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Int. No. 903

By Council Members Morano and Louis

A Local Law in relation to establishing a commission on proportional representation

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Definitions. For purposes of this local law, the following terms have the following meanings:

Agency. The term “agency” means a city, county, borough, or other office, department, division, bureau, board or commission, or a corporation, institution or agency of government, the expenses of which are paid in whole or in part from the city treasury.

City. The term “city” means the city of New York.

Commission. The term “commission” means the commission on proportional representation established by this local law.

Minority leader. The term “minority leader” means the council member chosen by the members of the council of the political party with the second greatest number of members in the council.

§ 2. Commission established. There is hereby established a commission to be known as the commission on proportional representation.

§ 3. Duties. The commission shall study and report on the feasibility and effects of adopting different methods for electing council members, including electing multiple council members from each council district based on ranked choice votes, awarding seats on the council to parties in proportion to votes cast city-wide for each party, and awarding seats on the council to parties in proportion to votes cast for candidates of each party. The commission shall include in such report any related recommendations for legislation, policies, or

procedures for electoral reforms that would broaden the representation of different political beliefs and of underrepresented groups in the council; result in a council that more accurately reflects the voting preferences of the city as a whole; and increase rates of voter participation in council elections. The report and recommendations shall take into account all of the following:

a. History of proportional representation in the city;

b. Benefits and drawbacks of proportional representation in cities and other political units, domestic and foreign, that have adopted proportional representation;

c. Differences among the forms of proportional representation adopted by cities and other political units, domestic and foreign;

d. Benefits and drawbacks of the current method of representation for elections in the city;

e. Information and analysis submitted by individuals with expertise in election law, New York state or municipal law, history, political science, comparative politics, public policy, or other relevant fields;

f. Information solicited at public hearings; and

g. Any other considerations the commission deems relevant.

§ 4. Membership. a. The commission shall consist of 11 members, as follows:

1. The chairperson of the campaign finance board or such chairperson's designee;

2. One member appointed by the mayor who is not employed by any agency;

3. Three members appointed by the speaker of the council;

4. One member appointed by the minority leader of the council; and

5. One member appointed by each borough president.

b. The speaker of the council shall designate one member to serve as chair of the commission. The commission may invite officers and representatives of relevant federal, state, and local agencies and authorities to participate in its work.

c. All appointments required by this section shall be made no later than 90 days after the effective date

of this local law.

d. Each member of the commission shall serve at the pleasure of the officer who appointed the member. In the event of a vacancy on the commission, a successor shall be appointed within 90 days of such vacancy in the same manner as the original appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term.

e. All members of the commission shall serve without compensation.

§ 5. Meetings. a. The chair shall convene the first meeting of the commission no later than 30 days after the last member has been appointed, except that where not all members of the commission have been appointed within the time specified in section four, the chair shall convene the first meeting of the commission within 10 days of the appointment of a quorum.

b. The commission shall invite experts and stakeholders to attend its meetings and to provide testimony and information relevant to its duties.

c. The commission shall meet no less than once each quarter and 4 additional times annually to carry out the duties described in section three.

d. The commission, in consultation with community stakeholders, shall select a minimum of one site in each borough on which to hold public hearings, exhibitions, and other relevant proceedings. In addition to providing notice in accordance with section 104 of the public officers law where applicable, the commission shall make best efforts to widely publicize the topics to be addressed at each public hearing, exhibition, and proceeding and encourage participation from the public in each such public hearing, exhibition, and proceeding.

§ 6. Report. No later than 18 months after the effective date of this local law, the commission shall submit a report to the mayor and the speaker of the council setting forth its findings on the feasibility and effects of proportional representation for election of council members, including a comparison of proportional representation to the current method for electing council members, ranked-choice single-member district elections, and any other relevant model. The commission shall further set forth in such report any related

recommendations for legislation, policies, or procedures for electoral reforms that broaden the representation of different political beliefs and of presently underrepresented groups in the council; result in a council that more accurately reflects the voting preferences of the city as a whole; and increase rates of voter participation in council elections. The report shall include a summary of information the commission considered in formulating its recommendations. If the members of the commission do not all agree on a recommendation, the report shall note whether it is a recommendation of a majority or minority of the members.

§ 7. Outreach and education. The commission, in consultation with the executive director of ethnic and community media, shall conduct an education campaign immediately following the issuance of each report required under section six of this local law to voters of the commission's findings and recommendations.

§ 8. Termination. The commission shall terminate 90 days after the date on which it submits its report, as required by section six.

§ 9. Effective date. This local law takes effect immediately.

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