



Arva Rice, Co-Chair
Henry A. Garrido, Co-Chair
Danielle Castaldi-Micca, Executive Director
NYC Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy

08/27/2025

Re: Request for Final Report Release and Public Update on Commission Work

Dear Co-Chair Rice, Co-Chair Garrido, and Executive Director Castaldi-Micca:

We write to request that you quickly release the Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy final report, which was scheduled to be released before the end of July. We also ask that you provide the public with an estimated timeline of the Commission's planned activity from now until next November that makes it clear whether there will be additional public outreach and solicitation of recommendations and when proposed Charter changes will be selected for the ballot.

At its July 1st hearing, Chair Rice announced that the Commission would hold a meeting by the end of July to decide which proposals should go before the voters. The Commission had previously committed to submitting ballot questions before an August 5th deadline.

That meeting did not happen and the Commission has not published a final report, issued any public statements, or shared news about its proceedings, other than re-opening a public poll it previously had circulated. The Commission's website has not been updated with minutes or transcripts from recent hearings, and no policy proposals have been published.

The compressed timeline imposed by the Commission's decision to pursue a 2025 ballot forced civic groups, community organizations, government agencies, and individual New Yorkers to work at an especially fast pace to meet a tight hearing schedule. That effort was made in good faith, under the expectation that feedback and informed testimony would meaningfully shape deliberations, and that the public would eventually see the fruits of those deliberations.

This lack of communication is concerning given the importance of the issues under review: government accountability, transparency, and safeguarding local democracy. As commissioners highlighted throughout the process, New York City has a unique opportunity to address pressing challenges stemming from the alleged misconduct in City government in recent years. Reforms considered by the Commission, like strengthening anti-corruption watchdogs, are too important to be left unaddressed without explanation or follow-through.

We therefore respectfully urge the Commission to (1) release a report detailing the policy proposals considered by the Commission, and (2) make public its timetable for soliciting further public outreach and submitting ballot questions.

Your work matters deeply to the future of New York City's democracy. The public deserves clarity, transparency, and the assurance that these crucial reforms remain a priority.

Sincerely,

Grace Rauh,
Executive Director, Citizens Union

John Kaehny,
Executive Director, Reinvent Albany

Kai Rosenthal, Co-President
League of Women Voters of the City of New York

Andrew Case, Supervising Counsel
LatinoJustice PRLDEF