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Tuesday February 19, 2019

To my colleagues on the Special Committee on Governance:

I would like to raise an important issue with you today, one that is very important to me and the diverse communities that I represent. During the election I heard from residents that their biggest frustration with municipal politics was that election after election they would see the same name winning. The incumbent bias doesn't just hurt voter participation in our elections, it also adds an insurmountable challenge to many seeking office for the first time.

Let's check the numbers. In 2018, all but one of the races with an incumbent for a seat on Council were won by incumbents. In fact, election after election we have seen incumbents winning elections by a disproportionate amount - 97% of incumbents won in 2014 and 85% of incumbents won in 2010. But the most staggering number is that only 13 challengers have been successful at unseating an incumbent in 167 races since 2003.

With numbers like these it is easy to understand why so many are apathetic about our municipal elections and why we have so few visible minority candidates, younger candidates, and LGBTQ2S candidates being elected to office.

It doesn't have to be this way. Term limits at various government levels in the United States have increased voter turnout and increased the amount of women and visible minority candidates elected to office.

This is why I bring this motion before you today. So we can live up to our motto of "Diversity Our Strength", by looking at ways we can remove barriers preventing our council from representing the diversity of Toronto.

With the governance changes forced on Council last summer, now is the time to look at how we can strengthen our democracy. We must make sure more people are engaged in municipal politics. I ask the Special Committee on Governance to take this motion seriously and consider the many benefits this important report could bring.

My motion with Councillor Bailão was referred to your committee at the January 2019 meeting of City Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. City Council request the City Manager to report to the Special Committee on Governance by the first quarter of 2020 on opportunities and next steps to implement term limits for City Councillors and the Mayor, such report to include but not be limited to:

- a. a survey and analysis on the use of term limits in comparable North American jurisdictions;
- b. consideration for the potential impacts of term limits on levels of political engagement, public participation in government, and diversity among elected officials;
- c. an extensive public consultation process with residents on their opinions toward term limits;
- d. recommended length and number of terms, and transition provisions for term limits; and
- e. the required legislative changes to the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 to implement term limits based on the findings in Parts a to d above.

Thank you for the important work the Special Committee on Governance will be undertaking in the coming months. I applaud the Chair's open call to Torontonians to give their input on how we can strengthen governance in this city and I hope term limits will be a part of that conversation.

Respectfully,

Brad Bradford

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