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**CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**  
**TESTIMONY TO THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS**  
**ON RESO 5376 RE: DISCRETIONARY FUNDING REFORMS**  
**October 11, 2012**

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Good morning, Chair Rivera and other members of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections. My name is Rachael Fauss, and I am the Policy and Research Manager of Citizens Union of the City of New York, a nonpartisan good government group dedicated to making democracy work for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide Citizens Union's position regarding Resolution 5376, which would codify reforms made over the last several years by the City Council regarding the discretionary funding process, and importantly provide for new, increased transparency of capital funding through an online searchable database.

Citizens Union has worked with the Council to institute these important reforms, beginning in 2006 when greater transparency was provided regarding funding decisions through Schedule C, and again between 2008 and 2010 when increased pre-clearance of organizations was provided in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Contract Services and conflicts of interest disclosure was required for organizations seeking funding and the councilmembers sponsoring discretionary items. Earlier this year, Citizens Union released a comprehensive report on the city's discretionary funding process, providing a framework for further reforms to the process to ensure transparency, accountability, and equity.<sup>1</sup>

Citizens Union supports enactment of Reso 5376, as it will codify the reforms made by the Council to date, and is pleased that it will additionally provide easier access to the public for "non-city" capital budget items (projects for nonprofits that are not on city-owned property) through an online searchable database. This is an important step forward which will establish a floor for the next Council's Rules to ensure that discretionary funding is allocated in a transparent and accountable manner. We hope to continue to work with the Council to further improve the discretionary funding process and ensure that it best serves all of New York's communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to present Citizens Union's thoughts on the proposed resolution.

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<sup>1</sup> Citizens Union's full report is available at:  
[http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/CU\\_Report\\_NYC\\_Discretionary\\_FundingFY2009-2012\\_May2012.pdf](http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Reports/CU_Report_NYC_Discretionary_FundingFY2009-2012_May2012.pdf)