

OPENING STATEMENT FOR ANDREA BIERSTEIN

Good morning Speaker Adams, Chair Powers, and Council Members. My name is Andrea Bierstein and I come before you today seeking your confirmation and consent to serve as a member of the Taxi and Limousine Commission. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and for the opportunity to tell you about myself and why I wish to serve on the TLC.

I am a lawyer in private practice representing individuals and municipal governments in a variety of litigation against corporate malefactors. I have spent the past six years working specifically on opioid litigation, lawsuits against manufacturers, distributors, and dispensers of prescription opioids on behalf of municipalities around the country seeking recovery for the public nuisance these companies have created. Among the clients I have been privileged to represent in this litigation has been the City of New York and I am proud that my firm and I have recovered hundreds of millions of dollars for our City to help combat the opioid epidemic. I am now working part-time for my firm, which has freed up time for me to give back to the City that has given so much to me.

Before I was an opioid lawyer, and even before I became a lawyer, I fell in love with New York City and, in particular, with New York City transportation. I grew up in suburban New Jersey, graduated from Princeton University, and moved to Brooklyn in 1980, two years after graduating from college. As soon as I moved to the City, I knew I had found my home and I have lived here ever since, except for a brief sojourn in Massachusetts while I was teaching law school. During my years in the City, I have lived

in Brooklyn and in Queens, but from 1985 to 1992, and then since my return from Massachusetts in 1996, I have lived in Manhattan, first Greenwich Village and, since 1996, on the Upper East Side. I attended NYU for law school – the only school I applied to because, having so recently arrived in New York City, I could not bear the thought of leaving to go to law school. After law school, my husband and I remained in the City, where I have worked at a number of law firms, and, for the past 21 years, have been a partner at a firm now known as Simmons Hanly Conroy. When I joined in 2003, Hanly & Conroy was a small New York City based law firm, our only office in midtown Manhattan. Ten years ago, we merged with the larger Midwest-based Simmons law firm; the merged firm’s headquarters is in Illinois outside St. Louis, but my New York partners and I have remained in the same midtown office space we took years ago, giving our firm a vibrant and important New York City presence.

When I first came to the City, it was the subways that caught my attention. Then, in my early years of practice as a lawyer, I delved deeply into the City’s bus system when I represented the New York City Transit Authority suing a manufacturer over defective buses. Over the years, however, I have come to see the City’s transportation infrastructure as a whole – the sidewalks, subways, buses, commuter trains, yellow taxis, the old “black cars,” and now the app-based for-hire vehicles, each one an important component of how New York City keeps people moving around our great City.

To me, New York City is, first and foremost, about walking – a place where you don’t have to get into a car to get around, where you can walk the streets and see the diversity of the City on display every day. But of course, you can’t walk everywhere –

our City is too big and too varied for that. In a City with our density, public transportation is also key. We can't always each be in our own cars, whether or not we are the ones driving them. But even public transportation isn't sufficient. Sometimes, a car is the right solution - for reasons of distance, or time of night, or accessibility, or because of the need to transport *stuff* - and when you need a car, a for-hire vehicle of some kind is a crucial component of our transportation infrastructure. I welcome the opportunity to be part of the agency overseeing the for-hire vehicle component of our transportation system and to serve the City and its transportation needs in this way.

I bring to this position 40 years of legal experience, including as noted, representation of the City, and I look forwards to using my professional and personal experience in service of the City and the riders who use taxis and other for-hire vehicles. I hope you'll see my candidacy as a valuable to the TLC, and I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

George Goodman's Testimony to NYC Council Committee on Rules, privileges, and Elections

RE: Nomination to Local Conditional Release Commission

Good afternoon, Madam Speaker, Chair Powers, and members of the committee:

I want to thank you for holding this hearing and for considering my nomination to serve on the Local Conditional Release Commission. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Adams Administration for this nomination. I was born and raised in the Bronx and now reside in Staten Island.

My family and I have been honored to serve the City of New York for over 50 years in various capacities. My father, the late George King retired as a New York City Detective with NYPD; mom as a supervisor for ACS and my wife as a speech language pathologist for the Department of Education.

It is my conviction that the Commission can function as a mechanism for selecting eligible candidates to transition into our communities with support services provided by the New York City Department of Probation. Eligible candidates for the Local Conditional Release program will have the opportunity to get back on track with their education and/or employment, improve the choices they make and renew relationships with their families and communities.

I have over 25 years of experience in the criminal justice system with the Department of Probation as an Officer, Supervisor and Branch Chief in both Juvenile and Adult operations. I have seen first-hand how risk and need assessment tools, supervision plans, motivational interviewing, restorative practice techniques and the identification of the stages of change all play a part in positively changing the behavior of clients; thereby, increasing public safety.

For these reasons I would be honored to serve on the NYC Local Conditional Release Commission.

Thank you again for your time and welcome your questions.

Draft Testimony to NYC Council Committee

Nomination to LCRC

Maria Almonte-Weston

March 2024

Good day Speaker Adams, Chair Powers, esteemed council members and members of the committee. My name is Maria Almonte-Weston, and I would like to thank you for considering my nomination to serve on the Local Conditional Release Commission. I would also like to thank the Administration for this opportunity.

As a Social Worker, I believe that being in the service of others is an honor, a privilege, and an enormous responsibility, especially when you're serving vulnerable populations, communities, and individuals. I came to this country, from the Dominican Republic, when I was four years old. I saw how my parents worked hard to give me a better life. As a youth/young adult, I made some mistakes and bad choices (as all adolescents do). Fortunately, for me, I was able to take accountability for my bad choices and learn from my mistakes, but not without help and assistance from others.

That was the primary reason I have dedicated my entire 25+ year career to be in the service of others. As the Senior Director of Court Reform Programs for the Center for Justice Innovation, I have helped to plan, implement, and oversee dozens of programs that have advanced equity, addressed public safety, and helped thousands of individuals who have made mistakes and/or bad choices, live a better, productive life. Programs like pre-trial diversion, supervised release, and alternatives to incarceration. These programs, and more, have impacted how justice is viewed in the city, through a fairer and more humane lens.

I strongly believe that my unique background as a social worker, an advocate of justice reform and implementor of successful programs, makes me a strong addition to the committee. I believe my unique perspective and experience is an important one because I have seen the difference it makes when a person shows that they care. Like being able to help a young person get out of a violent environment and begin to make changes because of educational and economic opportunities or providing an individual with much needed behavioral health services to address their mental health and or substance use disorder in order to avoid incarceration. For these reasons and more, I would be honored to serve on this committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

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