



GABRIELA ROSA  
Assemblywoman 72<sup>nd</sup> District

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**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations**  
**Hearing on Resolution 0115-2014**  
**June 9, 2014**

Dear Chairman Kallos & Committee Members:

As the representative for New York's 72<sup>nd</sup> Assembly district, which comprises the Northern Manhattan neighborhoods of Washington Heights, Inwood and Marble Hill, and as a co-sponsor of Assembly bill A.2448, I respectfully urge the Council to take up and pass Resolution 0115-2014. Assembly bill A.2448 and its Senate companion bill, S.4142, would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to serve on local community boards, which in turn would promote civic engagement among young people and provide community boards with a fuller understanding of the needs of that segment of the population. I hope the City Council will add its voice to mine and many of my colleagues' in calling for the passage of these bills into law.

The Community Board is the most local form of government, and it serves as a means to give residents a voice in decisions ranging from land use to economic development to the delivery of government services in their neighborhoods. These decisions directly impact young people, who make up roughly one-fifth of the population of the City of New York, but the current age restriction prevents these same young people from participating in the decision-making process.

A.2448 and S.4142 would also provide young people the opportunity to affect change in their communities and government, thus encouraging them to remain active participants in our democratic process. Sadly, young people are less likely to vote in local elections than national ones. This may be due to a lack of familiarity with candidates, their positions and the impact of government on their day-to-day lives. Passage of this legislation has the potential to curb voter apathy among young New Yorkers.

As the mother of a 16-year-old myself, I urge the City Council to act swiftly to pass this resolution in hopes that it will convince more of my colleagues in the state legislature to do the right thing by our young people.