THE ASSEMBLY

STATE OF NEW YORK

ALBANY

HARVEY EPSTEIN
Assemblymember 74ᵗʰ District

Testimony for the Meeting of the Commissioners of Elections
Office of Assemblymember Harvey Epstein
July 9ᵗʰ, 2019

My name is Harvey Epstein and I am the Assemblymember representing New York's 74ᵗʰ Assembly District, which includes the neighborhoods of the Lower East Side, East Village, Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village, Murray Hill, Kips Bay, Tudor City and the United Nations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Commissioners of Elections in New York City regarding electoral ethics.

An existing provision in the New York City Board of Elections Personnel Guidelines forbids candidates for party positions from participating in election day operations in the same political subdivision or political party as the covered employee (NYC BOE Personnel Guidelines Rev. February 23, 2018, p. E26). Under the current guidelines, candidates for county committee can still apparently engage in election management activities within an Assembly District where they seek to hold an elected position, though not at a poll site at which their name appears on the ballot. This activity, currently allowed under the personnel guidelines, could lead an outside party to form the view that a candidate's employment could impact the results of the election.

I urge you to strengthen and clarify the personnel guidelines by amending them to provide that no BOE employee who is a candidate for a party position be allowed to engage in any Board work related to election day operations or any related election management activities within an Assembly District in which they are seeking to hold an elected party position.

The Board of Elections' duty is to carry out a fair and transparent election process. This duty cannot be met if there exists even the perception of a conflict of interest. Strengthening the existing personnel guidelines will improve voters' confidence in our electoral system and encourage their participation. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.