

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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December 17, 2020
Start: 10:38 AM
Recess: 11:51 AM

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

B E F O R E: KAREN KOSLOWITZ
CHAIR

LAURIE CUMBO
MAJORITY LEADER

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Adrienne E. Adams
Margaret S. Chin
Corey D. Johnson
Steven Matteo
Keith Powers
Deborah L. Rose
Mark Treyger
Paul A. Vallone

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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Patricia Ann Taylor, President, New York
City Board of Elections

Miguelina Camilo, Practicing Attorney
Democratic Commissioner since March of
2019

Stephanie Thompson, Manhattan Democratic
Commissioner & Senior Vice President of
External Affairs, Brooklyn Navy Yard

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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FEMALE SPEAKER: We're live.

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MALE SPEAKER: APC recording done.

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Sergeant Polite, can you do the Cloud recording?

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SERGEANT POLITE: Cloud recording all set.

6

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Okay, thank you. Good

7

morning everyone. Welcome to today's remote New York

8

City Council hearing of the Committee on Rules,

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Privileges and Elections. At this time will all

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panelists please turn on your video. To minimize

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disruptions, please place electronics to devices to

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vibrate or silent. If you wish to submit testimony

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you may do so at testimony at council.nyc.gov. Again,

14

that's testimony at council.nyc.gov. Thank you for

15

your cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

16

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay, thank you

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very much. Good morning and welcome to the Committee

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on Rules, Privileges and Elections. My name is

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Karen Koslowitz, and I am Chair of this committee.

20

Before we begin this hearing I would like to

21

introduce the Council Members of this committee who

22

have joined us today. Minority Leader Steven

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Matteo, Council Member Adrienne Adams, Council Member

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Deborah Rose, and Council Member Mark Treyger. I

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would also like to acknowledge Rules Committee

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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2 Counsel Lance Polivy, and the staff members of the
3 Council's Investigative Unit, Chuck Davis, Andre
4 Johnson-Brown, Alicia Vessel and Ramsus Bootney.

5 (Sp?) Today the Rules Committee will consider three
6 candidates for reappointment to the Board of

7 Elections as Democratic Commissioners of Elections.

8 The three candidates are: Miguelina Camilo for Bronx

9 County, Tiffany Thompson for Bronx County and

10 Patricia Ann Taylor for Richmond County. Patricia

11 Ann Taylor is currently the President of the New York

12 City Board of Elections. Should Ms. Camilo, Ms.

13 Townsend and Ms. Taylor receive the advice and

14 consent of the Council, they will be...they will all

15 be reappointed to a four-year term that will begin on

16 January 1st, 2021 and expire on December 31st, 2024.

17 Chuck Davis our Chief Compliance Officer has briefed

18 all members of this committee regarding the contents

19 of the background investigations for these three

20 candidates. The Board of Elections consists of ten

21 commissioners, two from each of the city's five

22 counties. Each Commissioner serves a term of four

23 years or until a successor is appointed.

24 Commissioners shall be registered voters in the

25 county for which they are appointed, and registered

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2 as a member of the political party for which they are
3 nominated. Appointment of Commissioners New York
4 Election Law Section 3-204 Subsection 1 states that
5 at least 30 days before the first day of January of
6 any year in which a Commissioner of Elections is to
7 be appointed, the Chairman or Secretary of the
8 appropriate party county committee shall file the
9 certificate of party recommendation with the clerk of
10 the appropriate local legislative body. New York
11 Election Law Section 3-204 Subsection 4 states that
12 Commissioners of Election shall be appointed by the
13 County Legislative body or in the City of New York by
14 the City Council. It is for this reason that the
15 Rules Committee is considering these three
16 nominations today: The Bronx, New York and Richmond
17 County's Boards of Election submitted valid
18 certificates of five recommendations to the City
19 Clerk for each of these nominees on December 1, 2020.
20 All the certificates were submitted more than 30 days
21 before these first day of January of the year which
22 Commissioners are appointed. If the Council as a
23 whole does not act within 30 days of receiving a
24 valid certificate of recommendation, the applicable
25 political party conference with the Council becomes

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2 empowered to improve the recommendation on its own.
3 For example: A Democratic vacancy would be filled by
4 a vote of Democratic Party's Conference, and
5 Republican vacancy would be filled by a vote of the
6 Republican Party's conference.

7 The Board of Election's Functions: The
8 Board and its Commissioners are responsible for the
9 maintenance and the administration of voting records
10 and elections. The Board also exercises quietly
11 judicial powers by conducting hearings to validate
12 nominating petitions of candidates for nomination to
13 elective office. The Board is required to make and
14 annual report of its affairs and proceedings to the
15 Council. (coughs) Commissioners receive a \$300 per
16 diem for each day's attending at meetings of the
17 Board or any of its committees with a maximum of
18 \$30,000 per year. I want to welcome the candidates,
19 and will all three of you please raise your right
20 hand to be sworn in.

21 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you swear to tell the
22 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

23 MS. MIGUELINA CAMILO: Yes, I...

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: First, Ms. Camilo

25 MS. MIGUELINA CAMILO: Yes, I do.

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LEGAL COUNSEL: Ms. Taylor.

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MS. PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: I do.

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LEGAL COUNSEL: Ms. Townsend.

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MS. TOWNSEND: I do.

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CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Ms. Camilo, do

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you wish to make an opening statement?

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MS. TOWNSEND: Yes, I do, Councilwoman.

9

Thank you. Good morning...

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CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay.

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MS. TOWNSEND: If I may, thank you. Good

12

morning to all the honorable members of the Committee

13

and City Council joining us today. I hope you and

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your families are well, and I thank you for the

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opportunity to be heard this morning in consideration

16

of my recertification as Bronx County Commissioner of

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the City Board of Elections for the term of 2021 to

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2024. I am a practicing attorney handling mostly

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family and matrimonial matters, and I have spent the

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entirety of my legal career representing the people

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of the Bronx. As I manage my own practice, I have

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also made concerted efforts to be a representative in

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the community taking on leadership roles in bar

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associations and community efforts. I am an immigrant

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from the Dominican Republic, and when I became the

1
2 first attorney in my family, I started my career path
3 with years of experience of advocating for my parents
4 who relied on me to navigate the unknown systems in
5 New York City, and my extended community, which
6 included my extended family, neighbors and customers
7 at my family's bodega. When I first took on the
8 position as Commissioner in March 2019, I was
9 thrilled to be able to give back to my community in a
10 different way, now in a position where I could
11 directly impact their voting experience. Even as a
12 civic minded professional I was in awe when I first
13 stepped into the Bronx Board of Election borough
14 office on the Grand Concourse, and saw first hand
15 what the voting process actually entailed. It has
16 been with such incredible pride that I have seen our
17 staff manage the implementation of early voting, and
18 then soon after the expansion of the absentee ballot
19 in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our offices
20 have remained open and fully operational during this
21 pandemic because fair and transparent elections are
22 the cornerstone of what we hold most sacred in this
23 country. We braced for what we knew would be an
24 historical 2020 election where we saw an incredible
25 rise in enthusiasm and for worker recruitment, early

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2 voting and absentee voting. To run out (sic) we've
3 always strived to ensure that the voter has the best
4 experience and that our procedures, which were
5 subject to necessary changes to preserve the safety
6 of all voters were guided by the importance of
7 offering every voter ease and confidence in casting
8 their ballot. I understand the great importance of
9 the work we do at the City Board of Elections, and it
10 would be an honor to continue doing my work as
11 Commissioner in the same way that I have forged my
12 legal career path in an effort to uplift and unite
13 our communities by advocating for continued progress
14 and deliver on the promise that every vote counts.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay. Ms.

17 Townsend, do you wish to make a statement?

18 STEPHANIE TOWNSEND: Good morning, I do.

19 Sorry, I just had to unmute myself. Good morning to
20 the members of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and
21 Elections, and thank you Chairwoman Koslowitz for
22 convening today's hearing. It's a privilege to be
23 with you this morning, and thank you again for
24 considering my nomination for reappointment as the
25 Manhattan Democratic Commissioner for the 2021 to

1
2 2024 term. As you said, my name is Stephanie
3 Thompson. I have served as the Democratic
4 Commissioner since March of 2019. By trade I'm a
5 public servant. I spent the last 20 years working
6 across the area of communications, community
7 engagement and public affairs. Currently I serve as
8 the Senior Vice President of External Affairs at the
9 Brooklyn Navy Yard. Two years into that particular
10 role I often share with people that I'm extremely
11 proud to work for an organization that is economic
12 engine for Brooklyn and for the really New York City
13 as a whole, and in service through that mission,
14 which is to retain manufacturing in the city and to
15 create high quality jobs, we employ 11,000 people
16 roughly and are home to hundreds of small businesses.
17 These are businesses that provide jobs that allow for
18 upward mobility through training and ongoing
19 development of in-demand skills paying more than just
20 a living wage, and it's a place that where we care
21 deeply about equity and access, and where innovation
22 happens. And I share these sentiments with you
23 because they are a window into what I believe about
24 the right to vote, and about how our democracy
25 functions. The Board of Elections is one of the most

1
2 critical functions of our democracy, and I care
3 deeply about equity and access for all New Yorkers in
4 our elections process. I've been active in my
5 community for many years meeting New Yorkers of all
6 backgrounds and viewpoints. One thing I've learned
7 and witnessed is how many people...is how people
8 engage in the voting process. I've registered people
9 to vote, helped them change the voting registration
10 and information, find pole sites and more, and more
11 rewarding, I've often found that many people don't
12 often receive sufficient information about voting,
13 and that it's not apparent to them sometimes that
14 their vote indeed does matter, and as a
15 communications professional I'm always trying to
16 figure out the right message to truly connect to
17 others and make them understand the importance of
18 civic engagement. Stepping into my role as
19 Commissioner I realized that I had the opportunity
20 here to improve voter engagement and to use my role
21 to create an environment where voters feel welcome
22 and empowered to exercise their right. In my short
23 tenure I've seen steps taken by the Board that move u
24 in this direction, and I'm proud of their changes
25 that the Board has made in the past few years. In

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2 June 9, in 2019 as you may know, we implemented early
3 voting for the first time. This year we created an
4 absentee, online absentee application portal, and I
5 believe these changes should be just the start of
6 continued reforms to make voting easier, and more
7 accessible to the public and make the Boards work
8 more transparent. In addition, working with several
9 Manhattan district leaders we expanded access to the
10 17-year-old poll worker program making application
11 available online for the first time on election,
12 Board of Elections' website. This has helped to
13 ensure that the opportunity reaches our target
14 audience of tech savvy young people who want to do
15 their civic duty. As Chair of the Committee on
16 Communications, Voter Registration and Outreach, I
17 have worked with the Board's staff to support their
18 launch of the new vote...Vote.NYC website by
19 continuing to refine the user experience, and content
20 to ensure it provides essential information that
21 makes it easy for New Yorkers to register vote,
22 obtain information about upcoming elections, apply to
23 become a poll worker and more. We have also improved
24 the Board's social media presence, and have created
25 digital content that better expands the voting

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2 digital content that better explains the Board's
3 voting process. For example, we had great success
4 during the 2020 general election with our online
5 videos to show New Yorkers how to complete their
6 absentee ballots. In addition, we continue to work to
7 find partners including our elected officials, Good
8 Government and others who can help us spread our
9 message and help us connect with as many potential
10 and existing voters as possible. I believe that the
11 Board runs fair elections and I believe that the new
12 measures in place and on the horizon it has never
13 been easier for New Yorkers to vote. However, I also
14 believe that the Board has much work to do to
15 modernize its systems, and that the state must
16 support us in this effort, but with legislation that
17 increases efficiency and access. There is so much
18 space for us to innovate and be a best and pass Board
19 of Elections the way that New York City has in so
20 many areas. One area we can immediately consider is
21 poll worker staffing. Our poll workers are essential
22 workers, and they put themselves in harm's way so as
23 to keep multiple elections during the pandemic as
24 there is no work from home option for them available
25 and our elections are not possible without them.

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2 Although the 2020 general election showed massive
3 interest by New Yorkers to serve poll workers, this
4 historically has not been the case in other election
5 cycles, and we must consider all issues surrounding
6 staffing including things like staggered shifts and
7 hourly pay. We should also consider a multiple...a
8 municipal poll worker program which can help us fill
9 in the gaps in non-general events or down ballot
10 elections. A second area of focus is poll site
11 locations. As you know the Board does not own or
12 operate any of its poll site locations. This creates
13 numerous challenges including the need to pay for
14 private sites, which is particularly costly in
15 Manhattan. In addition, the process to
16 secure...Excuse me. The process to secure poll sites
17 often requires lengthy negotiations for the use of
18 public and publicly funded facilities and the Board
19 has been forced to pursue legal avenues to obtain
20 suitable space in some instances. This is not the
21 best use of the Board's resources or taxpayer dollars
22 and I have to work with, U.S. elected officials,
23 community groups, community groups and others to
24 identify and secure a larger number of suitable
25 spaces for poll sites and I welcome questions on the

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2 issue from the Committee. A third area is general
3 resources. Given that the work of the Board is
4 deemed essential, we must continue to... we continue
5 to need resources that allow us to do our work and to
6 do it well. We must continue to purchase equipment
7 to support elections and canvassing processes Such as
8 new sorting machines, which we've had for the first
9 time this year. These were an asset because they
10 just allowed us to work more quickly and with fewer
11 people to complete that work. Further, we needed to
12 show work space for some of our offices or for some
13 of our offices. This would allow our staff to better
14 server walk-ins and responsive phone calls while
15 still maintaining social distancing measures, which
16 are important in this environment. In particular in
17 Manhattan we've identified space that's actually in
18 our building where we are located at 200 Barrack and
19 I would really welcome the opportunity to discuss
20 with OMB and others an effort about how we can make
21 this possible so that we can better serve our
22 Manhattan voters. I continue to immerse myself in the
23 complex nature of conducting elections in New York
24 and with the time I've dedicated to this role since
25 2019 I feel even now more robust to steer the

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2 organization with my fellow commissioners. We have a
3 lot of work ahead and a second full term would allow
4 me to build on and to use my now expertise. I would
5 like to continue to be part of the boy's engagement.
6 Excuse me, the Bar's ongoing efforts to better engage
7 the public in the coming years. I would welcome the
8 opportunity to continue my work on behalf of
9 Manhattan and all New Yorkers. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you. Ms.

11 Taylor.

12 MS. TAYLOR. Yes, good morning. Thank you.
13 Good morning your honored Chairperson Koslowitz, and
14 if I may I would like to briefly translate the
15 Council brief from Staten Island, Minority Leader
16 Councilman Matteo and my Councilwoman, Councilwoman
17 Rose. I don't know whether Council Member Borelli is
18 still in the room, but if so, good morning, sir.
19 Thank you all very much for this opportunity to make
20 a statement. I was very pleased that I have been
21 chosen to complete an open term in February of 2019
22 and since that time I have learned so much, and I
23 hope that I've also brought something to the table.
24 I look forward to continuing the work of providing
25 the voters of Staten Island and the city with an

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2 effective and efficient voting experience if I am
3 reappointed by the Council. Although I am not a
4 native Staten Islander, I have lived on Staten
5 Island for nearly 35 years, and I have lived in both
6 North Shore and also in Tottenville as far south as
7 you can go. I'm grateful for the many Staten
8 Islanders who have defended me, and who have allowed
9 me to become an active part of the traffic of Staten
10 Island. During my two years serving as the
11 Democratic Commissioner for Richmond County the
12 Board has been very busy implementing a number of
13 new initiatives, some, of course, at your
14 instruction Council people, and many of them have
15 been noted already by Commissioner Camilo and
16 Commissioner Townsend but, you know, we had the poll
17 pads. We got early voting. Then we, of course, had
18 to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic finding ways for
19 our staff to work at home by cutting down first to
20 50% staffing by identifying at-risk persons, but
21 afterwards the board was declared essential so we
22 created ways to protect our staff: Social
23 distancing, text to gas positions, hand washing,
24 hand sanitizing, temperature checks, all that stuff.
25 Then we had to deal, of course, with the absentee

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2 balloting, which brought them the first mail out and
3 the returns of the absentee ballot applications, and
4 then followed by the mailing of the 700,000 absentee
5 ballots with nearly 400,000 I believe ballots
6 returned, and differently this year the absentee
7 ballot counting after the election we received more
8 than ten times the number of such ballots as the
9 entire elections, and we had to create bipartisan
10 teams in every borough to review the wording of the
11 ballots in public view because the rules for
12 reviewing absentee ballots remains the same as they
13 were when we had only a few. I am used to having a
14 full plate so I was enthusiastic about joining the
15 board and learning a new area of law and government
16 and new procedures in calling out the city business.
17 Prior to coming to the Board, I had retired as a
18 principal law clerk with the New York State Supreme
19 Court Kings County, and I also spent some years
20 working in New York City agencies, the Department of
21 Transportation and the Department of Records and
22 Information Services, and I also was allowed to work
23 for five years with it Dean of the CUNY Law School.
24 I very much think Commissioner John Zaccone my
25 Republican counterpart from Staten Island for

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2 greatly assisting me in accomplishing the very steep
3 learning curve, but it was necessary for the decline
4 to be of some value him as the 2019 Board President.
5 At the end of January 2020 during my first month as
6 President of the Board, the Democratic Commissioner
7 of Kings County, professionally John Flateau
8 accepted a full-time position with the State and I
9 appointed myself to substitute for him as the
10 interim Democratic Commissioner for Kings County,
11 salary increase not included. As you all are
12 undoubtedly aware, his replacement Commissioner
13 Rodney Pepe-Souvenir joined us just about two months
14 ago. So, I am, therefore, deeply indebted to
15 Commissioner Simon Shamoun, my Queens County
16 Republican counterpart for helping me to learn the
17 many necessary procedures that are required to
18 manage deductions in a borough base much larger than
19 mine. I also personally thank and recognize the
20 Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of both Staten Island and
21 Brooklyn and owe them a great deal of gratitude for
22 helping me through all of the above. To tell you a
23 little bit more about myself, I did assign the
24 interim Commissioner duty to myself because number
25 one, I didn't really think I could assign it to

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2 anyone else, and I had something actually with
3 Brooklyn, and also I saw what used to carry in
4 double loads while I was attending New York Law
5 School as a night student, my day job was the
6 Director of Municipal Reference and Research Center
7 now the City Hall Library. In addition, in my youth
8 before the age of 30, I completed the Masters Degree
9 in Library Science, and was working as head of a
10 faculty library for a university in the African
11 Continent, and also managing a family of five. After
12 completing my law degree and passing New York Bar I
13 switched fields to being an attorney. I've always
14 believed that in order to expect the best you must
15 begin by giving your best, and that is what I have
16 tried to do in my two years at the Board. So, there
17 have been some snafus, but that was not because we
18 at the Board were not trying our best. We were.
19 I'm seeking reappointment as the Commissioner
20 because I feel that I still have some energy to
21 offer to the board, and because I feel that during
22 this upcoming period, I will have more time to focus
23 on the improvement of services to the voters in my
24 own Borough of Staten Island. I have been very much
25 involved with the planning and policy for Richmond

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2 County elections, but and serving as the President,
3 of course would readily get him some instructions. I
4 would like to look further into a few initiatives
5 that might benefit the Board overall. For example,
6 strengthening our relationship with high schools and
7 colleges throughout the city to help create an
8 informed cohort of interns who would then have full
9 knowledge of the entire election process to take
10 back to their communities and who might later find,
11 a career related to election law in addition to
12 possibly being interested in being elected
13 officials. Even I with experience in electoral
14 politics was like babe in the woods when I came to
15 the Board. I had no nurturing, no idea about how the
16 Board probably its responsibilities once the
17 congregate completes the petitioning process. I
18 would also like to look further into the value of
19 the Board's forming relationships with organizations
20 doing research to improve voter turnout such as the
21 Ash Institute at Harvard, which is studying
22 universal voting as a civic duty among other issues.
23 I hope that my two years of service will allow me to
24 also provide good support to the next Board
25 president. Thank you so much.

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2 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you. Okay, now
3 we're going to open the floor to questions, and I
4 will begin followed by members of the committee that
5 raise your hand. Ms. Camara...Camilo, there were nine
6 people who came down at the Board of Elections with
7 the Corona Virus. What precautions have been taken
8 to this coming Tuesday's Special Election?

9 MIGUELINA CAMILO: Thank you, Councilwoman
10 for the question. So, you're referring to our
11 borough office in the Bronx that did experience a
12 number of our staff members unfortunately
13 contracting the virus. Our procedures, which have
14 been citywide for all five boroughs have been to
15 have deep cleanings of the office on a weekly
16 basis, and what we did was to increase that
17 specifically for the Bronx Borough office. We
18 increased the number of cleanings that we were
19 allowing for our office or managing for our office
20 to twice a week. We also brought in a van thanks to
21 cooperation from the Mayor's Office to have oh not
22 on-site testing, but near the office. We brought in
23 a mobile van to allow for testing for our employees
24 apart from already what was ongoing with
25 thermometer checks every time, temperature checks

1
2 every time our employees were coming in from
3 outside the building. We've had glass partitions.
4 You know, a lot of these measures we're taking on
5 as an emergency once the COVID pandemic first began
6 in March, and reducing the number of our staff, and
7 also having a schedule that allowed for our staff
8 to come in on a rotating basis. Those are a number
9 of measures that we are taking and we have assessed
10 the situation very carefully and monitor how things
11 are going in our city as a whole, and we ensure
12 that our workers are also protected.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay, thank you.

14 Ms. Taylor, the Board issued a request for a
15 proposals on November 16 to find a firm to tabulate
16 votes after New Yorkers ranked candidates in order
17 of preference on their ballots. If the BOE has
18 still not finalized all of its vendors to implement
19 ranked choice voting, why should voters trust that
20 the BOE is ready to implement this program by the
21 first special election in February?

22 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: We have received a
23 bid from an experienced vendor to act on ranked
24 choice voting, but you are aware, of course, that
25 ranked choice voting is the subject of litigation

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2 at the present time, and so it's important for me
3 not to speak too broadly regarding what.. the
4 Board's readiness. I do want to emphasize that the
5 Board is ready. The Ballot Committee has been
6 working for some time. We have been trying to
7 interact with the state for some time. We have been
8 trying to interact with the state for some time, we
9 will follow the law as it exists or as we are
10 directed to do so by the courts.

11 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you, and Ms.
12 Townsend, in your written responses (coughs) excuse
13 me... you noted that staggered shifts could help
14 assist issues with poll workers on election day.
15 You also expressed support for universal voting
16 centers. What specific steps would need to take
17 place in order for the Board to implement these two
18 programs?

19 MIGUELINA CAMILO: I will start with
20 universal voting centers. I think thank that that
21 should be a graduated process meaning that we
22 should take a county by county approach to that and
23 make sure that we can execute that fully in each
24 county and take some learnings from that so I'm a
25 big fan of implement tests, refine and then seek to

1
2 expand. So, I think that that that, I think that
3 that's the best approach to implementing Universal
4 Byrne Center. So, we do it by county and do all
5 counting voting and then we move to citywide. I'm
6 in favor of that approach, and then regarding,
7 regarding poll worker pay and just some things of
8 that nature, I think we have a lot of room to
9 innovate, and those are just some ideas that I am,
10 you know, I guess proposing essentially that we
11 should consider. I think that the reality is that,
12 you know, we have a very large base of poll
13 workers. However, they are aging out, and I do
14 think that getting young people into, you know,
15 getting to the... getting them to become poll
16 workers I do think to a certain degree that the
17 offering has to be different. We know that election
18 day is a very long day for people and even with
19 early voting the days can be very long, and I think
20 the ability to have some flexibility and scheduling
21 in shifts would make poll working all the more
22 attractive, you know as a work option for, for
23 anybody who wants to become a poll worker. So, I
24 think that there are a lot of...there...there... As
25 I said, there are a lot of ways that we can be

1
2 innovative, and I would be really open to
3 discussing with executive management how we can
4 explore that and make the option of, you know,
5 becoming a poll worker all the more attractive.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you. Counsel
7 have any members raised their hands to speak?

8 LEGAL COUNSEL: No Chair Koslotwiz, Council
9 Member Adams.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you so much.
11 Thank you, Chair and thank you all and
12 congratulations for your potential reappointment
13 today, and thank you for your hard work over the
14 years. There's a lot of seasoning in this, in this
15 group today, and it's very refreshing to hear. So,
16 I'm going to start Ms. Taylor, we're... and I'm
17 going to steer it. I'm perfectly transparent. I'm
18 going to deal with rank choice voting in the next
19 couple of seconds that I have to talk. It just
20 seemed that there because of litigation you're not
21 able to speak on certain terms, but yesterday there
22 was the decision made in Manhattan Supreme Court
23 that did deny those of us on that lawsuit the stay
24 of rank choice voting for the February Special
25 Election in District 24. So, I would encourage you

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just to speak freely at least on that topic for my state just so I could ask the questions that I have. Do you, um, are you aware of the, of the information regarding absentee military ballots for that election on the 2nd of February and whether or not that will, whether or not that will happen?

MIGUELINA CAMILO: Yes, I do believe that those ballots will go out on Friday to the military because that is the date that they must go and they will. At this time the ballot is designed for rank choice voting because that is the current law. I don't believe I answered in my earlier response about this issue that the equipment that we presently have does have the ability to read rank choice voting dots. So, the only thing that we actually were trying to contact with the vendor for was design up an algorithm for handling the data once it was collected.

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Yes.

MIGUELINA CAMILO: It's what I mean. It probably set him back.

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Yes. I'm aware of the equipment. Thank you. So, you're saying that...back to the previous question, you're saying

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2 that the, the absentee military ballots will be
3 finalized. They're do out by tomorrow.

4 MIGUELINA CAMILO: I believe they are.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Great. Okay. I'm
6 going to ask Ms. Townsend... good morning,
7 afternoon.

8 MS. TOWNSEND: Good morning.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Good morning.

10 MS. TOWNSEND: Yes, so it's still morning.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: (laughs) Can you
12 provide us with the starting date of education
13 campaign for poll workers and, and training for
14 rank choice voting?

15 MS. TOWNSEND: The Public Education
16 Campaign will happen as soon as the Bronx special
17 is over. That is my understanding at the timing
18 because. I think as we stated before we just want
19 to make sure thar our voters are 100% clear as to
20 now that we're, we would, you know, we're looking
21 at a transition to a different method of voting
22 that they're clear about when one thing ends and
23 the other thing begins.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: And you're
25 comfortable with that time frame? You're

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2 comfortable with the amount of time afterwards and
3 stopping what the traditional was and going into a
4 brand ne system? You're comfortable with the, the,
5 I guess the training for the poll workers, the
6 training for the voting population? You have a
7 comfort level? Can you tell us about your comfort
8 level with that?

9 MS. TOWNSEND: Yes, I do have a comfort
10 level with that. I believe we're looking at like
11 roughly the end of the month within the next week
12 or so before the end of the year for, for the
13 Public Education Campaign to begin, and then poll
14 worker training would begin roughly in, in January
15 keeping in mind obviously this is a much smaller
16 group of poll workers that do need to be trained
17 relative to let's say a general election or a
18 primary across the city. (background noise) I do...
19 I'm sorry, I got a little background noise. That
20 yes, so to answer your question yes I'm...I'm
21 comfortable with the timing that we have over...you
22 know, we have several weeks with which to train our
23 poll workers and get them up to speed and make sure
24 that they have clarity so that they can then inform
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2 the voters. So, I have a high comfort level with
3 our staff.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: That's good to hear.

5 I have to be honest with you, I remain concerned
6 and I don't know if you listened to the hearing
7 last week. It was about a four-hour hearing last
8 week, and we had a lot of different, you know, it's
9 a lot of information to share. One of my main
10 concerns with the, with the election coming up on
11 February 2nd in Queens is that it almost seems like
12 between the BOE and CFB quite frankly that, that
13 these voters are going to be, you know, just used
14 virtually to see if this thing works. A lot of the
15 sentiment was you know, let's just see how this
16 works. It's a smaller group of people that will be
17 voting. Let's see how this works and we'll just
18 take whatever works, whatever didn't work and let's
19 just use this, you know, to see whether it works.
20 I'm concerned about that theory. I'm concerned
21 about that mentality and that outlook onto the
22 voters that still, you know, on a day-to-day basis
23 they are out here speaking to people, going to
24 community boards, going to civic association
25 meetings on Zoom are just the faces, you know, of

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2 the voting population when it comes to RCV, it's
3 one big question mark and quite honestly in a lot
4 of spaces it's fear. You know fear that the, that
5 their vote will be taken away because they will
6 not, you know, have enough time to digest number
7 one the number of candidates on the ballot and
8 number two that everything that is impacted by
9 their choices. Do you know how many sessions have
10 been conducted, training sessions have been
11 conducted to date?

12 MS. TOWNSEND: No, I couldn't. I would be
13 happy to get back to you. I do not know the
14 specific number of training sessions to date. What
15 I can tell you is we have about... I think it's
16 about 700 poll workers that need to be trained, and
17 regarding your question in terms of outreach,
18 obviously from the hearing we do know that the
19 Campaign Finance Report, Campaign Finance Board
20 does have a responsibility in terms of it educating
21 voters. We will work with them and we will
22 complement that effort but, you know, as we've done
23 with, with any of our elections, you know and I
24 would say as Chair of Public Outreach Committee my
25 expectation is that there's always what we like to

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2 call a surround sound campaign of using as many
3 channels in as many ways to reach as many voters,
4 not reach as many, but reach all voters as possible
5 because we do know that people get their
6 information and through a lot of different ways and
7 there is no one single way to do that. So, that,
8 you know that would be my expectation as
9 Commissioner.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you and just
11 one final, and this is to any of your colleagues
12 can chime in. Regarding the language issue when it
13 comes to ranked choice voting and preparedness when
14 it comes to language the, the, we know that there
15 is only budget to provide language interpretation
16 for Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Bengali, but
17 300,000 of the city's limited proficiency English
18 proficiency residents don't speak those four
19 languages. It is a, it is a concern, you know,
20 again when it comes to the new system coming in and
21 the languages that will be disconnected from the
22 new voting system. So, I'm going to leave it there
23 and anybody can chime in and respond. Thank you so
24 much for your testimony. Thank you.

25 MS. TOWNSEND: Thank you.

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2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Chair Koslowitz, we have
3 Council Member Treyger followed by Majority Leader
4 Cumbo.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Council Member
8 Treyger.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, thank
10 you Chair, and I just wanted just to build on my
11 colleague's Council Member Adams' statement. I
12 think she had mentioned that it's because of budget
13 that the Board of Elections only provides certain
14 language options for New Yorkers. I just want to
15 clarify that I think it's because of choice because
16 the City Council has actually prioritized funding
17 for the Board of Elections. I know because I helped
18 lead the effort for translators who speak Russian,
19 who Haitian Creole and other languages and the
20 Board of Elections' leadership moved the goal post
21 and told me that well because New York State does
22 not mandate them to do so that they are not going
23 to hire these translators that would really assist
24 New Yorkers and break down barriers across the five
25 boroughs. The initiative is deeply personal for me

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2 because I, as I mentioned in previous hearings, I
3 have witnessed Russian speaking elderly people in
4 my community turned away at information desks
5 because no one would help them find out what their
6 E-D is. No one knows what an E-D is and it's not
7 their fault, and all they needed was someone to
8 look up a street finder, check their address and
9 then just tell them if they are in the right place
10 or not, and we lose people at the information desk,
11 and just correct, just for the record the Ranked
12 Choice Ballot will it be translated in different
13 languages or will it be only in English to your
14 knowledge? Can anyone answer that?

15 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: It will be in
16 different languages, of course. Certainly.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: But it will not
18 be... Can you tell me which languages the ballot
19 will be in?

20 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: I believe it will be
21 in five standard languages that are required by the
22 law.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So, but to be clear
24 the law does not prohibit you to add more language?
25 That's just...those are the languages that the law

1
2 prescribes, but there's nothing in the law that
3 prohibits the Board of Elections from adding more
4 languages. Is that correct?

5 MS. TOWNSEND: I don't know that I can
6 speak to that. I don't believe so.

7 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: If I, if I may add to,
8 yes there are five and that the Civic Engagement
9 Commission does also do this work in this area, and
10 my understanding is that the general for this past
11 November was the first time that our daily staff
12 had worked with the Civic Engagement Commission.
13 This is the first time they are mandated to serve
14 an election, and election event. They did so. My
15 understanding is that it was a good first
16 experience, and that there was an opportunity to
17 build on. So, yes, I echo Commissioner Taylor's
18 point in that we do provide in the five mandated
19 languages, but there is the expansion opportunity
20 right now becomes, comes in the form of our work in
21 partnership with the Civic Engagement Commission.
22 So, I'm hoping that that can...that we can continue
23 to build on that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right. Just two
25 points of clarification. I believe Russian speakers

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2 are the third largest language group I think behind
3 Spanish and Chinese over 100,000 or so identity as
4 speaking Russian, and in New York City it's a
5 sizeable population in addition to folks who speak
6 Haitian Creole, Urdu, Arabic, this remains a
7 barrier for many of our families, and I will
8 continue to speak up for them, and just to kind of
9 give clarification you know, we've added. We work
10 for funding, and we were told by the Board of
11 Elections' leadership that it's because they're not
12 required by the State that's why they're not going
13 to implement it. So, the City of New York has had
14 to literally come up with different pilots and
15 different variations and forms to try to provide
16 supplemental translation assistance, but nothing
17 really in a holistic sense, and I'm just, you know,
18 look I appreciate everyone's service, and I just,
19 you know I had a great conversation with
20 Commissioner Pepe so when she hears about this she
21 knows how important this is for us in Brooklyn. I'm
22 sure this is not just in Brooklyn. I'm sure Chair
23 Koslowitz has Russian speaking folks...

24 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Yes.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: ...who live in Queens
3 who have the same, and so we will keep pushing
4 until we knock down a barrier for barriers for all
5 of our families. This is a deeply personal issue.
6 It's the right thing to do, and so I just wanted
7 just to put that out for the record that folks
8 already face existing issues and challenges in
9 terms of the voting process, and the Rank Choice
10 Ballot in my opinion should be made available in
11 different languages as well, as well as the
12 materials to educate people about the process, and
13 I thank the Chair for her time.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: I just want to add to
15 that I agree with Mark. I have 60,000 Bukharian
16 people living in my community that have a hard time
17 when they go to the board, and I have been fighting
18 this for years. So, I just want to add that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: And with that, next.
21 The Majority Leader did you say yes?

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Yes, thank you
23 Committee Counsel and thank you Chair Koslowitz. I
24 share the same line of questioning as my
25 colleagues. So, the military ballots that went out

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2 for the Special Election what type of education
3 involving Rank Choice Voting has happened for those
4 individuals that will be asked to fill out those
5 ballots?

6 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: We must consider in the
7 first place we must remember that the people who
8 are receiving these ballots many of them are the
9 same people who voted for Rank Choice Voting. So.
10 they are not completely unfamiliar with it.

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Then I'll ask you this
12 way: What type of education program was brought to
13 the voters to educate them about Rank Choice Voting
14 when they voted on it in the first place? Was there
15 an education program that was done? Were there
16 community partners? Was there television ads? Was
17 there video, radio, community organizations that
18 were reached out to, elected officials? What was
19 done to educate the voters initially?

20 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: Let me say first that
21 also there is a letter or explanation that will be
22 going with the military ballots, which is the most
23 that we could do right at this moment, but also I'm
24 afraid that my colleagues and I were not members of
25 the Board of Elections at the time that Rank Choice

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2 Voting was originally on the ballot. So, and I
3 don't think that the Education program at that time
4 was handled by the Board of Elections. I may be
5 wrong on that, but if someone was present to it.

6 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Does anyone know if
7 there was any education plan that went out to
8 educate voters about what Rank Choice Voting was
9 going to entail when they voted on it or was it
10 just placed on the ballot for them to vote on along
11 with the other five?

12 FEMALE SPEAKER: So, if I may Majority Leader,
13 you're speaking to three candidates that came in in
14 March of 2019. We all came in together. President
15 Commissioner Taylor had spoken. You know the
16 passing of the Rank Choice Voting that came by
17 resolution by the New York City voters that is
18 something that happened outside of the scope of
19 what we the Board of Elections do as a ministerial
20 agency, but what I will say is that we do have a
21 valid committee, and it was spoken about
22 previously, and we do make efforts to afford the
23 voter as much clarity as possible on the ballot. We
24 all know we've gone and voted, and we see
25 instructions on that ballot, and we've had to

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2 configure a ballot for Rank Choice Voting because
3 that is the mandate at this time. So what I can
4 say, what we can say is that ballot that has gone
5 out has been reviewed by our Ballot Committee, and
6 has instructions on how many do you vote for or how
7 do you vote, and that's what's being sent to our
8 military personnel tomorrow.

9 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: So, the ballot
10 essentially is the education?

11 FEMALE SPEAKER: Well, you know like that's
12 like...

13 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: That there is an
14 additional information included in the packet that
15 goes to them in the form of a letter and
16 instructions.

17 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: And I beg your pardon
18 that Rank Choice Voting, you know, came from the
19 City Charter Revision Commission, and you are
20 responsible for educating the public, and I assume
21 they educated the public well enough because it was
22 voted in overwhelmingly.

23 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I would say that a
24 statement like that would have to be more backed up
25 with actual resources with, you know, with a plan.

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2 So, I was curious to understand or see what the
3 plan was and what the level of outreach was. So, in
4 our hearing that we did with Campaign Finance Board
5 and Board of Elections, we've learned that the
6 education budget for Rank Choice Voting is going to
7 be a million dollars. Right? So, when we look at
8 that as elected officials, and all the work that we
9 had to do to do census education and outreach, the
10 City allocated \$40 million to outreach, to reach
11 people, to have our staff do. I know my staff and
12 my team we did at least 12, at least 12 and that's
13 a conservative number of census outreach events to
14 educate people, and it was a begging and pleading
15 and, you know basically on your knees begging
16 people: This is what the census is, this is how how
17 fill it out, this is why it's important, and then
18 they would go...you would have to go back and forth
19 with questions with a mask on hoping people stand
20 back far enough away from you to answer the
21 question. So, when I think about a million dollars
22 and there not being really any educational outreach
23 about this, and the other issue that my colleagues
24 brought up in terms of the language issues. So,
25 let's just use for example the Russian community.

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IF the ballot, as was said, is pretty much going to be the education plan, and Russian speakers and many others are going to be coming forward to understand Rank Choice Voting, then they're going to be at real disservice. What is, what is the plan for when Russian voters come to vote and there are no ballots in their home language, there are not people on hand to educate them in their language, what's our, what's our answer to that?

PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: I do believe that we are... I don't want to make it appear that I am advocating Rank Choice Voting. The Board is here simply to... We will do what we are required to do by the law. We have a public education plan that we will put into place. We will do our utmost to educate the voters, but the responsibility for education of the voters was placed with the Campaign Finance Board. I believe they have a calendar and that we will be...they will be putting out materials in January. That is absolutely the most that I am able to say.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay and just one final question about this because I've had a lot of discussion about this, and maybe you all know the

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2 answer to this. Will Rank Choice Voting education
3 because I get this question a lot because the Good
4 Government groups and people that are for it are
5 questioning and say like: How hard is it to just
6 ran your top five voters? Like should it just fill
7 in number 1, number 3, number 4, number 5 and
8 you're done. So, sure filling out five bubbles in
9 theory is simple enough, but there's a whole
10 education side where people ask these questions in
11 terms of: Well, once I do it, how does it work?
12 Right? So, there's the top five and then you take
13 the votes from the fifth, from the fourth person,
14 and then you really reallocate them, and then it
15 goes to some sort of algorithm and some sort of
16 rounds and out of that you get some sort of answer
17 as to who won and who didn't win. Like is that
18 going to be part of the education because when
19 people ask me to explain the algorithm and how the
20 rounds are going to go and after you vote for the
21 fifth person and the fourth person and then you
22 take their votes and what if the fifth and fourth
23 person and all the votes wind up recognizing that
24 the seventh candidate actually when you add it up
25 and tallied all of them got more votes than those.

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2 Like it's a very confusing thing. So, I'm trying to
3 figure out is the education going to be more so?
4 Just fill our number 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, and call it
5 a day or is it: This is how this algorithm works?
6 Because many people let's say I have family that's
7 into the sports, and so they're saying: Oh, it's
8 going to be like the MBA where it's weighted. Your
9 first point candidate gets five points, this one
10 gets four points, this one gets... like people have
11 a lot of different understandings of what Rank
12 Choice Voting means, and then there's the whole
13 side of strategy where maybe if someone is the
14 front runner they may have to educate their base to
15 say: Don't participate in Rank Choice Voting. Just
16 vote for me because we don't want to give those
17 other people any more votes than they already would
18 get and, and then to just add to that people that
19 have broadband access that are more internet savvy,
20 they'll be able to communicate with their base a
21 lot faster than people that are relying on paper
22 mail or in a nursing home or in senior centers.
23 Those individuals are not going to have the same
24 engagement with Rank Choice Voting as those with
25 broadband. Those with broadband are going to get a

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2 far better education than those without. Would you
3 agree to that?

4 MIGUELINA CAMILO: Thank you Majority Leader
5 because you have laid out all the questions that we
6 have been trying to deal with in preparing our public
7 education program in consort with the Campaign
8 Finance Board. So, yes, it is my understanding that
9 the... Commissioner Thompson you can help me out with
10 this...

11 PATRICIA ANN TAYLOR: Yes

12 MIGUELINA CAMILO: ... or correct me if I'm wrong
13 but it is my understanding that the Public Education
14 program will cover helping people understand these
15 kinds of things and...

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I'm sorry, I'm sorry
17 (inaudible)

18 MIGUELINA CAMILO: and it will probably as soon
19 as the Bronx Special Election is completed.

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: That's correct, that's
21 correct and, and as... So, this is one special
22 election.

23 MIGUELINA CAMILO: Yes, yes and as I, as I
24 stated earlier, we'll start this after... the Bronx
25 Special is first again so as not to confuse voters

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2 about what they should be doing in one election
3 versus anything that may take place going forward,
4 but these are all of the questions that we are
5 considering in terms of thinking about all of the
6 potential to your point. You do have a lot of
7 scenarios and some of them I think are a little bit
8 more perhaps for a campaign to consider and not
9 necessarily for a voter to consider, but trying to
10 think about what would, what would, what would, what
11 questions a voter would have, and using that to
12 inform the strategy and the outreach around the
13 Public Education Campaign. As I said earlier, how do
14 you reach people who get their information in a lot
15 of different ways. Not everybody is on the Internet
16 at all or they may be and may not be so comfortable
17 getting their information that way. So, we
18 have...there can be and as you've seen probably in
19 other election cycles we have done broad outreach
20 whether it's using the LinkNYC Kiosk. We have
21 done... For example, we have done digital outreach.
22 It may be distributing flyers and worked with Good
23 Government Groups who know their populations and can
24 say: You know what? This group really we want to
25 reach young people. We should reach them on the

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2 mobile because that's where they are or we want to
3 reach a senior population. They may be less
4 comfortable on getting their information by our
5 website. So, let's think about is there a way to
6 call people or is there a way to mail them
7 information or are there other points like where...?
8 How do we meet people where they are is the question
9 that we're always asking ourselves, or asking
10 ourselves, and then that's how we determine the best
11 way to create a, to create a campaign to inform
12 people.

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: And yes, I appreciate
14 that.

15 MIGUELINA CAMILO: UH-HM.

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: And when it is down I
17 have super duper respect for all of you. So, this
18 is... when I see you, we're going to love each other
19 up and hug each other up all the same, but what
20 you're saying to me is deeply troubles me because
21 those types of questions and strategy in thinking
22 should have been worked out right when the voters had
23 voted for it in 2019 because now these are critical
24 questions that you're asking two months before
25 special election, and so when we're saying two months

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2 before a special election there's no way you can work
3 out those critical questions, and at the same time
4 educate voters and answer those questions about
5 language access, about seniors and when we're
6 thinking about best ways to reach seniors I mean we
7 had to think about those issues in terms of food
8 access. So, we're trying to deal with: How do we get
9 food to our seniors that are shut in? And typically,
10 and I'm not making this a black/white issue. I'm
11 speaking for the community that I represent in my
12 Orthodox Jewish community, in my African-American
13 community, we educate our seniors through our senior
14 centers. We educate them through our churches,
15 through our synagogues, through places, our food
16 pantries. Those are the places that we physically go
17 to to educate them, and if we cannot go to those
18 places, and it's not... You know when we drop the
19 food off to them we can't ring the bell and say: Hi,
20 Mrs. So and So. We have to put the food down, walk
21 away, knock on the door so that they know that it's
22 there. I don't see if we determined that that is the
23 only safe strategy to reach them how are you going to
24 enable to answer questions around algorithms when you
25 got to stand six feet away from the door to talk to

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2 someone, and is that the best usage of our time?
3 I'll end there because I'm very... It's not that I'm
4 passionate about this issue. It's more so I have just
5 seen a century of struggle from communities, black
6 people specifically who have fought and died for the
7 right to vote in order to put people of color in the
8 positions in New York State that are in there now
9 from Attorney General Leticia James, to Mayor David
10 Dinkins to the District Attorneys Darcel Clark and
11 Eric Gonzalez to our Borough President Eric Adams and
12 Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and many
13 others. We have more black elected judges than ever,
14 more black women in the Senate and Assembly than ever
15 before. Like we've made a lot of gains, and I just
16 see that being wiped away through a lack of
17 education, a lack of timing, a lack of education and
18 a lack of resources, and so this process troubles me
19 and the special elections that are coming up deeply
20 trouble me because it's an impossibility to educate
21 people in two months about this process. So, I'll
22 conclude there, and I thank you all so much for your
23 time today.

24 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you. Counsel, any
25 other people who wish to ask questions?

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LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Adams, I've seen your hand raised, too. Do you wish to ask any additional questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: No, I can't really state emphatically any better than my Majority Leader just stated, the overall big picture, you know, and we're really not here to defend or decry or anything like that. It's a matter of deep, deep concern where this issue has been put out there in our behalf and incorrectly stating our position. What she just said is everything about our position, and our deep, deep concern over the levels, the generations, and all of that that have brought us here, and as she said, we have more women, more people of color in office than ever before, and now we are emphatically giving a... Rank Choice Voting is a solution looking for a problem. So, that said, no matter what side of the fence we're on we are here to, you know, support you quite frankly. So, my last question will be for all of you one by one: How comfortable are you Commissioner Camilo in explaining Rank Choice Voting to your next door neighbor and then I will ask Commissioner Taylor and then finally Commissioner

1
2 Townend. On a scale of 1 to 10 and just give me a
3 number. Thank you so much.

4 COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Thank you Council
5 Member Adams for that great question to end with, and
6 if I would give a number as to my comfort as
7 explaining the process from beginning to end, which
8 includes the calculation of a number. If I'm honest I
9 would say about a 7 because I'm learning with you
10 all. (laughs)

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Councilman,
12 Commissioner Taylor.

13 COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: I think that I would
14 say an 8 only because I was a math minor. (laughter)
15 So, I'm familiar with algorithm.

16 COMMISSIONER CAMILO: I'm learning something
17 new about you. (laughter)

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Commissioner, you
19 know who the points of this algorithm business.
20 (laughs)

21 COMMISSIONER CAMILO: I'm sorry. I didn't
22 understand your statement.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: No, no, no, no, I was
24 telling, saying to your colleague that they know who
25 to count on for the algorism, the algorithm.

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2 COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Uh-hm. (laughs) And
3 then we are going to do a hand count if we need you.
4 We'll call you. We'll call you...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: There you go.

6 COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Even if it's a late
7 night, yes, yes (sic) (laughter.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you.
9 Commissioner Townsend.

10 COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND: I'm going to say, in
11 this moment I'm going to say about a 7 inching
12 towards an 8 in the sense that I like to get deep
13 in the weeds with things and probably deeper than
14 most and then kind of come up for air so that I can
15 explain it. That's my own personal methodology, and
16 then I'll use that to continue to apply it to how
17 we work with the, with the in-house team regarding
18 refining the plan that we have in place regarding
19 public education.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you all for
21 your testimony. I would...and your candor. Quite
22 frankly my count level is there with you between a
23 6 and a 7. So, we got a long way to go with
24 education all the way around. So, thank you very
25 much again.

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COMMISSIONER TOWNSEND: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CAMILO: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TAYLOR: Thank you.

CHAIR KOSLOWITZ: Anyone else?

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I would say mine is about a 3.

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: (laughs) I think you're being generous.

MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: It is generous, but I didn't want to put myself, too, out there.

(laughs) When a reporter called me to ask me about my opinion, I asked him to explain it to me.

(laughs)

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Anyone else Counsel?

LEGAL COUNSEL: No.

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: No, okay. with that I will now call upon the Clerk to take the vote on all three candidates for reappointment to the Board of Elections, and I will be holding the vote open for our Speaker to join us, and with that, please take the roll call.

CLERK: Good morning. William Martin
Committee clerk roll call vote Committee on Rules,

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2 Privileges and Elections. All three items are
3 coupled. Chair Koslowitz.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: I vote aye, and
5 congratulations to the three candidates.

6 CLERK: Rose.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Permission to explain
8 my vote? (chime) I hope that we heard (sic) because
9 that we've had... all of my colleagues have expressed
10 about rank vote, Rank Choice Voting, and actually
11 takes this back so that it's, it is the CFB is
12 supposed to do the education, but the Board of
13 Elections you have to be on top of it, and the
14 message is so important. In terms of language you
15 have to not disenfranchise anyone, and that's your
16 mission. That's your mission, and so I am so pleased
17 with your accomplishments, your credentials. All of
18 you are more than able to do this job. We have,
19 we're, we have less investment in you because we feel
20 like you can represent our communities because you
21 are of our communities. With that, based on all of
22 your experience and your credentials I know that
23 you'll be able to do this. I vote aye, but I plea, I
24 really want to implore you to take what my colleagues
25

1
2 have said here today and to actually limit it and to
3 make it less. Thank you.

4 CLERK: Council Member Adams.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you. Echoing
6 the sentiments of my great colleague Council Member
7 Rose, we do have confidence in you, and count on you
8 to represent wider communities. With that with a lot
9 of trust and say I vote aye.

10 CLERK: Thank you. Matteo.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Aye.

12 CLERK: Thank you. One moment. (pause)

13 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: What's happening?

14 CLERK: The meeting will stand at ease.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: What? I didn't hear
16 you Lance. What did you say?

17 CLERK: The meeting will stand at ease. We
18 need more Council Members to...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER Right

20 CLERK: Cast their votes.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Is Council Member
22 Treyger still on?

23 CLERK: No, he is not. (pause)

24 FEMALE SPEAKER: While we are at ease may I
25 say a word?

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CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Sure.

FEMALE SPEAKER: I would like to...one of the questions that came up on our pre-hearing questionnaire was regarding pole pumps, (sic) and I responded to that question by asking for additional support for the Board of Elections in locating and operating particularly early voting sites, and Commissioner Thompson stated you know the Board of Elections does not own any sites. So, we have to reach out to find sites, and we have to help those sites be our city duty to assist that. We really, really need the support and assistance of all the stakeholders in our community to have the number of early voting sites that would be optimal for our city in all the different boroughs, and so I am asking Council Members here simply because I have this moment and I have your ear to please assist us in condensing appropriate sites that in your civic duty and it would benefit them to help us have a larger number of poll sites in practically every borough, and in many geographic locations the number of sites is abysmal, but we cannot do it by ourselves as the Board of Elections with the support of other stakeholders. So, I...I...I apply to you to please

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2 assist us and to think of us, and I know that some of
3 you have been assisting in many areas. So, I'm not
4 saying that especially the people on this committee,
5 but I'm really speaking of all Council Members at
6 large, so to speak and all elected officials and all
7 community boards and an all interested parties in
8 helping the Board of Elections to operate a proper
9 early voting event. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Quite welcome and we
11 hear you. (coughs)

12 CLERK: Chair Koslowitz, can we continue the
13 roll call?

14 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Yes. I see we have
15 been joined by...

16 CLERK: Mr. Speaker. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker
17 all items are coupled.

18 SPEAKER JOHNSON: Yes, thank you Mr. Clerk
19 and I want to thank Chair Koslowitz as always for
20 chairing this hearing. I vote aye on all.

21 CLERK: Thank you. By a vote of 5 in the
22 affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions,
23 all items have been adopted by the committee.

24 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay, are we waiting
25 for Council Member Treyger or...?

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MALE SPEAKER: He said he was coming.

3

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay. (coughs)

4

(pause)

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COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Hello.

6

CLERK: Welcome to Council Member Treyger.

7

The Items are coupled. Roll call, please. Your

8

vote? (chime) Council Member Treyger.

9

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I vote aye.

10

CLERK: Thank you, sir. The vote is now 6

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in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no

12

abstentions.

13

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you and this

14

meeting is adjourned. (gavel)

15

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you so much to the

16

committee. We really appreciate you.

17

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you. My thanks for

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working with you as well.

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FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

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FEMALE SPEAKER: Congratulations

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colleagues.

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FEMALE SPEAKER: You've got steel. (sic)

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FEMALE SPEAKER: See you all Tuesday.

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(laughs)

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FEMALE SPEAKER: Stay warm and stay safe everyone.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Happy to help with that election.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: I presented. Thank you all. Congratulations. Thank you.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Hello.

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 16, 2020