

March 28, 2013

Speaker Christine Quinn
New York City Council
224 West 30th St., Suite 1206
New York, NY 10001

Dear Speaker Quinn:

We write concerning the legislative proposal for external review of the NYPD housed in the Department of Investigations.

As Corporation Counsel charged with safeguarding the legal interests of the City, we gained a broad perspective on the NYPD, and the ways that police practices play out on our streets and in our communities and would like to offer our views on oversight of the police.

The NYPD is a highly professional agency with a proud history and a strong record of fighting crime in the City. In the past two decades, including for the past 11 years under the impressive leadership of Commissioner Ray Kelly, the NYPD has reduced crime to record low levels. Residents of many communities feel safe walking streets that for years they avoided, and feel comfortable sending their children out to school or to play. This is a tremendous achievement. At the same time, however, as we saw through litigation filed against the City, residents in many communities need reassurance that they are being treated fairly and respectfully by the police. We recognize that the NYPD is successful because it has a clear system of command, and significant authority. The City should not interfere with this command structure. But we also believe that it is vital to have an external mechanism to review, analyze and provide advice on police practices, policies and procedures.

Although it is true that many entities currently exist for the purpose of reviewing actions by the NYPD, none serves this broad and important function. The primary focus of the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau, the Civilian Complaint Review Board, the District Attorneys' Offices and the Commission to Combat Police Corruption is on individual misconduct and corruption. None of these entities is charged with reviewing the full range of NYPD policies and practices.

We would have welcomed this review when we served as Corporation Counsel and we strongly support the creation of a review function today. We have seen the results of the work of other inspectors general and law enforcement monitors, including the work of the Department of Justice Inspector General and the important role that office has played with regard to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and we are confident that installing a similar mechanism in New York City will strengthen our security, improve the NYPD's relations with communities throughout the City, and improve the work of the NYPD.

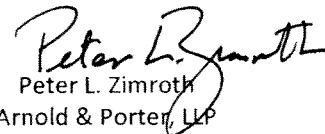
Thank you for considering our views on this important legislation.



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