

Int. No. 1517-A

I am the Director of Annual Disclosure and Special Counsel at the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board. I am here to speak briefly about Int. No. 1517-A, a local law to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York, in relation to the timing of a disclosure report for candidates for public office.

Administrative Code Section 12-110 requires all candidates for City elected office file an annual disclosure report with the Conflicts of Interest Board. Specifically, Administrative Code Section 12-110(b)(2) requires that candidates file an annual disclosure report “on or before the last day of filing his or her designating petitions pursuant to the election law.” This creates a Catch-22 situation for candidates since the Conflict of Interest Board cannot learn who has submitted designating petitions until after the petitions filing deadline has passed, and, thus, we are unable to notify candidates of their obligation to file an annual disclosure report until after they are already out of compliance. This situation most often applies to those candidates who are unable to afford an experienced campaign staff who are familiar with the election laws and applicable filing requirements.

Int. No. 1517-A would remedy this problem by fixing deadlines for the filing of annual disclosure reports by candidates that would enable the Conflicts of Interest Board to both notify candidates of their filing obligations in sufficient time for them to comply and to provide reports to the public in advance of an election. Instead of requiring candidates to file an annual disclosure report on or before the last day of the designating petition deadline, the proposed amendments would give candidates additional time, up to 30 days, to file their annual disclosure reports with the Conflicts of Interest Board. Additionally, the proposed amendments to Section 12-110(b)(2) would not undermine the requirements and schedules of either the New York City Campaign Finance Board or the New York City Board of Elections, with whom the Conflicts of Interest Board has consulted on these amendments.

Finally, since the 2017 City-wide election is forthcoming, the passage of this local law is especially relevant and timely for the current candidates for City elected offices.

I welcome any questions the Committee may have. Thank you.



CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Governmental Operations
On Proposed Changes to the Administrative Code of New York City
Int. 1517-A
June 19, 2017**

Good afternoon Chair Kallos and members of the Committee on Governmental Operations. Citizens Union is an independent and nonpartisan democratic reform organization that brings New Yorkers together to strengthen our democracy and improve our city.

Nonpartisan and independent, we seek to build a political system that is fair and open to all – one that values each voice and engages every voter. We thank you for the opportunity to speak today about Intro 1517-A.

The New York City Conflicts of Interest Board continues to work hard towards preventing ethical problems caused by public officials. The board enforces and administers the City's Conflict of Interest Law of the City Charter and the City's Annual Disclosure Law, enshrined in the Administrative Code. Intro 1517-A would amend the Administrative Code by extending the time for submitting disclosure reports to the Board of Elections for candidates running for public office. The submission of disclosure reports would be extended to 30 days after the last filing. By extending the deadline for disclosure reports, non-seasoned politicians who are running for public office for the first time and who may be unaware of the political process and who may have limited campaign resources, will be better able to complete the deadlines for filing their disclosure report.

Citizens Union supports Intro 1517-A for two reasons:

1. We believe that by implementing this legislation, it will allow a more diverse group of individuals to be able to run for public office in that it will give more time to candidates filing disclosure reports, especially political outsiders who may have less familiarity with the city's election process and fewer resources to wage a campaign. Enabling candidates from more diverse backgrounds to participate, and increasing competition in elections, will result in a more representative municipal government.

2. While this election cycle is already underway, we know that in the next election cycle a large majority of seats in the City Council will be open due to term limits, which will likely result in a large number of first-time candidates running for office. This legislation will help ensure that new prospective candidates have a better opportunity to make it onto the ballot by providing more time to file their disclosure reports.

Thank you again for providing Citizens Union the opportunity to testify on the matter of disclosure report deadlines for candidates running for public office in New York City.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1517 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julia Lee

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I represent: COB

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆