



New York City Campaign Finance Board

100 Church Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10007

212.409.1800 | www.nyccfb.info

**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 bill’s sponsors and Council staff for working closely with CFB staff on these proposals.

###