



Testimony to NYC Charter Revision Commission on Government Efficiency

An Easier Way for Agencies to Eliminate Outdated Reports

July 13, 2026

Good evening, members and staff of the Charter Commission. My name is Alex Camarda, Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany. We advocate for transparent and accountable government across New York.

First, and for the record, like many New Yorkers testifying to this commission and its predecessors, Reinvent Albany strongly supports using Ranked Choice Voting to choose the top four or three candidates in an open primary and select one of them as the winner in the general election. We note that only two of the 25 biggest U.S. cities have closed primaries, New York City and Philadelphia.

That said, we're here tonight to talk about the 2,000 reports a year that agencies are required to submit under local law, which the Commission referenced in its [preliminary report](#) as an "area to explore."

Reinvent Albany played a key role in the creation of New York City's [Open Data Law](#) and [subsequent amendments](#), as well as advocating for OpenFOIL legislation, which led to the creation of the City's [OpenRecords](#) platform. We are all about transparency, but requiring agencies to do thousands of reports does not necessarily result in more transparency. Many of these reports are not used by the City Council or the public, are outdated and irrelevant, and take agency resources away from more useful work including improving proactive disclosure on their websites and using open data.

We'd rather see the Council use more oversight hearings, informal information requests of agencies, and actually utilize its subpoena power when necessary to gain information from city agencies, rather than pass more laws requiring reports.

Since 2010, 1,500 New Reports Required, 28 Eliminated

As the Commission notes, the 7-member Report and Advisory Board Review Commission (RABRC) established by the 2010 Charter Revision Commission has not worked in eliminating reports, and we think it should no longer execute that function. It has eliminated just 28 reports while 1,500 reports have been newly mandated since its creation, according to the Commission. Furthermore, the Council on its own in 2022

passed legislation eliminating 27 reports nearly equaling the output of RABRC during its entire existence.

[The Department of Records & Information Services' \(DORIS\) Mandated Reports Portal](#), which is part of the larger [Government Publications Portal](#), contains a massive 2,036 reports. This is not even the full list because it only includes reports completed and uploaded after mid-June 2020, and over 1,000 of these are recurring. [The Required Reports dataset in the Open Data portal provided by DORIS](#) has 2,231 required reports with 1,859 of those recurring from daily to up to 8 years. Below is a ranking of most reports by agency:

<u>Agency</u>	<u># of Required Reports</u>
Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of (DOHMH)	100
Education, Department of (DOE)	92
Police Department (NYPD)	70
Transportation, Department of (DOT)	69
Human Resources Administration (HRA)	63
Environmental Protection, Department of (DEP)	62
Children's Services, Administration for (ACS)	59
Correction, Department of (DOC)	58
Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)	54
Citywide Administrative Services, Department of (DCAS)	49

RABRC is just one entity and lacks the capacity to review so many reports through periodic convenings. When Reinvent Albany last provided comments to RABRC in [January 2023](#), we were the only group or member of the public testifying about the reports slated for elimination at its [public meeting](#).

An Easier Way: Allow Agencies to Propose Which Reports to Eliminate via Process Akin to Rulemaking

We believe city agencies and entities should be able to eliminate reports mandated in law through a process mirroring agency rulemaking by:

1. Having individual agencies annually create a list of reports they seek to eliminate which they are charged with completing [using the same criteria for elimination of reports currently required of the Report and Advisory Board Review Commission \(RABRC\)](#);
2. Holding a public hearing, adequately noticed;
3. Receiving public and City Council written or oral testimony and feedback; and
4. Allowing for City Council override through reinstating the reports if it disagrees with the ultimate agency determination.

The City Council and advocacy groups could make their views known on proposed eliminated reports through this process. Alternative ways to make information public can be explored, such as through complying with existing law to publish datasets in the Open Data portal or Freedom of Information Law requests made available through the Open Records portal. If agencies don't adequately address concerns or interests voiced by the Council, the Council could act by overriding the agency's elimination of the report, or using its leverage to do so to reach a reasonable compromise or accommodation for receipt of information or data.

Our proposal above only addresses existing reports. The Council this year alone has already introduced 58 new bills with "report" in the bill title and passed 11. These range from an NYPD report on criminal complaints and arrests to reports on urban park rangers and students' home access to internet devices. For new legislation requiring reports, [we recommended in 2018 to the City Council](#) that they adopt a protocol restricting Councilmembers from introducing bills requiring reports if the criteria below are not met. A protocol like this could be required to be established by the Council in conjunction with the Mayor's Office:

Do Not Introduce Legislation Requiring a Report if:

- *The information required is a dataset with no narrative information.*
- *The data is a one-time request or is not routinely updated or useful in the future.*
- *The data is already required to be released under the Open Data or the Freedom of Information Law.*
- *The information is already available in the Open Data portal, DORIS Government Publications Portal or OpenRecords portal, agency website, other resource, or pursuant to local, state, or federal law.*
- *The Council can subpoena the information, and it's not critical for the information to be available to the public.*
- *An inquiry has not been made several times to the city agency or agencies possessing the data, including the Commissioner or senior agency staff.*
- *An inquiry has not been made to the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs.*

We additionally support automatic sunset of City Council recurring reporting requirements for newly created reports after a period of 4 years. However, reports that sunset should not be eligible for elimination.

To be clear, we are not recommending reducing reporting requirements because city agencies are excelling at transparency. In preparing this testimony, we identified 220 reports alone required to be completed annually in the DORIS Required Reports dataset that have not been completed by agencies since 2024 or earlier. But we think there are

more important transparency measures than doing required reports in a timely manner, including:

1. The Mayor should implement the “release to one, release to all” FOIL requirements embodied in [Local Law 199 of 2025](#) related to the [OpenRecords portal](#); and
2. The prohibition on private rights of action in the [Open Data Law \(Local Law 11 of 2012\)](#) should be eliminated.

Thank you for considering our recommendations. I welcome any questions you may have.