

**Testimony of Amanda Farias before The Committee on Governmental Operations of the  
New York City Council**

**Thursday, April 27, 2017**

Chair Ben Kallos and Members of the Committee on Governmental Operations:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on Intro. 1130. I would like to start off by thanking Chair Ben Kallos for introducing this bill and to the seven other Council Members that have co-sponsored it.

Now more than ever before, we have seen a surge in activism throughout New York City. Being one of the most progressive cities in the nation, as well as, having one of the most progressive campaign financing systems- Int. 1130 is needed in order for interested people to run an impactful, competitive campaign.

Currently, I am a candidate running for local office and I come from a modest background. I do not necessarily have the financial background or the wealthy network to run a campaign without using the Campaign Finance Board's matching funds program. Though the 6-to-1 matching program is extremely beneficial and creates a space where I am able to compete with other candidates running, it ultimately does not set someone like me up to win their race without a financial burden.

Int. 1130 would amend provisions of the Campaign Finance Board's small donor matching program by raising the matchable amount of contributions from a donor from \$175 to \$250, which would increase the amount of public funds available to a participant. This could dramatically influence how competitive one can be in a race, whether in an open seat or against an incumbent because it would allow equal opportunity for reaching the spending limit.

Increasing this threshold would make a major difference in whether or not candidates have a substantial chance in running a competitive race against others that may already be politically established or have different means and financial networks. Candidates who are running to represent the true interests of their districts and who are only able to run grassroots, small dollar campaign efforts should be capable of running competitive campaigns without the pressure of being out raised and/or outspent by others running. The increase not only encourages candidates that come from lesser means to run for office but it also increases the power of low dollar contributors which, in turn, helps voter participation and activism.

This bill will also decrease the funding gap and limited access for women and minorities running for office. As we know, there are many difficulties women and minorities have while looking for funding and it's evident a greater push needs to be made to break down these barriers, where women and minorities repeatedly encounter closed doors.

Again, thank you Council Member's for your leadership and for introducing this bill, I hope this legislation will push the City and Campaign Finance Board to lead the path for women of color like myself to run for office in our city.