

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST BOARD
ADVICE AND CONSENT HEARING
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL RULES COMMITTEE**

Opening Statement of Nisha Agarwal

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am Nisha Agarwal and I am honored to have been nominated by Mayor de Blasio for the Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB). I want to start by thanking Speaker Johnson, Chair Koslowitz, and members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to appear in front of you today and answer any questions you may have. I would also like to thank Mayor de Blasio for the honor of being nominated to the Conflicts of Interest Board.

For 15 years – my entire career – I have dedicated myself to public service and non-profit work in New York City; working to ensure that our City is fair, equitable, and just. I've had the privilege of serving as a Senior Advisor to the Deputy Mayor of New York City. During that time, I worked on voting and civic engagement under DemocracyNYC to ensure that all communities are able to register, vote, and be heard on the issues they care about most. Prior to this, I was chosen by the Mayor to serve as the Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs, and, in that role, we created IDNYC, a municipal identification card available to all New York City residents that 1 million people signed up for in the first year alone. In addition, I helped build Cities for Action, a national advocacy coalition. And, when I was in the non-profit field, we were continuously working with the City to create laws to help thousands of New Yorkers.

Throughout my career, I have held myself to the highest standards – implementing major initiatives, like IDNYC, required dedication, hard work, integrity and a drive to ensure fairness for all New Yorkers. I will bring this same dedication, hard work and drive to my work at the Conflicts of Interest Board, upholding the values of the Board and ensuring fairness and integrity in City government. Moreover, in my career, whether in government service or non-profits, I have the greatest respect for the city employees who serve the City day in and day out. The work they do is immense and I believe they truly want to support the City they serve. I believe in the Board's mission to support public servants through building trust in city government, and I look forward to being part of a Board that supports public servants, city government and the public at-large.

It would be a privilege to join the Conflicts of Interest Board and uphold our integrity and ethics for years to come. The independent COIB is charged with engaging trainings, confidential advice, and enforcement, if necessary. Training and engagement is one of the most important work that COIB does right now. My work on voting and civil engagement efforts make me an excellent choice to work with and support the education team to develop creative design and education materials so the conflict of interest law “pops” to city employees in a way that is informative, plain language and entertaining.

Confidential advice and enforcement is also crucial. During my service to the City, I have been subject to the Conflicts of Interest Law and complied with the Annual Disclosure Law. Also, in my tenure, I worked with city, state, and federal elected officials and agency partners on a range of issues, including important issues on government ethics and integrity.

I would be honored to join the Conflicts of Interest Board and work with city employees and, ultimately, all the residents of New York City to ensure the highest integrity, ethics and fairness for all. Thank you all for your consideration, and I will be happy to take any questions you may have.

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Opening Statement of Wayne Hawley

Good morning, Chair Koslowitz and members of the Committee. My name is Wayne Hawley. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today as a nominee of Mayor de Blasio for appointment to the Conflicts of Interest Board. I have a short statement and then of course will try my best to answer any questions you may have.

First, by way of personal background, my wife and I moved to New York City just over 41 years ago and we have lived here ever since. Our two children were born here, grew up here, and live here today. So, New York is my home. I care about this great city and its people.

I also care about the city's government and the public servants who staff this government. During my 18 years as a member of the staff of the Conflicts of Interest Board, one of my great experiences was talking to many thousands of the City's workforce...from elected officials and agency heads to teachers, police officers, and dozens of others. The range of important services that these people provide is staggering, and I had a lesson in the prominent role that City government plays in the life of this City. I also came to an appreciation for the hard work and dedication of so many of my fellow public servants.

At the same time, I came to appreciate what an outsized role this tiny City agency, the COIB, with its 5 Board members and its two dozen employees, could and indeed does have in a City of 8.5 million and a municipal workforce of over 300,000. The COIB, I came to understand, is both a symbol of, and one of the drivers of, the commitment of City government to put service to the public first, that is, to the principle that public service is a public trust.

If confirmed by the Council, I will have the opportunity to return to the COIB, this time as a board member, to advance its mission of helping to promote the public's trust in its City government. In that role, I would be mindful of my own obligation, in interpreting and enforcing the City's conflicts of interest and annual disclosure laws, to put the public's interest first. I look forward to that responsibility.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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