



## **New York City Campaign Finance Board**

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**Testimony of Amy Loprest  
Executive Director  
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**City Council Committees on Finance and Governmental Operations  
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Good afternoon, Chairpersons Brewer and Recchia, and committee members. I am Amy Loprest, Executive Director of the New York City Campaign Finance Board (CFB). With me today are General Counsel Sue Ellen Dodell, Operations and Budget Director Shauna Tarshis Denkensohn and External Affairs Director Eric Friedman.

As always, we thank you for your support of the Campaign Finance Program. The recent push for reforms to New York State's campaign finance system has focused on New York City's Program as a model for lawmakers to follow. The strength of our Program is due in large part to the participation of the City Council in the ongoing process of improving the Campaign Finance Act. We look forward to building on our strong working relationship in the coming year and beyond.

Pursuant to the New York City Charter, Section 1052(c), the Board submitted its budget for fiscal year 2013 to the Mayor on March 27, 2012. The Mayor included this in his Executive Budget. The budget is attached to this testimony.

The Board's fiscal year 2013 budget is \$55,076,598. Our allocation includes funds for matching payments to candidates and other expenses should the primary election date for 2013 be moved to June from September. As you know, earlier this year a U.S. District Court ruling moved the date of New York's primary elections for federal office to June, in compliance with the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. There has been discussion in the Legislature of moving state and local primary elections to June to create a single primary date for federal and state elections. In order to ensure that matching funds will be available to candidates in the event of a June primary, we are including an allocation of \$41,000,000 for the campaign finance fund.

The Board's budget request also includes \$3,700,000 for a Voter Guide for a potential June primary election date. As you know, the Board publishes and distributes the non-partisan Voter Guide to every New York City household with a registered voter. All candidates may publish information about their campaign in the Guide. It includes information on the citywide debate program, and guidance on how and where to vote. The Guides will be published in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Bengali and we anticipate producing 2.8 million of them for the 2013 primary.

The projected costs for the campaign finance fund and the Voter Guide are consistent with our experience in previous citywide primary elections and the number of candidates we project will participate in the Program in 2013. As in previous years, any funds remaining from these allocations after the primary elections are completed – or in the event the primary date is not moved forward to June – will be returned to the City’s General Fund.

In other areas, the CFB has made a significant effort to contain operating costs. Our personal service and OTPS allocation of \$10,367,000 represents a slight increase over fiscal year 2012, stemming from the CFB’s continuing effort to implement new mandates from the Charter amendments of 2010: voter assistance and disclosure of independent expenditures.

Our Voter Assistance Unit works closely with the members of our Voter Assistance Advisory Committee to increase voter registration and participation throughout the city. In March, along with the Commission on Women’s Issues and other partners, we launched the “Your Vote Counts” campaign aimed at increasing voter participation among women in New York City. The VAAC issued its annual report in April highlighting this and other partnerships we’ve created to increase voter participation throughout the city. On June 11, the VAAC will hold a public hearing to discuss programs to increase registration and voter turnout in elections this year and next.

The CFB continues to develop our effort to monitor independent expenditures in City elections, and ensure the disclosure process will be as simple and straightforward as possible for everyone involved. Our final rules for disclosure of independent expenditures were adopted in March, after an extensive public rule-making process. Our staff is working to prepare educational and training materials and online software that will be available to any organization that needs help understanding the disclosure requirements and how to meet them.

News coverage of this year's Presidential and Congressional campaigns has been dominated by stories of outside groups spending vast sums of money to influence the elections. The flood of spending has largely succeeded at overwhelming the federal disclosure requirements. As we prepare for the citywide elections next year, voters can be confident that complete information about independent spending in New York City elections will be broadly available and easily accessible for the very first time.

We continue work on the post-election audits of campaigns from the 2009 elections. To date, we have met the deadlines in the Act. We are always looking for ways to improve our operations. With the 2013 elections approaching, we are seeking ways to enhance the efficiency of the post-election process.

One improvement for the 2013 elections will make it easier for campaigns to comply with CFB disclosure requirements. Our new web-based disclosure application, Candidate Software for Managing and Reporting Transactions (C-SMART) Web, will give

campaigns more flexibility, stability and security when entering their information and filing disclosures with the Board. A number of campaigns are already using the new system, and the rest will transition to it in the coming months.

As always, the CFB looks forward to working closely with the Council to make our agency work more efficiently and effectively. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.