

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MONDAY, JULY 6, 1998

**QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS STATEMENT BEFORE THE
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION ON JULY 6TH 1998.**

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Let me begin by thanking you for this opportunity to address you on this important issue. My names is Sean M. Walsh and I am President of the Queens Civic Congress. The Congress is an umbrella group of ninety-one civic associations throughout all of Queens.

On April 25th, at its annual luncheon the Congress unanimously adopted the following position on the subject of charter revision: *It is the position of the Queens Civic Congress that there is no need for a charter revision commission at this time since any necessary changes could be made by an individual referendum call. We feel that there are currently few major issues to be resolved and those could be addressed by revision to state law or individual referendum as part of a general election.*

The process of revising the Charter, the New York City's constitution, is a very serious matter which goes to the heart of our democracy. The last charter revision commission seriously eroded the power of the communities. The political result was a secession movement in two boroughs. We view any attempt by any charter revision commission to further centralize power or decision making especially in the area of land use, ULURP, as a call to reconsider secession.

A government has the right to govern only when it has the confidence of its citizens. We do not have any confidence in a commission that was formed solely in response to keeping the Speaker of the Council's Yankee Stadium issue off the ballot (a separate issue which illustrates an abdication of legislative responsibility).

The last charter revision commission spent two years in preparing its proposals and had numerous public debates over a nine month period which provided opportunities to incorporate revisions. You have allowed a mere four months most of which are during the summer to discuss this serious matter. In fact you present no concrete proposals on which to comment. Instead, we suggest that you examine why two consecutive administrations have failed to adopt Major Concession rules as required by the present New York City Charter.

Therefore, we call on the mayor to immediately dissolve this commission because first there is no demonstrable need for a commission and second there is insufficient time for a serious public debate on this important subject. Thank You.