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CITIZENS UNION ANNOUNCES POSITIONS ON BALLOT PROPOSALS FOR 2018 GENERAL ELECTION

*Good Government Group Supports Term Limits for Community Boards, Opposes
Creation of Civic Engagement Commission and Takes No Position on Proposed
Changes to Campaign Finance System*

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NEW YORK, N.Y. (October 25, 2018) - Citizens Union Chair Randy Mastro and Executive Director Betsy Gotbaum today announced Citizens Union's recommendations on three proposals New York City voters will see on the backs of their ballot in this November's election.

After carefully studying each proposal, Citizens Union does not take a position on proposal 1, opposes proposal 2 and supports proposal 3.

"This November, New Yorkers will find three questions on the back of their ballots. In addition to carefully researching the candidates running for elected office, Citizens Union has taken a position on two of the three ballot proposals to guide voters. We encourage everyone to vote," said Betsy Gotbaum, executive director of Citizens Union.

Proposal 1:

While Citizens Union has been a supporter of New York City's Campaign Finance System, the group questions whether the case has been made for the full package of recommendations contained in proposal 1. For example, the use of city funds to increase the match that candidates for borough president and City Council would receive from 6-to-1 to 8-to-1. Should the proposal be defeated, Citizens Union urges changes to be made to lower contribution limits for all offices and increase the match for city-wide offices. This can be accomplished either by the City Council or through recommendations by the current Charter Revision Commission formed by the City Council.

“It is crucial that we take whatever steps possible to limit the influence of money on our elections, but at this point we are not convinced that it is necessary to increase the public funds match that candidates for City Council and borough president receive. For that reason, we are taking no position on question 1,” said Gotbaum.

Proposal 2:

Though Citizens Union is supportive of many of the goals outlined for the Civic Engagement Commission, the group recommends voting no on proposal 2 because the Commission appears to be insufficiently conceived and would lack independence. The Commission was designed to give the Mayor a majority of seats, but a commission having leverage over a myriad of important voting issues, like broader language access at polling sites and increased civic engagement programming, should not be beholden to any single public official.

“For a Civic Engagement Commission to be effective, it must be independent. Question 2 would give the Mayor too much control over the Commission. Though we are supportive of its goals, we encourage voters to reject this proposal and for our elected officials to look for other ways to promote civic engagement in a more independent fashion,” Gotbaum added.

Proposal 3:

Finally, Citizens Union supports proposal 3, which would institute four, two-year term limits for community board members, streamline the application process for appointments, and require all Borough Presidents to annually report on the outreach and recruitment methods, as well as evaluation criteria for appointments. These reforms would ensure that representation on boards can keep pace with changing demographics of communities and benefit from new ideas and energy.

“Community Boards perform an important function in our city government. We believe that by passing question 3, our community boards will become stronger and more reflective of the neighborhoods they serve. We encourage New Yorkers to pass this proposal,” Gotbaum said.

[Visit our website](#) to access Citizens Union’s online [Voters Directory](#) to learn more.

About Citizens Union

Citizens Union (CU) is committed to reforming New York City and State government to foster accountability, accessibility, transparency, honesty, and the highest ethical standards. For the past 120 years, we at Citizens Union have devoted ourselves to holding our local governments accountable to do better in all of these areas, and we remain committed to enfranchising all New Yorkers. The many initiatives that we are currently advancing include ethics reform, increased voter participation and civic engagement, greater policy accountability, and a truly accurate 2020 census. In all of these efforts, we have been—and will remain—nonpartisan. Learn more at www.citizensunion.org.