

Lisa Kron:

[Interlude music plays and stops] I want to really welcome everyone to this really last-minute heartfelt put-together with just the most amazing just...jumping into its spirit by so many people. In particular, I want to thank Emmanuel Wilson, Jenna Chrisphonte and Lily Dwoskin at the Drama To Skills who have done – just like a couple days just turned this thing around so fast and all of you I know who've gotten the word about this. So this came about because I have been showing up for a thing that maybe some of you know called Amplifying Activists Together, which is a bunch of theater people who meet on Friday's and do phone calling to support progressive legislation and progressive change in New York State and New York City.

I want to say that this event is a nonpartisan event, but I'm just going to tell you how we came to – how this came to happen. A couple of weeks ago, an activist named Caroline Cowan came to talk to us about a bunch of things. And one of the things she talked about was the selection. And she said something that really stuck in my brain; which was that there are a lot of offices being turned over right now, and the city is going to be a different city on the other side of this, because we're going to have so many brand-new elected officials. I think I've always – I think I probably always voted in the primary and in the general election in New York.

But I've definitely had the experience of walking into my polling place and being like, "Wow." I was not prepared for this. I don't know who these people are. I don't know what this is on the ballot. And the other thing is that this year, we have this whole new method of voting called Ranked Choice Voting. And we're going to hear a lot more about that. But the thing about Ranked Choice is that you get to vote for the people you really care about rather than trying to figure out, "Who is the sort of most electable person?" You don't have to game the system anymore. It's a very powerful new tool. But you have to be prepared for it.

So when you walk in – first of all, you've got to sort of change your mind so you're ready to think in that way, but also you have to be prepared when you walk into the polling place. You know, elections are always important. I think we understand that more than we ever have. I think we have a habit in New of thinking, "We're a progressive city. You know, we all" – a lot of us think – a lot of us feel, "Oh, everybody's on the same page." But we're actually not on the same page. And, you know, in New York as all over the country there's a lot of things...a lot of things have been made really clear if we didn't see them before.

For those of us who work in the theater, you know, our entire industry has been shut down. I don't need to tell anybody on this call. And it's going to have to be rebuilt. And our whole city's going to have to be rebuilt. When elected officials think about the theater – and they do a lot. I've watched a lot of debates, and they're all like, "I want to go to the theater. I want to Broadway." You know? But when they think about the needs of theater people who has their ear, it's producers, it's theater owners, it's artistic directors of big theaters. It's not necessarily working theater people.

And we really care about arts funding. We really care about what happens in the theater. But we can't live and work here without affordable housing. We can't live and work here without schools for our kids without...immigration policy matters to us. Racial justice matters to us. Safety for police matters to us. Reliable transportation matters to us. Barrier-free streets and buildings. It matters to us. Those things really, really matter. Not that many people ever vote in New York City elections. Not that many people are going to vote in this primary, which is terrible. But what it means is that if we vote, we can have a really big impact.

So this event is just about – we're not going to endorse anybody. I think a lot of people on this call still don't know who they're voting for. And that's not what we're – that's not what we're here to do. What we're here to do is to kind of galvanize our attention and start to think about the fact that this election is happening, when it's happening and start to look at who's running and how to vote. So what we're going to do on this call is that we are going to go through really quickly the race – we're going to talk about...not the candidates who are running but the offices that are in play and say what those people in those offices do. I'm going to share with you a bunch of Links that I've put together.

And this is really a work-in-progress. But there a bunch of Links that I've put together that have information about upcoming, you know, important dates about how to find your polling place, about how to find where you live, who's running for city council. Because there are a lot of people running for city council that have a bunch of candidate forms that you can look at and start to see the issues. There's much more information on who's running for mayor than there is on some of the other races. But, you know, I'm starting to put together some information there and welcome. I can keep adding to that Document, and I welcome people's suggestions about that.

And, you know, this is also to put you into conversation with each other because whatever – you can tell something about candidates from what they say. But really, I think a way to find out is to be able to understand how endorsements work; to be able to look at other politicians you admire and see who they're supporting and also talking to friends that you trust. So to start having conversations, because this is a big race with a lot of people.

And there are very few people who are actually going to have knowledge about all of these candidates. Okay. So we're going to start by really briefly going through what the races are that are in play and to describe – we have a number of very esteemed dramatists and theater people who are going to share this information with you. And we're going to start with a description of the Office of Borough President from Dramatists Guild President, Amanda Green.

Amanda Green: Thank you so much, Lisa. Borough Presidents are like mini-mayors but with less power. They're often described as cheerleaders for their boroughs. Between them, they share about \$4 billion or about 5 percent of the city budget, which they can use to fund local initiatives, local groups and projects like buying technology for public schools or renovating local parks or spearheading community health outreach. Borough presence can weigh-in on land use issues.

Their input is non-binding but can be quite influential and can sometimes even steer public opinion away from projects advocated by the city. Borough Presidents have a big megaphone as champions of their borough and can shed light on issues that they believe need attention. In their cheerleading function, they're well-laced to lift up cultural and arts issues. The June primaries, often referred to as the Democratic primary. But there are some Republican races. The race for Staten Island Borough President is one of them. You are still muted, Lisa Kron.

Lisa Kron: I'm a technical genius. Next, we are going to go to another very esteemed playwright and member of the Dramatists Guild. Mister John Weidman is going to talk to us about the controller or comptroller.

John Weidman: Yeah. Well, you stole my opening line. I mean, nobody actually knows how to pronounce this guy's or this woman's name. There's no agreement on how to pronounce it. Most of us actually have no idea what the person

does. But the controller has real power and, in many ways, is the second most important elected official in the city after the mayor. He's got a staff of over 100 people – or 700 people below him and a budget of more than \$100 million. The controller has three main functions.

First, to review all city contracts; second, to audit city spending; and third, to oversee the city's enormous pension plan. Which at the moment has over \$253 billion under management. The power to audit is particularly a big deal because it's a way in which the controller's office can monitor whether city agencies are actually doing what they were supposed to be doing and are spending the money that they were allocated in the way that they're supposed to spend it. It sounds - because it's called auditing, it sounds like it's all about money. But these things are really more in the nature of investigations.

And some recent ones – there was an audit that looked into ways vacant city-owned land could be used for affordable housing and wasn't, a way in which homeless shelters either were or weren't dangerous for children. Turned out they are dangerous for children; they investigated whether Access-A-Ride was failing New Yorkers with disabilities. It turns out it was; and finally – and hold onto your hats for this one – there was an audit to see whether or not the bathrooms in public parks were disgusting.

And they are. So the controller can't implement reform. He can't make policy. He or she can't make policy. But the weight of what comes out of the controller's office has enormous impact on policy. So in addition to being a good money manager, the controller has a sense of who and what matters. In that sense, that personal sense, will have an enormous impact on how the city operates.

Lisa Kron: Thank you, John. There are a dozen candidates I think currently still vying to be controller; comptroller. And we're going to Send you Links so that you can see exactly who they are. Next, we're going to hear about the public advocate from Jenny Grace. How do you say...I'm so sorry.

Jenny Makholm: Makholm.

Lisa Kron: Makholm. Jenny Grace Makholm, who is one of the co-founders of Be An Arts Hero, which is an amazing organization that probably many of you know about that is a grassroots campaign comprised of arts and culture workers, unions and institutions who have been pushing the Senate to

allocate proportionate relief to the arts and culture sector. They've been pushing for an Arts Secretary in the Cabinet. They're doing incredible advocacy work for our field. So now, I'm going to turn it over to Jenny to talk to us about – first of all, thank you for being with us – to talk to us about what the public advocate does.

Jenny Makholm:

It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you so much for asking me. I actually know a little bit about the public advocate 'cause I had a friend of mine run as public advocate in 2019. So the public advocate is a relatively new position. It was created in 1993. So the public advocate is meant to serve as a direct link between public citizens and New York City's government. Effectively, they're acting as a watchdog of kinds for New Yorkers. And fun fact, the public advocate is also first in line to succeed the mayor, just in case.

The position mostly deals with the public advocates and activists and brings their concerns forward to the New York City's government. So they monitor city agencies, and they investigate citizen complaints. And then, they bring those issues to the attention of agencies. And if they're not addressed there, then they take those issues to the city council, often offering guidance and mediation towards a solution. So what's important to know about a public advocate is that there aren't that many guidelines as to how this office is to be carried out. So its efficacy and mission are very much molded by the person who holds that office.

So when voting for a public advocate, you want to pay attention to their past advocacy interests as that may inform you as to where they'll focus their efforts if they were elected. So for example. When Bill DeBlasio was public advocate, he created the worst landlord's watchlist to shame bad landlords. Right? When Letitia James was public advocate, she used lawsuits very effectively on behalf of foster kid disabled students and elderly tenants who were being badly served by city agencies. So that's a quick snapshot of what a public advocate does.

Lisa Kron:

Jenny, thank you so much. There are currently four candidates for public advocate. The powerhouse who needs no introduction. Young Jean Lee is here to tell us about what a city council person does.

Young Jean Lee:

Thank you, Lisa. Okay. So a city council person, you know – as Lisa pointed out, we're about to have a New York. And a huge part of that is the fact that so many council members are going to be newly elected. So

because of term limits, right now 35 out of the 51 council members will be newly elected. And so, this means like huge swathes of the city from the Lower East Side in Manhattan to here in the Bronx are going to be electing a new council member.

And this is what they do. Number one, they pass legislation. So last year, city council enacted 125 laws ranging from protections for fast food workers against being fired without cause to criminalizing chokeholds by the NYPD. Number two, they negotiate the budget. And for us in New York, it's larger than that of many nations; even the coming years, the stakes around the budget will be incredibly high as we begin our recovery from this past year and grapple with the glaring inequalities that have surfaced.

Number three. They oversee the work of city agencies, holding agency leaders to account on all sorts of things ranging from a lead paint scandal and NYCHA housing to the persistence of public school segregation to dangerous driving by commercial carting companies. Number four, they have final say over zoning changes. This is huge because these transform neighborhoods for better and/or for worse. The fate of our waterfronts, our small businesses, our access to affordable housing, of the balance of public to private space and basically everything about the character of our city comes down to zoning. And the council have the final say over it.

Lisa Kron:

Great. Thank you, Young Jean. There are nearly 300 candidates running throughout the five boroughs. In the Links that I will drop into the Chat, there's a way to – you can look up who is running where you live. Before we go back to Young Jean to tell us about what the mayor does, I am going to tell you about the Manhattan DA race. The job of a district attorney, the general job of a DA is to serve as the top prosecutor in a city, a town or a state. DAs oversee all the local criminal prosecutions within their jurisdiction.

Which sounds straightforward, but in fact DAs have incredibly wide latitude about what and how they prosecute. For instance, whether or not to seek bail, how plea bargains are made or not, whether and when to use civil forfeiture to take people's property. The DA decides up to their discretion whether they go after powerful people on Wall Street, for instance; or, say, Harvey Weinstein or, say, the Trump family. The Manhattan DA's office is the second largest in America. It has 500 prosecutors on a budget nearing \$170 million.

And there are a number of people running in this primary. And many of them are aligned with the Progressive Prosecutor Movement, which many of you probably know, over the last few years has elected people like Larry Krasner in Philadelphia, Kim Foxx in Cook County in Illinois, Chesa Boudin in San Francisco. This is a movement that is seeking fundamental change in what has been traditional DA culture looking for alternatives to sending people to prison, particularly for minor crimes and, in general, using the Office of the DA to create a less punitive, less racially biased criminal justice system as they see it. This is a powerful movement. It's been quite controversial because it's a big culture change. Many of the – many but not all of the people in the field from Manhattan DA are aligned with this movement.

It's a big, big deal. There hasn't been a lot of attention for it. But because the Manhattan DA's office is the second-largest in America, it's going to be a – it has the potential to be a trend-setting election for DAs across the country. And unfortunately – and I just found this out today – the DA's race is not being decided by Ranked Choice voting. Which means that you'll have to pick one. I don't know why that is, but that is happening in that race. So now, the last – the last. The biggest; the one that we mostly hear about, Young Jean, will you tell us what the mayor of New York city does?

Young Jean Lee:

All right. So as the city's chief executive, the mayor sets the city's agenda and priorities. The mayor drafts the budgets, which serves as a blueprint for how we pay for these things. The mayor appoints and can remove the commissioners of more than 40 city agencies, including police, fire, education, sanitation and health. The mayor can propose legislation to city council and can also veto legislation that the council has passed. The mayor has full control over the city's public schools, although it must be authorized through state approval.

So things like pre-K, charter schools, testing policies, school desegregation and COVID protocols are in the mayor's purview. Contrary to popular belief, the mayor does not control the subway system. The MTA is essentially controlled by the state, which means the governor. FYI. The next gubernatorial election will be next year. But the mayor does control the streets and has a lot of control over the bus system. Also, bike lanes, also outdoor dining. The mayor can also create new forms of transportation like bike share or a city-wide ferry system. The mayor plays

a major role in the city's development using their powers to affect zoning and the land use. It's through these powers that mayors leave lasting marks on neighborhoods, coastlines and streetscapes.

Lisa Kron: Thank you, Young Jean. Currently, there are I believe – still – 13 Democrats, 2 Republicans and a handful of independents running. Okay. So that's what's in play. You'll get Links to look at the specific people. And now, we are going to turn it over to Brian Chevere who has stepped away, but I think he's going to be back – and if not, I bet that Dave Heller will handle it – to tell us about this new system of voting which is very exciting and will really empower voters called Ranked Choice voting. Thank you so much for being here-

Jenny Makholm: I think Brian's back.

Lisa Kron: Yes.

Jenny Makholm: Brian's back.

Lisa Kron: Yes. Take it away. Take it away, Brian.

Brian Chevere: Okay. I'm going to be sharing my screen, so we've already kind of did that one, hit Screen Share Desktop. And let's see. I have to find just the right thing here, and let's hope this works. Okay. Are you seeing a big thing saying ranked Choice Voting yet?

Jenny Makholm: Not yet, Brian.

Brian Chevere: Okay. Let me try clicking this again. Now are you seeing my Screen?

Jenny Makholm: Yes. We see your Screen.

Brian Chevere: Okay. You have to double-Click on it, not just click on it. You'd think I'd know that by now. Okay. And now we're Live. Hello everybody and thank you for inviting us here today. I'm Brian Chevere, member of Ranked Choice Voting New York. Allow me to introduce my co-presenter Dave Heller. Ranked Choice New York is a nonpartisan, no-for-profit organization working to bring Ranked Choice Voting to all New Yorkers. Ranked Choice Voting is a voting reform that improves the Democratic process and enhanced this voter voice by giving them greater choice.

Some of you may already be familiar with Ranked Choice Voting. Some of you may be hearing it for the very first time. Either way, I'm going to explain what it is, how it works and how it fixes our current election system. I'm hoping that this presentation will help you see how truly beneficial this is to our democracy. Unfortunately, I won't be able to see you or whether you have any questions. But my co-presenter, Dave, will monitor the Chat and help out with any quick answers.

And after the presentation, we'll have a full Q&A session. I've also put up a sign-up sheet in the Chat so if you can't stay for the Q&A or if you have any follow-up questions, please, please reach out to us. We'll follow up in a day or so. So what is Ranked Choice Voting? Simply put, Ranked Choice Voting is an instant runoff election. It's a simple process where each voter gets to rank candidates in the order they prefer them instead of being limited to a single choice. The system has been used throughout the United States since the early-1900's.

Today, it's been statewide in both Maine and Alaska's as well as many local jurisdictions, including New York City as I'm sure all of you know. It's also being used nationwide in Australia, Fiji, Hong Kong, Ireland, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and others. So it's not some radical, new idea. It's a tried-and-true method for elections. We're working to get Ranked Choice Voting adopted here statewide in New York as well as expanding it to other local jurisdictions outside of New York City.

So what does Ranked Choice Voting look like? Here we see a Ranked Choice Voting ballot. Back when we used to be able to have these sorts of things in person, we might decide to provide the attendees with ice cream. But how do you decide on a flavor when there's so many options? Simple. All attendees rank their preference. And at the end, whichever option has the most support wins. In this example, you can see I really want chocolate or maybe Rocky Road. And I'm willing to settle for vanilla.

And to be perfectly honest, I really don't like strawberry ice cream. Once the votes are cast, how do we figure out which option has the support of the majority? Clearly, if one option has support of the majority that option is the best option. Here, we see that strawberry wins the day. Even though I don't like it, I can see it's the best – it's a clear favorite. So I'm okay with that. But what if no option get more than 50 percent of the vote? Here, we see the strawberry got only 31 percent of the vote; less than 1/3 under our current system. That would mean that strawberry would win, and I'd be

really disappointed.

And who knows if strawberry is actually what most people would've preferred? Enter the instant runoff. Remember. My first choice was chocolate. But chocolate got the least number of votes. So chocolate is removed from the running, and all those chocolate votes go to their second choice. My vote goes to my second choice, which was Rocky Road. And it looks like most chocolatiers prefer Rocky Road as their second choice. Now, Rocky Road and strawberry are tied. But there's still no clear majority. Now vanilla has the least number of votes.

So vanilla is removed from the running, and all those vanilla votes go to their second choice. And once again, most of them chose Rocky Road as their second choice. And now, we have a clear majority. And it turns out Rocky Road is the winner. A majority of voters preferred Rocky Road to the other remaining options. That's what Ranked Choice Voting is. That's how it works. But why do we need it? Simple. To prevent spoilers. In our ice cream example, say there was no Ranked Choice Voting. I only got to vote for chocolate. People preferred the vanilla only got to vote for vanilla.

Well, once the votes were counted it turns out we split the Rocky Road vote which would've been okay with the majority of pro-chocolate and pro-vanilla voters, and strawberry won. What a bummer. I don't like strawberry, and no one ever knew I would be good with Rocky Road. In this example, chocolate and vanilla split the Rocky Road vote which would've met both chocolate and vanilla's needs. Now, turning to the real world and politics, there is the ever-infamous spoiler case of Bush versus Gore in Florida.

For those of you who don't remember or weren't born yet, the 2000 Presidential election actually came down to just one state. And by Florida. And by the number of votes counted, this is how it broke down. George Bush won the state with 48.85 percent of the vote. Al Gore came in second with 48.84 percent of the votes. A difference of only 1/100 of a percent and just 537 votes off. But there was a third-party candidate that year, Ralph Nader, who got over 97,000 votes. What would've happened with the Ranked Choice Voting? Exit polls showed that if Nader had not been an option, 45 percent of Nader voters would've voted for Gore. That's about 43,800 votes.

Only 27 percent would've voted for Bush. That's about 26,300 votes. The

other 28 percent would've stayed home and not voted at all. And some, Al Gore would've won Florida with 50.4 percent of the vote; a difference of over 17,000 votes and, most importantly, a clear majority. Remember. Under our current system, neither candidate had a majority. The margin was only 537 votes. Only after every voter's preference is taken into account will a clear picture emerged of who Florida voters truly wanted in the White House. Not only that. If Ranked Choice Voting had already been in place, maybe more voters would've voted for Nader. Voters know all too well about the spoiler effect.

We hear people talking about third-party candidates ruining it for the two big parties every election cycle. This scares people off from voting their true conscience in favor of the, quote, "Moderate electable candidates." And now, this isn't just a Blue issue or a Red issue or a Green issue or a third-party issue or an independent issue. This issue affects everybody. Look what happened just eight years before Bush, Gore and Nader – when Bush Senior faced a spoiler of his own, Ross Perot, and Bill Clinton took the White House with only 43 percent of the vote.

Now, he was close to a majority. And of course, this problem isn't reserved for just Presidential races. There are many, many examples and spoilers in New York State elections. To highlight a few, in 1970 James Buckley – a Conservative – represented New York State in the US Senate after the liberal Republican Charles Goodell split the progressive vote with Democrat Richard Ottinger. And in 2014, Marc Panepinto – a Democrat – won a seat in the New York State Senate with only 32.7 percent of the vote. There were two third-party candidates in that race who, combined, earned more votes than the man who took office.

This of course also applies to city council's mayors and other local positions where there are 24 or more candidates. And the winner can take office with less than 1/3 of the vote. The conclusion? Our current system, the plurality, first passed the poll system, is the real spoiler with a whole list of problems. First and most obviously, it splits coalitions of like-minded voters amongst many candidates. In my ice cream example, the chocolate and vanilla votes got split, and strawberry won the day. Second, this splitting of coalitions causes the spoiler effect.

Because chocolate and vanilla got any votes, the vote was spoiled for Rocky Road which would've met both chocolate's and vanilla's needs. Third, the spoiler effect scares people from voting for their true

conscience. Take my ice cream example. Let's say I'm actually allergic to strawberry. So in the current system, I can't risk voting for chocolate. I would have to try to figure out, "What is the most popular non-strawberry option," and vote for that instead of what I really wanted, which was chocolate.

And as we've seen, our current system fails to guarantee a majority winner. Which means the person with less than majority support is routinely elected to represent all of us. And 5th, the system discourages people from running because they are afraid of becoming the spoiler. And some of the current system limits our choice and our voice in the voting booth. The solution is Ranked Choice Voting. Instead of picking just one candidate, Ranked Choice Voting lets you rank multiple candidates in the order you prefer them.

And this system has many more benefits to name a few. Oh. Where'd I go? Oh. I lost my place in my script. Excuse me. Okay. Ranked Choice Voting ensures that every elected official has broad voter support because the elected official must at least have a majority in the final round in order to win. Ranked Choice Voting also reduces negative campaigning. This is because every candidate will be running to be your second choice as well as your first.

For example. In San Francisco, a Ranked Choice city, candidates now routinely cross-endorse each other. Ranked Choice Voting also simplifies runoff elections, reducing election costs and making voters go to the polls only once. Take the recent Georgia Senate runoff. Now, although Georgia does have a system that guarantees an elected official has majority support, it does so at the expense of holding a second election. And with that, the contribution clock is reset, giving big donors a second chance to make big contributions to the candidates; making that election the most expensive in history.

Meanwhile, voters have to go to the polls twice, which has proven to cause a huge drop in voter turnout between the general and the runoff. Yet, voter turnout routinely increases after the adoption of Ranked Choice Voting. This is because it encourages participation by giving voters more voice to express their top choice. Ranked Choice Voting also empowers women and persons of color, both as voters and as candidates. While a voter's top choice may be a woman or a person of color, our current system forces voters to ask, "Is our town ready for a woman for mayor, or

will other people actually vote for a person of color as governor?"

Under a Ranked Choice Voting, no voter will ever have to ask themselves this kind of question again. And this has documented effects. For example. A study of Ranked Choice Voting cities to plurality cities in California showed that Ranked Choice city's representation of persons of color increased by nearly 20 percent while in that same time period cities that did not adopt Ranked Choice Voting...it increased by only 3 percent. Likewise, in a study of nine US cities women made up only about 25 percent of city councils before Ranked Choice Voting.

In those same cities, women made up about 50 percent city councils after adopting Ranked Choice Voting. And some Ranked Choice Voting more fairly represents the full spectrum of voter, and this has a natural effect on voter turnout because Ranked Choice Voting empowers voters with greater choices in the voting booth. And this is not the only tool in the Ranked Choice Voting tool box. There is a wealth of voting reform ideas out there, including multi-winner Ranked Choice Voting which helps get rid of gerrymandering.

Every reform you can imagine to make our nation and our planet a better place starts with elected officials who listen to the voice of the people. Ranked Choice Voting is the first up in making that happen. Now, for all of those reasons we support Ranked Choice Voting as a real and practical solution. It eliminates voters and spoilers in votes splitting and encourages more people to run. It encourages negative campaigning and encourages voters just to get out there and vote by giving them more choice and more voice. Now, the only way we're going to get this done is by building a movement and putting pressure on our legislators.

And we need your help. So I'm re-Posting the sign-up sheet in Chat. Please, please sign up if you're interested in helping our efforts on behalf of New York voters; whether by volunteering, donating or both. Thank you all for inviting us here today, and I'm hoping this presentation helps you see how Ranked Choice Voting will improve our elections and our democracy. We're also hoping for the endorsement of the Dramatists Guild of America. Ranked Choice Voting enhances the democratic process and, therefore, is in the interest of every American.

Please Scan this code with your phone to visit our Website and social media Pages. And lastly, Ranked Choice Voting New York's statewide

meeting is Sunday, June 27th at 7:00 PM. We hope that this will help you spread the word. Please mark this on your calendar. And now, I will give it to the question and answer, and I'm sure there's going to be plenty of questions. And, David, I will do the best we can to answer all your questions. Okay. And that was my little speech. I hope you all enjoyed it.

Lisa Kron: Brian, That was amazing. I have to say I feel incredibly excited for Ranked Choice Voting. And welcome, Dave, who's going to answer some questions. We've been trying to make the Chat work, so I don't know yet if it's working for people. I'm going to put my Links – Down here in-

Jenny Makholm: Yeah. We want everyone to try to Chat Box. But if that doesn't work, please submit your questions through the Q&A session.

Lisa Kron: Yeah. Our Q&A definitely works. I see that anonymous attendee has asked about voting cross-party. In the Primary, you can only vote for your party that you're registered to. The last day for voter registration is tomorrow. Tomorrow is the last day. If you're not registered, there is a very weird thing where if you're registered, if you want to vote in the democratic Primary and you're registered, say, in the working family's party, I believe that it's too late to change your registration. But in these Links, you can check your registrations. You can check a lot of things. So I turn it over to...let's see. Oh. There are a bunch of – oh, no. There's really questions about the Chat. Questions about Ranked Choice Voting.

Brian Chevere: May I suggest if you have a question, you use the little Raise Your Hand Icon and we'll try to get around to you in order that you raise your hand?

Jenny Makholm: Yeah. So I'll start with the first one, Lisa, in the Q&A section.

Lisa Kron: Please. Go ahead.

Jenny Makholm: It's from an anonymous viewer who asked...

Lisa Kron: Oh, yeah. I just answered that one, Jenna.

Jenny Makholm: You did that one. So the next one is from Dale Brown. It says, "If we are just now entering the Chat feature, it is blank. There are no Links from a previous Post. How is this working?" Oh. So those are just logistical questions. So please, if you have questions about Ranked Choice Voting in general, please feel free to Send then through the Q&A section on the

Bottom of your Screen right next to where it says Participants In Chat. Just Click on the Q&A. I think John Weidman has a question.

John Weidman: I do have a question. I'm curious as to where the pushback against this comes from. I mean, when you describe it, it seems to make complete sense. Who doesn't like it?

Dave Heller: Well, establishment candidates don't like it; particularly campaign managers don't like it because when you run a Ranked Choice Voting campaign, you're trying to get other candidates second choices, not just first-choice votes. You're trying to get second and third. So you don't mudsling. It's more issue-based campaigning. And it's a lot easier for candidates to win by mudslinging. So that's where you get a lot of pushback. And, you know, the people in power are the ones that control how we vote. So that's the other thing.

John Weidman: Thank you.

Jenny Makholm: I guess I'll ask a question. Can you speak a little bit about how it affects campaign fundraising? Because it just feels so different right now. Some people have large amount...you know, certain candidates right now beforehand have raised enormous amounts of money, but it doesn't seem to be helping their campaigns at all because of Ranked Choice Voting. Could you just speak about how this changes the fundraising, backhand side?

Dave Heller: Well, because now more candidates – you know, you don't have to...before Ranked Choice Voting, people have to basically go with the person they think is going to win. And so, it allows people to support people who are more of a long shot. And so, you know, Ranked Choice Voting is one reform to help democracy become better, but it's not a – it's not a panacea. You know? We still need to do reforms for campaign, finance reform and public funding and stuff like that. So it has less to do with campaign finance reform and how campaigns are financed than you would think.

Lisa Kron: So I think this was covered. So if there are candidates that you don't like at all, you don't rank them at the bottom. Right? You just don't include them at all. Right?

Dave Heller: Well, it depends. Like, you have five choices in New York City. So if you only like three candidates and you really hate, you know, three candidates

and there are two that you kind of don't like, but you like them more than the ones you really hate, then you want to rank them 4th and 5th.

Lisa Kron: I see.

Dave Heller: You know? And if it's a big money candidate, if you hate all the bit money candidates and you like one less than the one you really hate, you basically save that one for your 5th choice. You know?

Brian Chevere: Just save the last one for the one that you can least stomach when it comes down to...

Amanda Green: There's some good questions in the Q&A section.

Brian Chevere: Okay. What do we got here?

Lisa Kron: Kathleen Turkelion asked, "Might the pushback be happening against Ranked Choice Voting because voters must do research on more people? Which is a good thing." I think she's asking on whether that will discourage people from going to the polls. I hope I've got that right, Kathleen. It says, "But will we get the numbers at the polls?"

Dave Heller: Typically it's increased voter participation. If you look at the voter turnout in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, they've all – percentage-wise, it's increased over the years. So it's going to – it should increase voter turnout.

Lisa Kron: Yeah. I'm very excited to vote without having to worry about whether somebody's electable. I feel very excited about that. So another person asked if this system is just being tested out here in New York or if Ranked Choice Voting is here to stay in New York.

Dave Heller: Well, they only have it for the Primaries. So that's unfortunate-

Lisa Kron: It won't be in the general election.

Dave Heller: It's not in the general election. It's just the Primary. Yeah. I know.

Lisa Kron: And why is that?

Dave Heller: Because the board – when the charter amendment was put through, the board was a little timid. They said they wanted to test it out with the

Primaries before they put it in the general election. And hopefully – they were honest about that. And it seems like they've already...we've already had three special elections. So they kind of worked out any Bugs and stuff. So it should run smoothly in this Primary, and hopefully there'll be another charter amendment to make it for the general elections too.

Lisa Kron: Mm-hmm. And what can we do? If we like this system, do you know what we can do to try to push to make it permanent?

Dave Heller: Well, you have to encourage the council.

Lisa Kron: Yeah.

Dave Heller: Yeah.

Lisa Kron: Great. One person asked to confirm that somebody can just vote for one candidate if they want to. Correct?

Dave Heller: That's right. Yeah. There's no obligation to rank. But there's no downside from ranking all five.

Lisa Kron: Right.

Dave Heller: So, you know, like some of those things where it's like, "Vote for three candidates," and you really like one candidate, you just vote for your favorite candidate. You don't vote for 3, right, 'cause you want to get your favorite elected. And with this, like, there's no disadvantage to ranking all five.

Lisa Kron: That's so important. There's no disadvantage to putting all five down. That's really, really useful information.

Amanda Green: In the Primaries, if we have 13 candidates will it winnow them down with ranking? I mean, to go to the general election? Is it possible that will go to the general – I'm confused-

Dave Heller: Well, that's why I said you save the – if you don't like any of the big money candidates, they're not your 1st, 2nd or 3rd choice and you really don't want any of them to win but you don't want your worst nightmare to win...so you save your least-hated or – I'm...but, you know, the big-money candidate who typically win, you save that for your 5th vote so that you

get all your favorites. And if none of your favorites win, you want to block your least-favorite from winning. So that's – do you understand how that works? Amanda, you don't look 100-percent convinced.

Amanda Green: I just don't understand how – will it winnow down the 13 candidates to a smaller amount of candidates for the general election?

Dave Heller: Well, it's going to winnow it down to one Primary winner.

Amanda Green: Okay. Okay.

Dave Heller: So yeah. It is.

Amanda Green: It's all right. It was a dumb question, but yeah. Thank you. *[Laughs]*

Lisa Kron: John, did you have a question? You're muted. John, you're still muted.

John Weidman: There are two candidates running in the Republican Primary. Right? So, I mean, 1, 2; 2, 1. Somebody's going to get more votes. On the other hand, you know, at least one of them appears on other lines in the general election. Right? But there's no crossover between how things sort out in the primary and how people might or might not appear on a different line in the general. Right?

Dave Heller: No.

Lisa Kron: You can only vote in the – if you are a registered democrat, you're only voting for democratic candidates. If you're registered Republican, you're only voting for Republican candidates in the Primary. And in the Republican Primary, there'll be a couple – so Staten Island Borough President, and then there are also I think in Stain a couple of city council seats in play. Yeah. But there's no crossover. Deborah Grace Winer asks about...and this is the second question – about guidance from the DG on candidates who might help get the city back in ways that will benefit our industry.

You know, the DG is an organization of ornery, independent-minded playwrights. And we have no collective political positions in this way. But I think that any number of individual playwrights would be happy to share their thoughts with you. I think that's where we take this next, is into individual conversations. I'm happy to – not on this call – talk about what

I'm looking for. I'm sure that... I would imagine most of the people on this call are happy to have that conversation also. But the Dramatists Guild does not do that. Okay. Still confused. How does ranking my most hated candidate – IE, giving them a vote – block their chances? Wouldn't it be better to exclude them entirely from my ranking?"

Brian Chevere: I think I can take that one. As soon as you don't vote for your most hated, you vote for basically what you consider – they're still going to be your 5th choice, highly electable but the lesser evil. Just in case it comes down to that guy that you think is just a run-of-the-mill crook and one that you think is just an axe murderer or something; that you have an opinion that they're probably an axe murderer in private. The other one's just a run-of-the-mill crook. Better the run-of-the-mill crook.

Lisa Kron: Right. So what you're saying is, you don't vote for your most hated candidate. You don't put them. But you can sort of, far down the rankings, if you think you have a choice you can block them by putting somebody else into that last spot.

Brian Chevere: Yes. Even if it's just what you figure as the lesser of two evils. It's still the lesser evil.

Lisa Kron: That's great.

Brian Chevere: If it comes to that, that's an option.

Lisa Kron: Okay. Great.

Dave Heller: Yeah. Your first four votes are free to vote for, you know, your hopes and dreams. And then, your fifth vote is the lesser of two evils backup. It's your backup vote.

Lisa Kron: Great. We're coming up on an hour here. So unless there are more questions, I think that we will wind up. I am going to – one more time – put my Link Document here. IN that Document – which I've proved my technical prowess, so I'm sure it's *[clicking sound]* – that Document is very clear and every Link is working perfectly, because I'm batting 1,000 so far. But it should have places to find out if you're registered, find out who's in your city council race. There's all kinds of information.

And then, there are sites where you can see who all the candidates are, all

the races and then some issue-specific information. Again. This is, I hope, the beginning of all of us really getting ready for this election. And really, really – this is what we're doing here is relational organizing. We're talking to each other about the fact that this is happening and how we can all help each other get our attention on it and make a big difference. Winton Miller has a question at the 11th hour. "My first choice candidate is in a close heat with my second choice candidate, but I really want my first choice person to win. Can I vote in a certain way that will help my first choice be someone else's second choice but still win?"

Dave Heller:

That's just, you know, advocating with your friends who are voting that have, you know, different favorite candidates. In fact, in other cities – like in San Francisco, Berkeley – a lot of candidates will endorse one another. So I would say, like, you know, "Vote for me first. Vote for Lisa second." And then, Lisa, you would say, "Vote for me first. Vote for Dave second." Right? And that happened. That's how Jean Quan became the first Asian-American female mayor of a major city in the United States. And that's how she did it. She had other candidates that co-endorsed with her. So that's how she ended up on top.

Lisa Kron:

Great. Nobody's going to vote anybody else off the island. Definitely not. Friends, colleagues, I thank you all so much for being here. This is going to be – this has been taped. You can share it with other people. Yes, I'd like to second Amanda in thanking Brian and Dave for being here. And they put Links to their organization into the Chat. This was free. They came here. They're going all over and doing this work getting the word out. So, you know, support this work if you can. And big, big thanks from all of us to you for being here. And everybody, let's stay in touch. Let's get ready to vote. Let's get our friends ready to vote. Onward. Thank you all. Thank you.

[End of Audio]