



New York City Campaign Finance Board
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**Testimony of Amy Loprest
Executive Director
New York City Campaign Finance Board**

**City Council Committee on Governmental Operations
August 20, 2014**

Chair Kallos and members of the Government Operations Committee, I am Amy Loprest, Executive Director of the New York City Campaign Finance Board. I regret that I am unable to join you, but I wanted to share my thoughts on the bills before you today.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislation dealing with the Voter Guide requirements of the Charter.

Since the very first election conducted under the Campaign Finance Program in 1989, the Voter Guide has been part of the CFB's mandate. In the years since, the Guide has become an authoritative source of nonpartisan, unbiased information upon which New York City voters have come to rely.

For each citywide election, other regularly scheduled elections, and elections with a city referendum on the ballot, the CFB has printed and mailed a Guide in English and Spanish. As mandated by the federal Voting Rights Act, the Guide is also printed for certain areas of the city in Chinese, Korean, and Bengali. With every passing year, the volume of election-related information online has grown exponentially, but the print Guide is still a trusted resource for millions of New Yorkers.

It is no small project to provide a comprehensive guide to an election for every registered New York City voter—at last count, the state Board of Elections listed more than 4.2 million active voters in the five boroughs. For 2013, more than 7.5 million Guides were printed and mailed for the primary and general elections. The two editions of the citywide Voter Guide cost nearly \$10 million to produce, print, and deliver. It is an important resource which requires a significant investment of city resources.

The logistics of producing the printed Guide require a predictable schedule. In a year with a citywide election, like 2013, this is not an issue. But in other years, in cases where there may be uncertainty about the requirement to print a Guide—for instance, if a citywide referendum is certified for the ballot only at the very last minute—it may be necessary to expend city resources to prepare a Guide before knowing if a printed Guide will be required.

We believe this legislation will provide certainty for CFB operations, and ensure that city resources are not wasted to prepare Guides that are never printed. Providing information to voters remains a central

mandate for the CFB. Even when a print guide is not produced, we will continue to make comprehensive, nonpartisan voter information available to New Yorkers through electronic means, as we do for every election required by our Charter mandate and beyond.

We thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this legislation, and we support its passage.

We would also like to reiterate our support for the other bills to be voted on today: Int. No. 6, and Int. No. 148-A.

Int. No. 6 will ban anonymous campaign ads, by requiring every communication produced by a campaign to indicate its source by including a “paid for by” notice. This was a recommendation of the Board following the 2009 elections, and is included among the Board’s 2013 post-election recommendations.

Int. No. 148-A will provide New Yorkers with a more complete view of the funding behind independent expenditures in City elections. It will require spenders to provide the CFB with more details about their largest contributors; and further expand the information provided to voters on the face of the communication, including the names of the entity’s top donors. Given the volume of independent spending in last year’s elections, this measure is important and timely.

We previously testified in support of these bills on April 25 of this year, and we would like to thank the bills’ sponsors and Council staff for working closely with CFB staff on these proposals.

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Testimony
Henry Berger
NYC Council Committee on Governmental Operations
August 20, 2014

Thank you Chair Kallos and members of the Government Operations Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today.

On very rare occasions referenda are proposed for the ballot that present nearly insurmountable barriers to the Campaign Finance Board to meet its Charter-mandated obligation to print and mail a voter guide.

To timely prepare a printed voter guide, the CFB must begin to commit resources at least 60 days prior to election day. This commences a process that costs the city \$3million.

When candidates for municipal office are on the ballot, the CFB knows it has to print and mail a voter guide and commits the resources to do so.

When the only issue on the ballot is a referendum and that referendum has been submitted late in the election calendar, it may happen that 60 days before the election, a determination has not been made whether the referendum actually qualifies for the ballot. Nonetheless, pursuant to the Charter the CFB must begin to commit the resources to prepare for a voter guide even though there may, ultimately, be no referendum on the ballot and the money spent will be wasted.

This legislation provides that when it has not yet been determined that there will be a referendum on the ballot 60 days before election day and there are no candidates on the ballot, the CFB will meet its obligation to inform the voters of the referendum issue, if such referendum is subsequently approved for the ballot, by posting the information on its website rather than printing and mailing a voter guide.

In today's electronic information age as we provide more and more information on line, this is a fair allocation of limited city resources by providing necessary information to the City's voters without risking the unnecessary waste of City dollars.

If you have any questions, I will be pleased to answer them

Thank you.



CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Testimony to the New York City Council Governmental Operations Committee on Legislation Related to Campaign Finance Disclosure and CFB Voter Guide

August 20, 2014

Good morning Chair Kallos and members of the Governmental Operations committee. My name is Rachael Fauss and I am the Director of Public Policy of Citizens Union. Citizens Union of the City of New York is an independent, nonpartisan, civic organization of members who promote good government and advance political reform in the city and state of New York.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the introduction related to the voter guide requirements for the Campaign Finance Board, and also wanted to briefly respond to your voting today on legislation that Citizens Union previously provided testimony about at your April meeting.¹

Briefly on Intros 6 and 148-A, Citizens Union believes that it is important that there be greater public transparency around who is spending money on campaigns and on which candidates and issues. These two bills, sponsored by Councilmembers Lander and Garodnick, will pull back the curtain and result in greater information being provided to New York's voters. Voters want to know who is behind paid messages that inform and sometimes influence their thinking on candidates and issues.

Regarding the introduction related to the voter guide requirements of the Campaign Finance Board, we support the need to save taxpayer dollars by not requiring the mailing of voters guides to all voters on a single ballot item and only city election matter, which may not ultimately make it on the ballot. While we support the legislation, we ask the City Council to examine legislation introduced in the previous session, Intro 769 of 2012, which would require the CFB to expand upon its city voter guide by publishing a version during state and federal elections years, and include information about all state and federal candidate running for election. The CFB's voter guide is an important resource for voters during municipal elections, and could play a similar important role for state and federal elections as well. Doing so would make it easier to simply add this year's proposed city ballot question to an already planned voter guide.

I welcome any questions you may have.

¹ Citizens Union Testimony available at:

http://www.citizensunion.org/www/cu/site/hosting/Testimony/CU_Testimony_Council_GovOps_CampaignFinanceLegislation_4_25_14.pdf

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Precon Futro Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Aug 20 14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Richard Fauss

Address: Citizens Union

I represent: 299 Broadway Suite 700

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. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Henry Berger

Address: _____

I represent: Mayor's Office

Address: _____

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