

## ***Question # 2: Civic Engagement Commission***

This proposal would establish a new Civic Engagement Commission in order to enhance civic participation, promote civic trust, and strengthen democracy in New York City. The Commission would consist of 15 members. Of the 15 members, the Mayor would appoint eight members, including at least one member from the largest political party and at least one member from the second largest political party; the Speaker of the City Council would appoint two members; and each Borough President would appoint one member. The Mayor, Speaker, and Borough Presidents would be required to consider candidates who are representative of, or have experience working with, immigrants, individuals with limited English proficiency, people with disabilities, students, youth, seniors, veterans, community groups, good government groups, civil rights advocates, and categories of residents that are otherwise historically underrepresented in or underserved by City government.

Members of the Commission, who must be residents of the City, would be prohibited from serving as an officer of a political party or being a candidate for nomination or election to the office of Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President, or City Council Member. Commissioners other than the Chair, who would serve at the pleasure of the Mayor, would serve four-year terms, except that initial appointees, whose terms would commence on April 1, 2019, would serve terms ranging from two to four years. This ensures that terms of members end in different years, with the purpose of preventing wholesale turnover of the commission and promoting continuity.

The Mayor would designate a Chair, who would also serve as the Executive Director, from among his or her appointees to the Civic Engagement Commission. The Chair/Executive Director would be charged with the organization and staffing of the office.

The Civic Engagement Commission would have, subject to appropriation, the following powers and duties:

- Implement a Citywide participatory budgeting program established by the Mayor, to be implemented no later than the Fiscal Year beginning on July 1, 2020, and establish a participatory budgeting advisory committee;
- Develop new initiatives to support and partner with community-based organizations, institutions, and civic leaders in the public and private sectors in their civic engagement efforts;

- Develop a plan to consider the language access needs of limited English proficient New Yorkers in developing and implementing its programs and services;
- Establish a program for providing language interpreters at poll sites in New York City to be implemented in the 2020 general election and a language assistance advisory committee to provide recommendations for such program; and
- Partner with New York City agencies to increase awareness of and access to City services, assist the agencies in developing and promoting civic engagement initiatives, and develop strategies to centralize public information about opportunities for civic engagement.

The Commission would also be required to annually report on participatory budgeting, poll site language assistance, and any other information it deems relevant.

The Mayor would be authorized to transfer to the Commission, by executive order, any directly related powers and duties currently being performed by the Mayor's Office or any department whose head is appointed by the Mayor. Heads of Mayoral agencies would be required to cooperate with and offer assistance to the Commission in carrying out its functions.

If approved by the voters, these amendments would take effect on April 1, 2019.