



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 488

By Council Members Perkins, Yassky, Addabbo, Avella, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, DeBlasio, Dilan, Fidler, Foster, Gentile, Gennaro, Gonzalez, Jackson, Liu, Lopez, Martinez, Monserrate, Quinn, Recchia, Reed, Reyna, Rivera, Sanders, Seabrook, Serrano, Stewart, Jennings, Weprin, Bacz and James

A Local Law to amend the New York City charter, in relation to limiting the amount that the mayor or member of the council may contribute or spend on ballot proposals submitted to voters by a charter revision commission.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Declaration of Legislative Findings and Intent. This legislation intends to limit the amount that elected officials may contribute or spend on Charter ballot proposals submitted to voters by a Charter Revision Commission. By possessing an unchecked ability to spend an unlimited amount of funds to support or oppose a ballot question, an elected official is afforded a limitless and unrestricted ability to promote a particular agenda. Historically, the Mayor has always had significant influence over the Charter Revision Commission, including appointment power over members of the Commission. And because the Mayor appoints them, the members typically advance the interests of the Mayor and put forth ballot proposal questions to the voters based upon the Mayor's particular agenda. This legislation only seeks to limit the Mayor's capacity to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence the electorate. The Mayor, as the City's most prominent political figure, will always enjoy tremendous public exposure. As Chief Executive of the City, the Mayor has unlimited access to free media which will undoubtedly continue to influence public opinion. Thus, though the Mayor will always have influence over the Charter Revision Commission, this legislation attempts to balance these clear advantages, by creating a fairer, more just system that allows all voices to be heard.

§ 2. Chapter 49 of the New York City charter is hereby amended by adding a new section 1136.2 to read as follows:

§1136.2. Amount that the mayor or member of the council may contribute or spend on ballot proposals submitted to voters by a charter revision commission.

1. It shall be a violation of this section for the mayor to contribute or spend any amount of money, directly or indirectly, to promote, support or oppose, any ballot proposal submitted to the voters by a charter revision commission appointed pursuant to subdivision four of section 36 of the state municipal home rule law.

2. It shall be a violation of this section for any member of the council to contribute or spend any amount of money, directly

or indirectly, to promote, support or oppose any ballot proposal submitted to the voters by a charter revision commission appointed pursuant to subdivision two of section 36 of the state municipal home rule law.

§3. This local law shall take effect immediately.

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