

Reinvent Albany Supports Mayor de Blasio's Charter Revision Commission on Transparency, Campaign Finance and Election Laws

Commission Puts Focus on Good Government Issues

Reinvent Albany, a statewide watchdog group, welcomes the Mayor's plan to convene a City Charter Revision Commission focused on transparency, campaign finance and election laws. We thank the Mayor for providing a powerful path for advancing good government.

Reinvent Albany is particularly interested in making city government more transparent. We were instrumental in passing the city's [Open Data Law](#) and [subsequent amendments](#), and advocating for OpenFOIL legislation which led to the creation of the City's [OpenRecords](#) platform by executive order, which the Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) is continually working to improve.

Reinvent Albany will provide comprehensive recommendations to the Commission when it is convened. **Four immediate transparency reforms the Mayor and City Council can make include:**

- 1. Filling vacant senior open data positions in the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics and the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT)** which are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the city's Open Data portal;
- 2. [Creating a modernized city lobbying database making city lobbying activity more transparent.](#)** The database is more than two years overdue, as the law required its completion by December 2015 as a result of the recommendations made by the last City Lobbying Commission.
- 3. Establishing a uniform procedure for handling Freedom of Information Law records requests.** The Law Department should provide this guidance to all city agencies, and has agreed to do so in the past but has not implemented it.

4. **Making the city's budget more transparent by implementing [Local Law 217 of 2018 \(Kallos\)](#)** making underlying data machine readable, downloadable and available for third party analysis in the city's Open Data portal.

Reinvent Albany will also provide recommendations on campaign finance and election laws to the Commission when convened. [In its 2018 testimony to the Campaign Finance Board \(CFB\)](#) regarding the last city election, Reinvent Albany urged the CFB to exercise caution in lowering contribution limits to prevent the money from instead flowing to less transparent and accountable independent expenditures. Unlimited contributions can be made to independent expenditure committees. [We also urged the CFB to enact Int. No. 1130-A of 2017](#), which would incentivize candidates to raise more funds from small donors.