

Testimony of Stephen Loffredo
before the
New York City Council Committee on Rules, Privileges, Elections, Standards and Ethics
February 25, 2026

Good morning Speaker Menin, Chair Ung, and members of the Committee. My name is Stephen Loffredo. Thank you for the opportunity to address you concerning my nomination by Mayor Mamdani to the Conflicts of Interest Board.

The Board's mission as an independent entity promoting ethical and accountable government is a profoundly important one. It's essential to fostering public trust and confidence in city government and in the rule of law. My decades of work as a public interest attorney, and as a law professor training generations of public-interest lawyers, reflects my longstanding affinity with and commitment to these values. I would be honored to serve on the Board and work to advance its mission.

I have deep roots in and love for this City. I was born in the Bronx, the place my grandparents immigrated to from Southern Italy. My wife, Helen Hershkoff (who joins me here today) was born in Brooklyn to a father who immigrated from Poland and a mother whose family arrived here from Ukraine. Our son Ben was born in Manhattan where he continues to reside.

I have devoted my entire professional career to public service and public-interest work in New York City.

Immediately following a judicial clerkship with the New Jersey Supreme Court in 1982, I entered practice as a staff attorney at the civil division of the Legal Aid Society in the South Bronx. While there, I represented hundreds of individuals and families, and also litigated impact cases with my colleagues—including the first generation of cases establishing a right to shelter for homeless families.

As pro bono counsel to the Urban Justice Center, I continued to represent large groups of vulnerable New Yorkers -- and was recognized by the Association of the Bar of the City of New York for "extraordinary dedication and outstanding performance" in advancing the legal rights of poor people in New York City.

I served for thirty-eight years on the faculty of CUNY Law School, an institution dedicated to the public interest, and widely regarded as the leading public interest law school in the nation. In addition to teaching constitutional law, I founded and directed four clinical programs, providing legal services to underrepresented communities throughout New York City.

That service took the form of individual representation, collaboration with community organizations, policy advocacy, and impact cases. Some of this work was done side by side with lawyers from the city and the state. For example, through our Immigrants' Rights Clinic, ~~I served as lead counsel --- with the City of New York and the State of New York~~ as co-plaintiffs – in a years-long litigation against the federal government, challenging illegal restrictions on the immigrant amnesty program of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986.

Later I founded the Economic Justice Project in response to certain harsh and unlawful welfare policies that arose in the 1990s -- policies that drove thousands of low-income CUNY undergraduates out of college and into dead-end workfare assignments. Many of these students were single parents, striving to obtain the skills and credentials needed for living-wage jobs that could lift their families out of poverty -- and alter the life chances of their children. Together with community partners, we fought that battle for over fifteen years, enabling countless students to earn their degrees; and securing policy reforms that allowed CUNY to more fully serve its historic role as an engine of economic mobility for the people of New York. The national Clinical Legal Education Association honored our work with its Award for Excellence.

Lastly, I directed the Labor Docket of CUNY's Community and Economic Development Clinic and the Workers' Rights Clinic, both of which engaged in a broad array of labor and employment representation on behalf of low-wage workers, most often immigrant workers, whose circumstances made them especially vulnerable to exploitation.

All of these endeavors have sought to advance the well-being of New York and New Yorkers, in most instances, by holding government accountable to the law. This has been my life's work. And in the course of that work, I've instructed hundreds of clinic students, handling actual cases, in the ethical practice of law under the Rules of Professional Conduct; and I've developed deep expertise in administrative law, adjudication, due process, and judicial review of agency action -- expertise directly relevant to the functions of the Conflicts of Interest Board.

Serving on the Board would give me the opportunity to continue to work in the public interest and to advance the Board's mission of promoting fair, honest and accountable government, a mission I strongly believe to be of the utmost importance.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer your questions.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Stephen Cofferdo

Address: [REDACTED] 10014

I represent: COIB Nonunion

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