

THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

January 13, 2016

Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Mark-Viverito,

On September 18, 2015, pursuant to § 3-601 of the City's Administrative Code, I appointed a Quadrennial Advisory Commission to review the compensation levels of New York City's elected officials. This independent three-member commission was comprised of leading experts in management and compensation. It was chaired by Frederick A.O. ("Fritz") Schwarz, Jr., the Chief Counsel at the Brennan Center for Justice and former Corporation Counsel for the City of New York, and also included Jill Bright, the Chief Administrative Officer of Condé Nast, and Paul Quintero, the Chief Executive Officer at ACCION EAST, Inc., a non-profit that works to empower low- to moderate-income business owners with access to capital and financial education.

The Commission was asked to study and potentially recommend changes to the compensation levels for the Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough Presidents, Council Members, and District Attorneys. The last commission was convened in 2006.

The Commission examined a wide variety of factors in evaluating compensation. Of particular interest is that this Commission, for the first time ever, considered elected official salaries as they relate to pay for working New Yorkers. They also studied traditional metrics like the responsibilities of each office and the number of employees they supervise. They evaluated the benefits package our public employees receive relative to their counterparts in other jurisdictions. The Commission's deliberations reflect a concern for ensuring fair wages and benefits for all public employees – a concern that this Administration shares. Just last week we

increased the minimum wage for city employees to \$15 and offered 6 weeks paid parental leave to 20,000 city employees.

As the Commission noted in its report, they put a premium on transparency and solicited input from all New Yorkers while conducting its study. The feedback to the Commission included several proposals for reforming City Council compensation and a range of views on how those reforms should be valued as it relates to City Council raises, with some good government groups arguing for larger raises than this Commission recommended.

This Commission is also the first to recommend that being a Council Member should be formally recognized as a full-time position and that members should be largely prohibited from engaging in outside employment. Such a proposal would require all Council Members to wholly dedicate themselves to their office and forego any non-City employment that could require a significant amount of their time.

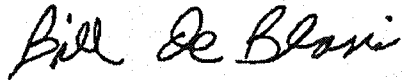
Accordingly, full-time status would preclude outside employment other than de minimis activities – such as writing an article or teaching as an adjunct professor – and would require Council Members to generally give up their ability to take on other occupations or assume duties beyond their office. However, passive income derived from investments or ownership interests would be permitted, provided that they do not involve active management on behalf of a Council Member. Moreover, a process should be established to ensure that outside activities do not interfere with the effective performance of official duties and that any potential conflict of interest should be reviewed by the Conflicts of Interest Board.

The loss of potential income from transitioning to a full-time status is not insignificant. However, should the City Council adopt this groundbreaking reform in New York City, it will have the dual benefit of allowing Council Members to fully commit their time and energy to their constituents and eliminating even the appearance of conflicts of interest.

I am grateful to Fritz Schwarz, Jill Bright, Paul Quintero and their staff for dedicating their expertise, time and energy to this extraordinary effort. The Commission, which has worked independently and tirelessly, took a comprehensive look at the issues of management and compensation in City government and their efforts resulted in thoughtful, well-reasoned recommendations. Pursuant to City law, the Commission will be impaneled in three years to continue the review of elected official compensation.

New York City is home to some of the best, hardest working public officials and I believe the Commission successfully balanced a variety of competing concerns in their recommendations. I forward you this report with my approval, and affirm the Commission's recommendation that, upon the City Council's action on these proposals, all changes be made retroactive to January 1, 2016.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill de Blasio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill de Blasio