



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

**City Council Committees on Governmental Operations and Finance  
June 2, 2015**

Good afternoon to the Chairs, Council members Kallos and Ferreras-Copeland, and committee members. I am Amy Loprest, Executive Director of the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB). I am joined today by Eric Friedman, the CFB's Assistant Executive Director for Public Affairs.

As I do every year at this time, I want to thank the Council for your continued support of the Campaign Finance Program and for the opportunity to testify today. Our budget for fiscal year 2016 will support the CFB's dual mission of preventing actual or apparent corruption in City government and spurring greater voter participation in City elections.

Before I turn to our specific budget request, I want to invite all of you to a conference on campaign finance reform that the CFB will host with the Brennan Center for Justice on July 22. We will gather nationally recognized legal experts, scholars, elected officials and other stakeholders to discuss how public campaign finance may help to restore citizens' confidence in our elections and encourage more voters to participate in them. I'm excited to share that Public Advocate Letitia James will be participating as a panelist and that our

keynote speaker for the day is Ann Ravel, the Chair of the Federal Election Commission. I hope you all will join us for this important discussion on July 22 at the Greenberg Lounge at the NYU School of Law.

The Board's fiscal year 2016 budget is \$14.5 million and it is attached to this testimony. Pursuant to New York City Charter, Section 1052(c), the Board submitted its budget for City Fiscal Year 2016 to the Mayor on April 6, 2015, and it was included in his Executive Budget.

The CFB's budget request includes \$1 million for the NYC Campaign Finance Fund to pay public funds to participating campaigns in special elections in the coming fiscal year. Based on media reports, we anticipate elections will be held to fill vacancies in at least two City Council districts this fall. Based on our experience, we believe our public funds request will be sufficient for those elections and other special elections that may arise later on. The CFB returns any funds remaining in the Campaign Finance Fund to the General Fund at the end of each fiscal year.

The Personal Services budget request reflects salary increases arising from settled labor contracts as well as additional staff. Specifically, the CFB is requesting adding auditors to further improve that core agency function. The CFB has focused intensively on making our post-election audit program for the 2013 election cycle more efficient and more effective. Before the audits began roughly 18 months ago, we conducted a comprehensive risk analysis to allow auditors to focus their reviews on the most risk-intensive items.

We are beginning to see the results of those efforts. As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, the CFB has completed draft audit reports to 185 campaigns, 37 more than the CFB had issued as of the same date in 2011 for the 2009 elections.

The CFB has concluded a number of audit reviews from the 2013 elections, including full final audits for 10 campaigns whose audits did not result in enforcement action. Limited reviews for another 46 campaigns that had minimal activity during the 2013 cycle have also been closed.

The Board has taken action on audit findings for eight campaigns from the 2013 elections to date. The Board has completed enforcement actions for seven campaigns, two of which did not have any penalty recommendations only public funds repayments resulting from a final bank balance. The Board determined that the eighth campaign was eligible to receive a public funds payment. By the end of the process, the CFB will complete full audits for slightly more than 200 campaigns.

The CFB's Personal Services request will also allow the agency to add software developers and other IT staff to execute our plan to overhaul and enhance all of the systems candidates use before the 2017 elections. Many of these upgrades will take place behind-the-scenes to improve functions within our candidate disclosure systems, C-SMART and C-ACCESS, but will in the long-term allow for greater enhancements. One key, public-facing enhancement currently in the works will provide expanded disclosure

of independent expenditures in City elections. The CFB's disclosure worked very well in 2013, but we are adding significantly to what will be available to City voters in 2017.

The CFB requests increased funding in its operations budget for 2016. The bulk of the increase is primarily to cover construction costs in our offices to meet current and future agency needs that were not adequately addressed in the original design. We are also working to expand the reach of some of our core programs over the next few months. The CFB's website is just weeks away from a new and exciting re-launch. Among the many benefits of the new design, we believe it will do a better job of highlighting the benefits New Yorkers receive through their investment in the campaign finance program.

Other projects on the horizon include the re-launch of our new and improved NYC Votes online contribution tool and an expansion of our non-partisan get-out-the-vote effort. NYCVotes.org, which we launched on a trial basis for the 2013 elections, will help candidates reach and engage new supporters and contributors online and on their smartphones. It will process credit card contributions, connect seamlessly to C-SMART, and transmit all the information candidates need for compliance directly to the CFB.

Our get-out-the-vote direct mail and phone banking effort in the 2014 general election helped to boost turnout among newly registered voters. We plan to expand the program for the 2016 elections beginning next spring.

As always, the CFB strives for efficiency in everything it does. New Yorkers have made an important and remarkable investment in our elections through the Campaign Finance Program. The Board and CFB staff are committed to ensuring that the City receives maximum return on that investment.

On behalf of the Board and CFB staff, we look forward to continuing to work with the Council to empower more New Yorkers to make their voices heard in city elections. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

**NEW YORK CITY CAMPAIGN FINANCE BOARD OPERATING BUDGET  
FISCAL YEAR 2016**

	<b>FISCAL 2015 CFB BUDGET</b>	<b>FISCAL 2016 CFB BUDGET</b>	<b>CHANGES FROM 2015 ADOPTED</b>
<b>PERSONAL SERVICES (PS)</b>	\$ 7,632,777	\$8,140,985	\$508,208
<b>OTHER THAN PERSONAL SERVICES (OTPS)</b>			
OTPS	\$3,919,000	\$4,860,650	\$941,650
VOTER GUIDE	\$391,500	\$476,500	\$85,000
NYC CAMPAIGN FINANCE FUND	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0
SUB TOTAL OTPS	\$5,310,500	\$6,337,150	\$1,026,650
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,943,277</b>	<b>\$14,478,135</b>	<b>\$1,534,858</b>

<b>HEADCOUNT</b>	<b>FY2015</b>		<b>FY2016</b>		<b>CHANGE</b>	
	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Seasonal</b>	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Seasonal</b>	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Seasonal</b>
	91	7	96	7	5	0

**New York City Campaign Finance Board**

**Fiscal Year 2016  
Operating Budget  
By Appropriation Code**

**Personal Services**

Unit of Appropriation 001 \$ 8,140,985

**Other Than Personal Services**

Unit of Appropriation 002

CFB Core Operations \$4,860,650

Voter Guide \$476,500

Sub total 002 \$5,337,150

**NYC Election Fund**

Unit of Appropriation 003 \$1,000,000

**TOTAL BUDGET**

**\$14,478,135**