**April 30, 2015**

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Good morning Chair Kallos and members of the Governmental Operations committee. My name is Rachael Fauss, and I am the Director of Public Policy at Citizens Union. Citizens Union is a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. We serve as a civic watchdog, combating corruption and fighting for political reform.

Citizens Union last completed an in-depth policy review of the community boards in the context of city charter changes for the 2010 City Charter Revision Commission, issuing a report with a comprehensive examination of numerous issues facing community boards.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to that review, we have examined other issues such as term limits for community boards. Together, our positions on community board reform seek to strengthen community boards, providing them with additional resources, while also ensuring that there is a more rigorous selection process and open process for appointment of members.

Our positions are as follows:

- 1. Community boards should receive an independent budget allocation** that is not at the discretion of the mayor or council. We believe that they are currently insufficiently funded, and greater resources are essential for community boards to carry out their Charter-mandated responsibilities as an advisor on land use, planning, and budgeting. To this end, community boards should be provided enough funding to be able to hire staff with land use and/or budgetary expertise. The budget for community boards should be linked to that of borough presidents' offices, which should be linked to the City Council's budget (Citizens Union also supports independent budgeting for the Borough Presidents). Community boards in total should receive 65% of the borough presidents' allocation, with each board receiving an equal amount in addition to allocations to cover offices, electricity and heat, which would still be determined through the regular budget process. Sixty-five percent of the FY2015 borough presidents' allocation would have provided the boards with a base of approximately \$265,000 per board, to which would be added additional funds for offices, electricity and heat (which are not included in this formula). The additional funds from the operating formula coupled with a separate allocation for offices, electricity and heat should provide for the hiring of additional expert staff.

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<sup>1</sup> See the full report at:

[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/0610CU\\_Charter\\_Revision\\_Report&Recommendations.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/0610CU_Charter_Revision_Report&Recommendations.pdf), with the community boards chapter on pages 37-41.

- 2. A mechanism should be created that provides an available pool of urban planners independent of the borough presidents' offices that can be accessed by community boards.** This is critical to provide meaningful and informed input on land use decisions and to develop 197-a plans. These urban planners should be connected to one or more boards, thereby establishing relationships with those boards and the larger communities they serve. While housing urban planners with the borough presidents is aligned with their current responsibilities to "establish and maintain a planning office...for the use, development or improvement of land located in the borough" under section 82 of chapter 4 of the City Charter and to "provide training and technical assistance to the members of the community boards" it could become problematic when the borough president may disagree with a community board on a land development issue. Given their distinct roles in ULURP and past instances in which borough presidents have sought to remove community board members who have not aligned their votes with the sentiments of the borough presidents on land use proposals, it is essential that the independence of the community boards, and the urban planners that serve them, be maintained.

**Citizens Union recognizes that Intro 732 seeks to provide planning expertise to the community boards and supports its intent, though prefers providing planning services independent of the borough presidents for the reasons outlined above.**

- 3. Reform the process for selecting members to community boards.** Community boards are too often plagued by vacancies. To professionalize and open the boards to the communities they serve, a formal standardized and transparent process should be created for filling community board positions, as was done by former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer.

Language should be added to the City Charter that:

- **Requires written applications and interviews of all appointees or reappointees by the borough presidents;**
- **Establishes a deadline of 30 days for filling vacant positions; and**
- **Requires borough presidents to issue an annual report detailing their outreach efforts, whom they notified of the process, methods used and the demographics of those serving on community boards in comparison to the communities served by the boards.**

- 4. Community board members should be term limited, serving five consecutive two-year terms.** This limit on terms should be phased in prospectively to ensure there is not a mass exodus of institutional knowledge from the boards, while ensuring that representation on boards can keep pace with changing demographics of communities and does not become inaccessible to the communities they serve.

**Regarding Intro 585, Citizens Union supports the institution of term limits, though as noted prefers two five-year terms rather than six, and opposes the provision of the bill that exempts from term limits those members appointed before April 1, 2016.** We believe that exempting members appointed before April 2016 will unnecessarily delay the intended goals of introducing terms limits – ensuring that boards are better able to reflect the current and

changing dynamics of neighborhoods, while balancing historic perspectives. It is particularly important that implementation not be delayed to ensure that emerging immigrant communities are able to be empowered in their representation. Lastly, we would note that community boards could still create opportunities for former members to remain involved – either through mentoring programs or advisory committees of non-voting members.

Regarding phasing in new members, prefer a staggered approach that will phase in term limits, for example providing in the legislation that those who have currently served 5 terms or more terms could only serve 1 more term; those who have served 4 terms could serve for 3 more terms; those who have served 3 terms could only serve 2 more terms, and so on, until every member who is appointed can only serve a maximum of five terms.

I thank you for the opportunity to present Citizens Union's views on community board reform. I welcome any questions you have.

Intro No. 585 – April 30, 2015

Chairperson Kallos, Committee Members, thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify in opposition to Intro 585.

I am a vice chair of Queens Community Board 7, which represents the communities of Bay Terrace, College Point, Beechhurst, Flushing, Malba, Queensborough Hill, Whitestone and Willets Point. In terms of population, Community Board 7 is the city's largest community board. I also serve as chair of CB 7's Aviation and Transit Committees.

Members of Community Board 7 deal with large scale zoning and land use issues such as the Willets Point Redevelopment, College Point Industrial Park, Willets West project and development of downtown Flushing, including the recently proposed Flushing West rezoning. Community Board 7 also represents some of the city's largest park and is home to the USTA National Tennis Center.

Additionally, CB 7 is a member of the Port Authority's New York Aviation Community Roundtable, which was created under a directive issued by Governor Cuomo. In order to serve the community well, board members must have a high degree of knowledge, expertise and dedication.

Today you will hear testimony concerning the importance of institutional memory, which cannot be underestimated. However, I would like to discuss another matter that should concern us all.

Although unintentional, Intro 585, which seeks to term limit community board members, is nothing more than another form of age discrimination. Take the case of J. Doe who is appointed to

serve as a community board member at fifty years of age. Twelve years later member Doe is sixty-two years old and due to term limits is prohibited from continuing to serve. Eventually, we will reach a point where there are few if any members who are 65, 70, 75, or 80 years old. Senior citizens who are energetic, vibrant and sharp will effectively be blocked from contributing and giving back in a meaningful way. I know for a fact that the good members of this council would never condone or promote any type of discrimination.

Instead of proposing legislation that will weaken our community boards, I suggest that more resources be made available to strengthen the boards. Some thought should also be given to expanding certain board areas beyond being merely advisory.

Many years ago, a very wise senior citizen described community boards as being the average persons' City Hall. That characterization is still true today.

Thank you.  
Warren Schreiber  
Vice Chair, Queens Community Board 7

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warrennyc@gmail.com

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Ruben Diaz, Jr.  
Borough President

## **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD No. 10**

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Martin A. Prince  
Chairperson

Kenneth Kearns  
District Manager

Testimony from Bronx Community Board #10  
before the New York City Council on Governmental Operations  
on Int. 0732-2015  
April 30, 2015

Good Afternoon Chairman Kallos and members of the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations. My name is Martin Prince and I am Chairman of Bronx Community Board #10. I would like to offer comment on the proposed legislation, Int. 0732-2015, allowing for the placement of urban planners in the various Borough President's offices, who will be available to the Community Boards for consultation.

I would like to state that Bronx Community Board #10 supports this legislation because of the following factors: the number and complexity of the proposed projects that our Board is asked to vet, the number of variances that we are asked to approve, the short time frame that the Boards are given to review these projects before they are referred to the Board of Standards and Appeals and finally, the time it takes to develop arguments, regarding the proposed project's impact on the community.

Any analyses of development in our Board's service area, always takes place within the context of Zoning Resolution and its amendments. The availability of a dedicated planner will provide the Boards with an incredible resource for us to reference.

City Planners were part of every community board, but successive mayoral administrations over the past twenty years, had this job title stripped away. The return of planners to the Boards will enable us to truly live up to our original name of Community Planning Boards.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.



**Ruben Diaz, Jr.**  
*Borough President*

## **BRONX COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 10**

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**Martin A. Prince**  
*Chairperson*

**Kenneth Kearns**  
*District Manager*

Testimony from Bronx Community Board #10  
before the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations  
on Int. #585  
April 30, 2015

Honorable Chairman Kallos and Members of the City Council Governmental Operations Committee, my name is Martin Prince and I am Chairman of Bronx Community Board #10, and I appear before you today to offer comment on Int. #585. This legislation will establish term limits for any Community Board member first appointed to a term commencing on or after April, 2016 and limits their service on a Board to no more than six consecutive terms. The number of members appointed from the nomination of a Council Member shall be proportional to the share of the district population represented by such Council member. The City Planning Commission, after each Council redistricting pursuant to Chapter two-A, and after each community redistricting pursuant to Chapter 27-102, shall determine the proportion of the community's district population represented by each Council member. Copies of such determination shall be filed with the appropriate Borough President, Community Board, and Council member. One-half of the community board shall serve for a term of two years beginning the first day in April in each odd-numbered year in which they take office and one-half of the members appointed to any community board shall serve for a term of two years beginning on the first day of April in each even-number year in which they take office. Members shall serve until successors are appointed, but no member may serve for more than sixty days after the expiration of the original term unless reappointed by the Borough President. No Board can have 25% of its members be city employees; no person shall be appointed or remain as a member who does not have a residence, business, professional, or other significant interest in the district. The Borough President shall ensure adequate representation with the Community District. Additionally, he will consider if the aggregate number of appointments is representative of all segments of the community.

As Chairman of Bronx Community Board #10 and I would like to take this opportunity to convey my Board's thoughts to the assembled body regarding several provisions:

1. The proposed legislation in its current form appears to severely limit the discretion of the Borough President in appointing Board Members by establishing term limits. Under existing legislation, the Borough President appoints Community Board members, with at least one half of the nominees being selected from the nominees of the Board's District Council member, in proportion to the share of the District's population represented by that Council member. The term for each Board member is staggered for two years; one half of the membership is appointed each year. A Council member also has the inherent responsibility of not recommending a nominee, and the Borough President of not re-appointing that nominee, when that Board

member's term is up. This occurs every two years, because each Board Member must submit reappointment papers every two years, on the anniversary of the appointment.

2. We at Bronx Community Board #10 believe that this legislation negatively alludes to a lack of turnover. However, existing legislation on this matter has the systemic mechanisms needed to avoid this problem within its current state if utilized diligently by Council members and Borough Presidents in the vetting process for board appointments and re-appointments. A more prudent approach to additional legislation could be accomplished by reviewing the manner and process by which Council Members and Borough Presidents seek individuals to serve on Boards. Generally, Board openings are circulated in the community by word of mouth, or public announcements at meetings by an elected official making the public aware that Board applications are available each December for anyone who is interested. The potential pool of individuals who receive this information is limited and the general population is usually unaware of the opportunity to serve on a Community Board. What our Board would like to see is a robust and well planned series of public service announcements providing the general population with a history of Community Boards, their role in government and the value of public service.
3. We further feel that the Boards themselves, should take a more direct role in publicizing Community Board service, and that the regulations or laws governing their participation should be amended to reflect this responsibility.

Furthermore, I would like to say a few words about the value of long serving Board Members. For those members who have been on the Board for many years and have enjoyed repeated reappointments, I would like to suggest that the Council acknowledge their institutional memory and the value that they bring to Board operations. Often, we find that long term members bring an immense value to our deliberations and meetings with the development community and governmental agencies. To lose this type of experience after a designated period of time would be a disservice to the future development of our communities.

This concludes my statement on Int. #585. Thank you for your attention and consideration in this matter.

Robert V. Cassara

Bay Ridge/Dyker Heights, (CB 10)

April, 30, 2015

**Testimony in Favor of Int. 0585-2014**

A Local Law to amend the New York City Charter, in relation to establishing term limits for community board members.

I am Bob Cassara, a resident of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn and I am in favor of the term limits bill being put forward. As a former CB10 member I think this amendment is long overdue.

Community boards are an important part of the community as they are our local representative body. Therefore, the members, if possible, should be reflective of the community that they serve. Neighborhoods do not stay constant; nor should the members of the community board. Periodically replacing community board members will add fresh ideas and a new perspective on what the community needs or doesn't need. Times change and the manner in which things should be done should change with the times. I believe that there are many good people who serve on community boards, but in some cases, after 20 years or more, they may become rigid in their thinking and not be receptive to new ideas and any changes in the community that they represent.

I have heard it said by those who are against term limits that a periodic turnover would result in a loss of collective memory and of how things work. But board meetings are memorialized in the minutes so there is always a reference to the past. And since the entire community board will not be replaced at one time, the longer serving members will have the opportunity to pass on their knowledge to the newer members and the newer members will do the same to those that follow them. This will allow some of the collective memory to be retained in a manner other than on paper.

New York City decided, several years ago, to limit the terms for Council Members and Mayor. We also have a limit on the number of presidential terms. Why? Because when people stay in office too long they tend to become static. I was on my community board for 8 years and I saw how events play out and how people act. I am sure that most board members are honorable and act out of concern for the community but some can begin to act out of their own self interests if their tenure is unlimited.

Board members are either appointed by the Borough President or Council member. There needs to be better outreach to increase the applicant pool from which to select board members. This should not be a "closed" organization but rather one that actively recruits the talent of local residents to be of service to their community.

As a former community board member and as a community activist, I recommend that this committee approve the bill and send it on to the full council for their vote and their approval. Please give others a chance to serve their community.

Thank You



# Queens Civic Congress, Inc.

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**Harbachan Singh Esq.**  
President

STATEMENT REGARDING INTRO.585 ENTITLED "A LOCAL LAW TO AMEND THE  
NEW YORK CITY CHARTER, IN RELATION TO ESTABLISHING TERM LIMITS FOR  
COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS"

April 30, 2015

Queens Civic Congress is an umbrella organization that represents over 100 civic associations throughout the Borough of Queens. The Queens Civic Congress was formed in the 1990s primarily to unite civic groups to improve the quality of life and to preserve and protect the residential areas of our borough. We strive to help members fight overdevelopment and inappropriate development in their communities.

Intro.585 proposes that, "No community board member first appointed to a term commencing on or after April, 2016 shall serve more than six consecutive terms as a voting member of a particular Community Board."

Our main objections are based on the following:

- This creates a 2-Tier Community Board with some members being re-appointed every two years forever and others being able to serve no more than twelve years;
- Council members already have the ability to not re-appoint members at their discretion, and the Borough Presidents have the power to not allow the re-appointment of Board members at their discretion;
- The fact is that the Board Members are often appointed predicated on their areas of expertise and Intro.585 will dilute the effectiveness of this practice;
- Intro.585 would also disrupt the fact that individuals are also appointed because of their community involvement (Civic Associations, Block Association, Places of Worship, etc).;
- The practice whereby in every two-year appointment cycle, there are sitting Board Members who do not seek re-appointment because of different reasons (health, relocation, time constraints);
- That there is now and always has been substantial turnover in the Boards' compositions;
- That effective board members are not easily replaced or replaceable;
- That the Community Board members serve without remuneration.

The Queens Civic Congress therefore opposes.585 and urges that New York City Council to vote it down.

*Harbachan Singh*  
President

MELINDA KATZ  
PRESIDENT



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CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE BOROUGH OF QUEENS  
120-55 QUEENS BOULEVARD  
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**Testimony of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz in opposition to Intro 585 before the Committee on Governmental Operations**

**April 30, 2015**

The New York City Charter vests the power of appointing Community Board members in the Borough Presidents. At least half of these appointments are nominees of the Council Members elected from Council districts within the community district. Furthermore, the Charter also provides that the Borough President shall consider whether the aggregate of appointments fairly represents all segments of the community.

By curtailing the term of a Community Board member to a maximum of twelve years, Intro 585 unfairly infringes upon a Borough President's appointment power. In addition, it unnecessarily abates the Borough President's power in determining whether community board members are representative of the communities they serve.

A check on the Borough President's appointment power already exists. Each Borough President is elected for a term of four years, subject to a maximum of two terms or eight years. This amounts to a term limit in of itself as each new administration brings change and Borough Presidents are under no obligation to reappoint an individual beyond the designated two year term.

In Queens, our fourteen community boards are comprised of nearly 700 dedicated and civic minded residents who play an integral role in shaping the borough's policies. Community board members are volunteers who must spend lots of time learning the intricacies of local government. In order for community boards to be most effective, institutional knowledge should be preserved. Community Board members must know about their communities and have extensive knowledge of local laws, agency policies, zoning codes, and service delivery. Board

members play an integral role in negotiating with developers, assisting constituents, and addressing community problems pertaining to traffic, sanitation, safety, business development, and more.

Government is most effective when it is inclusive. We have great faith in our board selection process and in our City Council members to recommend individuals who are truly representative of their respective neighborhoods. Over 26 percent of all members on our community boards in Queens have been serving for less than three years. And every member, regardless of tenure is required to reapply every two years for their unpaid positions. Renewal is not automatic and the Borough President conducts application and interview processes to ensure that board members are held accountable to the standards we set regarding attendance, participation, community involvement, and lack of conflict of interest.

We understand that the composition of community boards must change to reflect the influx of new ideas and cultures. However, this is already happening and we don't need a law to reflect these changes at the expense of seasoned and heavily experienced community board members. There has always been turnover in community boards due to members' change of residence, job, and health. Eliminating members of community boards with deep institutional knowledge will likely lead to a weaker board that is less capable in serving its respective neighborhood. Effective board members are not easily replaced. For these reasons, I oppose Intro. 585.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585 F732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Phil Konigsberg

Address: 23-25 150th St (BLVD)

I represent: CB7

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: HARBACHIAN SINGH

Address: 193-12 Foothill Ave

I represent: Queens Civic Congress

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paul White, TA

Address: 127 W. 26th, #1002, NY, 10001

I represent: Transportation Alternatives

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585/732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30

Name: Rachael / Fauss (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Citizens Union

Address: 299 Broadway Suite 700

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585/732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30/15

Name: JOANNA SMITH (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 829 President

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585/732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

both girls  in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30/15

Name: Ed Jaworski (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1821 E. 28 ST. 11229 Brooklyn

I represent: Madison-Marine-Homocrest Civic

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585/732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lauren George

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Common Cause NY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shulamit Warren (on behalf on MBP Gale Brewer)

Address: 1 Centre street, 19th floor south

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 732 Res. No. 585

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4-30-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Craig Hammerman

Address: 250 Baltic St. Bklyn NY 11201

I represent: Brooklyn CB6

Address: same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kenneth Kearns

Address: BX CB# 10 3165 E. Tremont Ave

I represent: BX Community Board # 10

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARTIN PRINCE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: Community BD 10

Address: 3165 E TREMONT AVE BX, NY

CBI PANEL  
3/3

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 4-30-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DIANA SWITAJ

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: MANHATTAN CBI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL**  
CBI PANEL **THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

2/3

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: 4-30-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MECHAEL LEVINE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: MANHATTAN CBI

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL**  
CBI PANEL **THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

1/3

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 732 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: 4-30-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CATHERINE MCVAY HUGHES

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: MANHATTAN CBI

Address: 49 CHAMBERS

**THE COUNCIL**  
**THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor     in opposition

Date: 4/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: WARREN SCHREIBER

Address: 13-24 BELL BLVD, Bx 506, M1136

I represent: QUEEN'S COMMUNITY BOARD 7

Address: FLUSHING

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

SPT

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. SPT Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 1-20-15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: CHUCK APPLICAN

Address: 1415-30 79 ROAD FUSHING NY 11354

I represent: CB#7Q

Address: FUSHING NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 0585-2014 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROBERT V. CASSARA

Address: 973 - BAY RIDGE P.K.W.T. BKLYN

I represent: MY SELF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30/2015

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: GENE RUSSIANOFF

Address: 9 MURRAY STREET

I represent: NYPD IRL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 585 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/30/15

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Cheresa SCARVO

Address: 2001 Woodal Blvd Bklyn 11235

I represent: CB15 Bklyn.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms