THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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CHRISTINE C. QUINN
SPEAKER

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December 2, 2008

Dear President Sampel and Mr. Cederqvist:

Tuesday, November 4th, 2008, was a remarkable day in the history of our country. In towns and cities across America, people went to the polls in record numbers to cast their vote in what was arguably the most important election in a generation.

But according to an article in today's Post, thousands of New Yorkers were nearly denied that opportunity. Over 3,500 voter registrations were left for nearly two months to collect dust on the floor at the Board of Elections without being processed.

We recognize that the Board was under a tremendous strain during this election cycle and the many hours you worked in the days before the election. But a time of increased voter participation is the very moment when we need to be confident in the Board's ability to carry out its most basic functions. Such a failure to perform routine operations is more than alarming – it is the type of mishap that can shake public confidence in our democratic process.

All of us in government are being asked to do more with less as we deal with the financial crisis, but that cannot be an excuse for denying New Yorkers critically important core services, especially the fundamental right to vote.

The Council's Governmental Operations Committee will look into what went wrong at the Board with regard to these registrations, in addition to problems related to long lines at the City's polling sites on Election Day, at an oversight hearing on Wednesday,

December 17, 2008. We must figure out what steps are necessary to avoid other, more serious problems in the future.

Sincerely,

Christine C. Quinn
Speaker, New York City Council

Simcha Felder
Chair, Governmental Operations Committee