



Testimony to 2024 NYC Charter Revision Commission On Preliminary Staff Recommendations

July 11, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. Reinvent Albany is a watchdog organization that advocates for open and accountable government in New York.

We write to respond to the following preliminary staff recommendations:

Budgetary efficiency

- *“Improve assessment of the financial impact of legislation on the budget, including by requiring an assessment of fiscal impacts earlier in the legislative process and by involving additional parties in the assessment process.”* We support earlier assessments, as well as the Citizens Budget Commission’s proposal to have the Independent Budget Office produce fiscal impact statements on programs costing \$100 million in any fiscal year.
- *“Harmonize the Charter-mandated budget process with the Council’s power to pass legislation with budget impacts outside the annual appropriations process.”* We support [Citizens Budget Commission’s two proposals](#) to have fiscal impact statements disclose whether legislation can be executed in the current budget or fiscal plan, and to have high-cost laws be grafted onto the budget.
- Additionally, we support CBC’s proposal to require detailed explanations of changes when expenditures change more than 10% year to year, or when Mayoral estimates differ more than 20% from State or City Comptroller estimates.

Public safety

- *“Enhance the deliberative process for legislation pertaining to public safety while preserving the City’s ability to take expedited action when necessary.”* Reinvent Albany believes that one type of issue does not deserve more consideration than another. Requiring that certain matters, other than the budget, be subject to greater review is arbitrary, illogical, and unsupportable. We

agree with Citizens Union’s analysis showing New Yorkers already have [ample opportunity](#) to comment on public safety legislation.

Finally, we again urge the Commission to not make any sweeping changes related to election laws, particularly to Ranked Choice Voting. As we said in [our previous testimony](#): “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”