



New York City Campaign Finance Board

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

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Good morning, Chairman Felder and committee members. I am Amy Loprest, Executive Director of the New York City Campaign Finance Board. With me is Deputy Executive Director Carole Campolo. I am here today to testify on Intro No. 586-A.

As I've expressed to this committee previously, we are pleased to have taken part in the process that produced this important legislation. Placing strict, low limits on contributions from individuals and entities doing business with City government will help renew the faith and trust New Yorkers place in their elected leaders.

We've also congratulated the Council for helping further emphasize the role of the average individual New York City contributor in election campaigns, a central goal of the Campaign Finance Program. At last week's hearing, we also expressed some concern about the sections of the bill that may intrude upon our administration of the law.

However, in my testimony today I would like to focus on some issues that were not fully addressed in our last appearance before this Committee.

The legislation as amended will require the Board to accept certain documentation through an "electronically scanned transmission." While accepting these documents electronically has been a goal of the Board, there is no protocol currently in place to do so.

In response to this legislation, the Board will be drafting new rules over the next several months to meet each of its administrative mandates. Those new rules will define a format and method for electronic submissions meant to ensure the legibility and authenticity of documents received in this manner, and campaigns interested in submitting backup documents to the Board electronically will need to be guided by those rules.

In our previous testimony, we spoke briefly about the budgetary impact of this new legislation. Since then, we have prepared a conservative estimate of the resources that will be necessary to meet the bill's new administrative mandates. We are estimating these mandates would require a 50 percent increase in the Board's budget. The largest part of this increase is for new staff and additional space to house those staff. The need for additional space is especially critical in order to ensure the legislation is implemented for the 2009 election as the Council intends, and that process must begin immediately. We are anticipating assistance from both the Council and the Administration in procuring the resources necessary to implement this legislation once it becomes law.

You also have asked a series of questions about the Board's application of current law. We have addressed those questions in a letter which is attached and submitted for the record.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to answering any questions you might have.