



BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT VANESSA L. GIBSON

**New York City on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation
Oversight: Community Board Resources and Structure
June 22, 2026**

Good morning Chair Brewer and the members of the Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation for convening this important hearing today to discuss how we can improve the functioning of community boards across the city.

Community boards are the most local units of New York City's government and provide a vital link between community members and elected officials and city agencies. These boards are made up of volunteers who are devoted to making their local neighborhoods a better place, and they deserve our full support to ensure they receive the appropriate support and resources so they can do their jobs effectively. Community boards have important roles when it comes to land use, oversight of agency delivery, alcohol and marijuana licensing, and more. They also serve as a forum for residents to make their voices heard in their own communities.

The proposed legislation, Introduction 322, which aims to alter the way community board members are appointed would not serve the interests of either the boards or the community as a whole. The proposed legislation would allow council members to appoint half of the boards instead of the current method of nominating members for the borough president to approve. While this may seem like a minor change, it has potentially far-reaching consequences.

The current process involves collaboration between the borough presidents and the local council members, but decision-making remains firmly within the borough presidents' offices. This is important for several reasons, not least because the borough presidents retain significant oversight authority over the members of the community boards, regardless of how the members came to be on the board.

The legislation does not contemplate several factors that would be affected by this change:

1. How would recruitment occur? The legislation would require the borough presidents to post, as part of the annual demographic report, "a description of any coordination with relevant council members as part of the recruitment plan." However, this does not require council members to take any action to recruit their share of the members, nor does it require the borough presidents and council members to work together in any way. Currently, all applicants must go through the borough presidents' applications, but we would no longer be able to take applications for prospective members we are not able to appoint.
2. How will trainings be handled? Currently, borough presidents have requirements to conduct certain trainings for community board members, and each borough president goes above and beyond to provide more training and orientation than is legally required. If the borough presidents are no longer appointing all the members, what duties would the

borough presidents have towards the members who are appointed by the city council members? These trainings and orientations consume resources in both funding and staff time from the borough presidents' offices, and this would result in borough presidents training members of different city agencies who are no longer appointed by our own offices, hampering our own offices' work.

3. How would Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) claims be handled? Currently, EEO complaints implicating the community boards are handled through the borough presidents' offices. Would this continue to be the case for members who are not appointed by the borough presidents? How would the appointing city council member for a board member involved in an EEO complaint be involved in the process?
4. How would codes of conduct be enforced? The Bronx Borough President's Office requires community board members to adhere to a code of conduct to ensure that each member comports themselves in a way that makes the operation of the boards successful and limits potential disruption of the boards' work. Would the borough presidents' offices be able to enforce a code of conduct against members who are not appointed by the borough presidents? What will be the city council members' responsibilities in ensuring that the board members that they appoint are behaving in a respectful and non-disruptive manner?
5. How would removal of community board members work? Under §2800(b) of the City Charter, borough presidents may remove members of the community board for cause, including for substantial non-attendance at meetings. The proposed legislation amends this provision by adding that the appointing council member may remove, but it does not take away the borough presidents' power to remove members. This section of the legislation must be clarified as to whether the borough presidents retain the ability to remove members appointed by council members. If such power no longer exists, how does this affect the borough presidents' authority to enforce the City's EEO laws or our own codes of conduct to ensure that the boards run smoothly and within the bounds of the law.
6. How is borough president communication with the boards affected? Currently the borough presidents' offices communicate with the boards, often through the district managers or the chairs, but also to all members directly. If half the boards are not appointed by the borough presidents, do the borough presidents have the responsibility to continue to communicate with those members? Will the council members take on responsibility for communicating with the members that they appoint?

While I welcome increased council member engagement in the community board process, and I will continue the strong collaboration with the Bronx members, I do not believe that this legislation would serve the best interests of the community boards in The Bronx. I urge the Council not to pass this legislation at this time and to engage in a more robust and collaborative process with the borough presidents and community board members throughout the city to determine the best way to move forward to ensure that the boards are operating to the best of their abilities.