



Two Penn Plaza ■ Fifth Floor ■ New York, New York 10121

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

MARIANA ALEXANDER, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, CITIZENS BUDGET COMMISSION

Monday, June 12, 2017

### "Testimony in Support of Introduction 1176 of 2016, the 'Open Budget Act'"

Good morning. I am Mariana Alexander, Research Associate at the Citizens Budget Commission (CBC). The mission of CBC is to achieve constructive change in the finances and services of the New York State and New York City government. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Introduction Number 1176 would require the Office of Management and Budget to make relevant budgetary documents available on (1) the city's website; (2) the 'NYC OpenData' web portal; and (3) via an open application program interface in both a human-readable format and formats that permit automated processing, such as an Excel or CSV spreadsheet.

In carrying out its mission, CBC depends heavily on the availability of up-to-date budgetary documents including, but not limited to, the preliminary, executive and adopted budgets and their supporting schedules and the Mayor's Management Reports. For budget watchdogs like us, the availability of data in "open" formats has significantly aided the speed and ease with which we can do our work.

CBC supports the proposed legislation as it will ensure the continuing accessibility and usability of budget data, ultimately facilitating transparency and accountability in the budget process. We also offer two recommendations:

- (1) Add the Preliminary and Final Mayor's Management Reports, produced by the Mayor's Office of Operations, to the list of documents that should be available on these platforms so as to facilitate the link between agency performance and budgeting.
- (2) Require the Office of Management and Budget to make public a document reporting prior fiscal year actual spending in a format similar to the Supporting Schedule, providing data by agency, unit of appropriation and budget code.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer your questions.

*Founded in 1932, the Citizens Budget Commission is a nonpartisan, nonprofit civic organization devoted to influencing constructive change in the finances and services of New York State and New York City governments.*