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Testimony of Vie Mae Richardson-White

Member 32BJ SEIU

Committee on Government Operations, Int. 1130-2016

April 27 2017

Good afternoon Committee Chair Kallos and Committee members and thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. My name is Vie Mae Richardson-White; I'm a resident of Brooklyn, a commercial cleaner in mid-town Manhattan and a proud member of 32BJ SEIU.

32BJ represents 163,000 property services workers, including over 85,000 here in New York City. We are cleaners, janitors, doorman, supers, window cleaners and security officers. We are a diverse union with members coming from over 60 different countries.

In addition to fighting for good contracts on our jobs, our members are active campaigners in their communities.

To win economic justice and affordable housing, to protect and expand civil rights, and to make our neighborhoods healthy and safe, we need elected leaders who stand with us and not big money donors.

New York's public matching funds program works to boost the impact of small individual donations. The amendment proposed by bill 1130 will increase the cap on public funds available for participants of the program.

Under the change, candidates who rely on small contributions from local residents will be able to raise the same amount as candidates who receive large external donations.

This change will encourage candidates for city offices to pay attention to the needs of city residents and focus their campaign on building local support.

On behalf of my union brothers and sisters and all other active community members, I encourage the council to pass this bill and help give our voices a better chance at being heard.