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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Testimony before the NYC Council Committee on Public Safety
June 9, 2020

RE-IMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

I am Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and I thank Public Safety Committee Chair Donovan Richards and the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony today.

The murders of many Black men and women by the police have demonstrated the horrific legacy of racism upon which our country was built. That legacy is apparent in the tragic ends met by Eric Garner, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Amadou Diallo and so many others.

Saint Augustine said, “In the absence of justice, what is sovereignty but organized robbery?” When our institutions, policies, and funding priorities are characterized by the absence of transparency, fairness, and due process for so many, we actively conspire to deny individuals, their families and communities of their basic rights and freedoms.

Out of the pain and oppression must come activism, and in its crucible is a chance to create a more just society.

I fully support the long-overdue Int. 536-A, introduced by Council Member Lancman, to designate the use of chokeholds and other deadly techniques like placing a knee on a person’s neck, as a misdemeanor, as well as the Eric Garner Anti-Chokehold Act and the repeal of 50-A which passed the State Legislature yesterday, June 8. They are on the Governor’s desk and it is expected that he will sign them.

The Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) plays a vital role in ensuring that everyone in our city receives equal protection before the law. It provides a fair and effective process for handling complaints of police misconduct. The 2019 Charter Revision Commission, created by legislation I introduced with Council Speaker Johnson and former Public Advocate Tish James, proposed a number of reforms affecting the NYPD and CCRB.

Several of these reforms were overwhelmingly approved by voters in November 2019, including changes to the appointment of the members of the Board; the requirement that the Police Commissioner provide an explanation when recommended discipline is not applied; the delegation of subpoena power to senior Board staff; and protection of the CCRB personnel budget.

These were essential reforms that will make the Board a more effective body. All have taken effect, with the exception of the budget measure which starts with Fiscal Year 2021 (beginning July 1, 2020), and the terms of the two new CCRB members which will begin on July 6, 2020.

But the Commission did not offer a ballot proposal that would obligate the Police Commissioner to adopt a consistent, transparent disciplinary process. I fully support Int. 1309, introduced by Chair Richards, which mandates this overdue reform and requires that the disciplinary guidelines be made publicly available.

However, I urge the Council and future Commissions to also consider the following additional needed reforms:

-The CCRB may currently investigate the truthfulness of any material statement that is made within the course of ongoing CCRB investigation; and where officers are found to have been untruthful the CCRB would be empowered to recommend appropriate discipline. This power should be coupled with the ability of the Board to impose discipline in cases of false representations made during CCRB investigations.

-The Charter should be amended to codify and make permanent the current Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) that authorized the NYPD Administrative Prosecution Unit and established that the NYPD must cooperate with the Board beyond the investigative stage of a proceeding.

-The CCRB's budget should be set permanently at 1% of the NYPD budget. The 2019 ballot referendum requires that the CCRB personnel budget be high enough to support a staff size equal to 0.65% of the budget for uniformed police officers. By tying the two budgets, we can ensure that as NYPD's resources change, the CCRB can continue to carry out its responsibilities and investigate and pursue new issues as they arise. An independent, adequately-funded CCRB guarantees fair and equal treatment for both citizens and officers. We must ensure that the body charged with making that guarantee a reality is funded sufficiently to do so.

Having said all of this, I also know from a recent IBO analysis: <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park2/2020/06/last-november-voters-approved-an-increase-in-civilian-complaint-review-board-staffing-does-the-mayors-budget-plan-provide-the-funds/>) that the Administration is planning to defer funding CCRB staffing levels passed in the 2019 City Charter Revision until FY22 for a total savings of \$1.1 million. The Mayor is allowed to do so due to "unforeseen financial circumstances"; but IBO sites that the FY22 budget gap is estimated as far worse than FY21. This funding should not be delayed.

Events have made it clear that we must take a hard look at NYPD budget priorities. Hiring fewer new officers, reducing overtime, and cutting the OTPS budget can bring reductions in line with the 6% cut being taken by other city agencies. Many have suggested a \$1 billion dollar cut - approximately \$250 million a year for 4 years.

The City Comptroller is suggesting a 5% cut to the NYPD. He has made specific recommendations.

In the past, generally, where budget cuts were needed, most Mayors told agencies how much to reduce but not specifically what areas to reduce. This year, the Council and advocates looking at the budget should focus on specifics.

The process should focus not only on cuts but also on re-allocations that bolster communities, including, opportunities for youth, housing security, and a strong CUNY. \$124 million would fund the highly successful and economically vital Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), employing 75,000 youth each summer. \$213 million would bring back other programs that support our youth and families - Beacons, Cornerstones, summer camps and more. We have seen time and again that supported and engaged young people make our communities safer, culturally enriched, and stable, and provide role models for younger children.

We must also support our youth by providing them with a stable learning environment. Affordable housing is a proven community stabilizer. Unfortunately, rather than investing in the very tool that generates and preserves affordable housing, the Mayor's proposed FY21 Executive Budget cuts the New York City Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) capital budget by more than \$450 million or 38%.

I am already seeing the impact of decreased capital allocations—long-time affordable housing developers, even those committed to projects with 100% of affordable units, admit that without sufficient subsidy from HPD, the affordable units on offer will have to be set at higher income bands. The Mayor plans to add back some of the money in FY2022-2024, but that is not good enough. We need to reinstate HPD's capital budget allocation now. To reiterate, we would like restoration of some portions of the \$450 million back into HPD's FY21 capital budget.

As the Center for an Urban Future points out, CUNY, especially the community colleges, must be part of our recovery effort in New York City. The \$20 million cut to the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP) must be restored, and the City of New York must build on this extremely successful effort. If every CUNY community college student was an ASAP recipient, 16,000 more students would graduate from these colleges every year on time. ASAP is so successful that states such as Ohio are replicating it. Why are we cutting the funding?

I also support making whole CUNY in the Heights, which is now a branch of the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) but needs the program funding to be successful.

In past recessions, the jobs coming out of the downturn went to New Yorkers who had some college credentials, which is one reason I support funding the community colleges. We are facing the same challenges today with even more automation and digital learning.

I note that the for-profit colleges in New York have, during this pandemic, increased their advertising budgets, whereas CUNY does not have the finances to do ads. Yet students benefit from the BMCC's and other CUNY colleges, while students who attend the for-profits are often left with debt, default, and no job.

Also, to support low-income New Yorkers getting jobs as part of the recovery effort, the City of New York must fund the Bridge Programs, which have been severely cut. Many immigrants cannot get jobs in any industry because the literacy programs have been cut, and when non-

profits select candidates to train for tech jobs, for instance, they weed out those who would not be hired by industry partners. With fully funded Bridge Programs, this would not be the case.

Apprenticeship programs in construction have always been successful when funded, but we need the same effort in technology, finance, and health care.

Many people know that I have fought for a social worker in every school, and I know that we also need a nurse in every school. Last year, in FY20, working with Council Member Treyger and with the support of many members of the City Council, we succeeded in obtaining baselined funding of \$29.7 million for 269 social workers, including \$10.9 million of re-allocated ThriveNYC funding to support 85 School Crisis Responders.

But the need is far greater: the Independent Budget Office estimated last year, in a study I requested, that it would require \$94.4 million to fund a full-time worker in every school that did not currently have one—a total of 716 workers needed system-wide.

Even the goal of having one social worker per school barely starts to meet the need at hand: the National Association of Social Workers recommends one worker per 250 students. For a New York City public school student body population of over 1.1 million, that translates to a total of 4,500 social workers.

Despite massive budget pressures, we must strive to meet this bare minimum goal of at least one social worker per school. This crisis stands to wipe out all the gains and generational benefits of the many strides we've taken on education in this city -including Universal Pre-K- unless there is real social-emotional and physical health for school communities.

What's more, the coronavirus pandemic has led us into a mental health crisis of a scale not unlike the physical health crisis of the virus itself. Children are shouldering the mental health burdens and conflicts stemming from the virus too, all while understanding much less. And the economic aftershocks—including massive joblessness and food insecurity—have been proven to cause their own mental health effects.

New York City needs a tangible response to this mental health crisis. Social workers are mental health professionals who are trained to address those issues— and they can help relieve the pressures on already overworked educators and staff.

Yet, according to the IBO, the Mayor's FY21 Executive Budget proposes a reduction of \$12 million from the Single Shepherd program, which assigns a guidance counselor or social worker to mentor and guide middle school students; and an \$8 million cut to the previously agreed upon FY21 hiring of 25 new school based social workers.

There are many other human service and arts programs that need support during these difficult times. I have listed just a few priorities above.

Finally, the NYPD must continue and expand better recruitment and training efforts. People who live here in the city and are part of its fabric should continue to be recruited for policing jobs. And training must include de-escalation tactics as well as race dynamics. Our police force

must be well versed in the issues facing all of our communities and be able to play a positive role in addressing these issues - whether racism, homophobia, transphobia, or income disparities.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to submit testimony as we move toward re-imagining public safety in New York City.



<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/nyregion/police-kettling-protests-nyc.html>

I appeared in a photo on the cover of the NYTimes on Saturday June 6. When I went out to protest the day of the photograph, I had no idea or intention of doing anything newsworthy.

I keep on trying to tell people what happened but don't have the language to describe what the cops did, because it seems so evil. Trapping us in and then beating us. Kettling. Now I know.

On June 3, I marched peacefully from Barclays center to Cadman plaza as the city's curfew went into effect. At around 8:38pm, we were stopped in our tracks as police in riot gear rushed in to bar us from walking any further. Batons out. Shields up. Helmets on. No masks, though.

After cheering and standing and kneeling for about 15 minutes, the crowd collectively decided to turn around, go home, or at least away from the cops. At that point, we realized we were surround. Cops had filled in behind and around us. There was no where to go. At this point, the cops who had first filed in started advancing on us, moving us backwards, causing some

to trip and fall and be at risk of getting trampled. Some people tried to run, but only realized we were trapped.

At 9pm, something changed. All of the sudden, the rules were not the same, and they began to beat us.

I have video of the exact moment pictured on the cover of the New York Times on Saturday June 6. That cop with yellow sunglasses laid out the guy who was on his knees with his hands up. He used his baton to push him forcefully in the face so he was on the ground, at risk of being trampled. In that moment, I also got whacked in the side of the head with the end of his baton. I couldn't take it, just started screaming, "STOP IT. STOP HURTING PEOPLE."

We did NOTHING to provoke the violence. Aside from protesting police violence.

Other notes from this encounter: there was a woman with a walker who could not move as fast as the cops wanted her to who we tried to protect as she found her daughter. People were getting pushed to the ground, including a cop, who was then helped up by a group of protestors.

Some cops during the encounter were yelling "Hold the line! Hold the line!" Other cops were absolutely not holding the line, beating people and pushing them on their backs. At one point it was clear that the "hold the line" order ended and they just went at us. There were also two white dudes specifically provoking cops, which didn't feel right to me.

When some of us finally escaped and they stopped going after us, the skies were opening up. There was lightning. Everyone was screaming, yelling, and asking if each other was ok.

Also later on that night we did get stalked by the cops while we were trying to return safely home. But that's another story.

I walked away free and largely unharmed (have a bruise on my ear). I did not go out expecting any of this. I went out as a white person trying to use my privilege to get in between cops and the black activists who are doing the WORK right now. I was also curious as to how they were going to enforce curfew, but could not have predicted this. I was fully in shock. But I walked away free and largely unharmed. That is not the daily, lived reality of black people in this country, and that is why I was there in the first place.

Finally, as you can so almost NO cops wear masks. Almost ALL protestors do. Mine came down when I screamed, I guess, but we've all been pretty vigilant. Not the cops.

- Mattie Barber-Bockelman

NYC City Council,

My name is Mark Harris, resident of Brooklyn. I am submitting this testimony in support of the bills being reviewed today. These bills are important and necessary. I am officially asking you to support them.

As you are aware, George Floyd's murder and the resulting global protest movement, have once again underlined the need, not only to reform, but to reimagine public safety.

The roots of the issues with public safety run centuries deep, and not only lead to insufficient accountability but define the very relationship between police and citizen.

There is no lack of research on the origins and history of professional police forces. I encourage you to listen to [American Police from NPR's Throughline](#) (linked). I hope it will encourage you to continue thinking beyond individual reforms, about the nature of public safety, the actual needs of our citizens, and the city we want to be.

It is important to remember, public safety's problems are systemic and the responsibility of our leaders. Like teachers and firefighters, we know that many, many individuals join police forces because they want to do good for their cities and communities. So reimagining public safety is for their sake as well. If we rethink what we ask of them, and support their work with other services better suited to specific tasks, we only demonstrate our commitment to them in return.

Please support the bills today. But also, please keep an open mind reimagining public safety on a much more fundamental level as we move forward.

Arundhati Roy's quote from ["The pandemic is a portal"](#) is equally applicable here.

"...We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it..."

Seeking Shalom

Seeking Shalom Marriage and Family Therapy, P.C. and Seeking Shalom Mental Health Counseling, P.C.

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Testimony of The Rev. Dr. Christopher L. Smith, LCAC, LMHC, LMFT

President and Clinical Director

Seeking Shalom

Supporter of CCITNYC, Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing

Public Safety Commission

Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is the Rev. Dr. Christopher L. Smith, LCAC, LMHC, LMFT. I am the President and Clinical Director of both Seeking Shalom Marriage and Family Therapy, P.C. and Seeking Shalom Mental Health Counseling, P.C. Other service includes nationally as the President of the American College of Counselors and as a Clergy Liaison in the 34th Precinct. Seeking Shalom is one of 80 organizations and 400 stakeholders that are a coalition called Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

Seeking Shalom is a group teaching practice in the area of mental health. In addition to developing emerging clinicians and teaching clinicians how to incorporate clients' spirituality in the therapeutic practice, we have intentionally chosen to provide services in areas of the city that has traditionally been underserved. Part of the reasons that they are underserved relates to the provider side and to funding issues, part of it relates to cultural dynamics present for many in the community, and part of it comes from a mistrust in a system that causes them fear about the response they will receive that overwhelms any hope they have that help will be safe and beneficial. These last two parts require significant effort to provide transformation that can provide an environment for residents' peace and wholeness.

Seeking Shalom and CCITNYC thank Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the standard form of response of the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer have to be a role of the NYPD and allow the NYPD to focus on what is core to its purpose.



We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team response.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is parallel to what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners with extensive training and experience in de-escalating individuals dealing with emotional and cognitive distress.

There are a lot of reasons why a model for addressing those in crisis separate from law enforcement as the initial response is a good solution. One of the most basic ones is that more people would be willing to access help, and this has the potential to save lives and prevent other damage. During intake assessments in my practices, we regularly talk about what they would do if they became suicidal or homicidal. Most of the clients in the Bronx may squirm a little but will go through all sorts of things they would do and even when we talk about making a 911 call a significant number of them state that they would never do that. Having a response that would be accessed would be humane and life preserving. Another basic reason relates to the sanctity of human life and the right of individuals to be given respect that preserves their dignity. No response system will have a perfect record in terms of the outcomes. I am fortunate that every situation I have responded to in the community where someone was suicidal, I was able to de-escalate the situation and get the person to be willing to get help. Part of that statistic is because of my professional expertise. However, who is likely to have better outcomes – someone whose training and focus is on de-escalating the situation and being attuned to mental health issues or someone whose training and focus is on other areas? In some of the group work I have done after a suicide (e.g. in a fraternity), I have seen the effectiveness of peers watching for signs and knowing how to intervene and in a couple of cases this has led to the prevention of a further suicide.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

- Mario Ocasio, Age 51– June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed
- Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed
- Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed
- Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed



- Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed
- Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed
- Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed
- James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed
- Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed
- Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded
- Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded
- Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed
- Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.



Committee on Public Safety
New York City Council

June 11, 2020

Re: June 9, 2020 Committee on Public Safety – Reorienting investment from the
NYPD to social services

Councilmembers:

I am writing to you during a time of unprecedented and much-needed scrutiny of policing in the United States. The protests around the racist and vicious murder of George Floyd have compelled many elected officials to look into ways of reforming the police departments they are responsible for. Because the protests arose from the murder of George Floyd, there has been a lot of focus on reducing police use of lethal force. However, as many of you may already know, the New York Police Department (NYPD) is one of the least lethal police forces in the country. This may give you a false sense of security, a belief that this is not a New York City problem or at the very least is not as much of a problem as it is elsewhere. But NYC has a more pervasive and subtle form of police violence that the NYPD enacts on communities of color and the working class every day. It did not end with the end of routine racist stop-and-frisk, and while it may not involve as many bullets or chokeholds, it threatens the lives and security of New Yorkers.

A good illustration of this problem is the policing of turnstile jumping. No matter how it may be characterized as having a more broad kind of harm to the MTA, stealing a fare is a \$2.75 crime. Weigh this \$2.75 loss in revenue against the dehumanization, fines, and even physical assault that results from the policing of the turnstile jumping. What is the purpose of it all? To improve the MTA's revenue? Studies consistently show more money is lost by people choosing other transportation than from stealing fares. But both, choosing other transportation and fare beating, arise from the same problem: failure to invest in social services.

Policing is the bargain basement alternative to investing in communities. The decision to police communities of color and working class people was not made to make people more safe, it was made to prevent rebellion against poverty and powerlessness. You now have the opportunity to be part of a new era in public safety that chooses effective methods of de-escalation and violence prevention. You can make NYC safe by ensuring that New Yorkers are not assaulted and harassed for being poor but are instead collectively enfranchised, as should have been done centuries ago to dispel the racist economic inequality that is a vestige of slavery and Jim Crow.

Please heed the call of Black Lives Matter and organizations like mine, the Democratic Socialists of America, and vote "No" on any 2021 budget that does not cut at least \$1 billion from the NYPD and reinvests it in the social programs that make all of New York safer, rather than just the wealthy and white.

Sincerely,

Emma Caterine
740 Empire Blvd. #3G
Brooklyn, NY 11213

Written Testimony of

Fred A. Levine
Law & Public Policy Consulting

In Support of the
Recommendations of
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC
("CCITNYC")

&

In Support of an
Independent Review of the
Policies, Practices and Budget of the NYPD

New York City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
June 9, 2020

Thank you members of the New York City Council for giving me this opportunity to submit a written statement in support of the recommendations of the CCITNYC.

My name is Fred A. Levine.

While serving as the Counsel to the Executive Director of Fountain House, and as a member of the NYAPRS Criminal Justice Task Force, I had the privilege to work closely with senior members of the NYPD and its training staff, and with members of the community who had a wide variety of experiences while interacting with NYPD officers. I was given the opportunity, not only to develop training materials that were used to implement models of community policing based upon best practices, but to meet with and train new Recruits and experienced Officers.

1. Support for Recommendations of the CCITNYC

This written statement is submitted in support of the recommendation of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC ("CCITNYC") which, among other things, seeks to pair emergency medical technicians with peers (individuals with lived mental health experience), to create working teams that will respond to individuals in emotional crisis, rather than having NYPD officers do so. The CCITNYC would test the efficacy of this model over the course of a five-year pilot project within two designated Precincts.

This would give the Mayor, City Council, NYPD and members of the community, an opportunity to work together to begin to reshape a system of crisis response within two Precincts. It could begin show the benefits of a system of community care for individuals in emotional crisis using best practices, performed by individuals who both want to do this work, and are properly trained to do so.

The CCITNYC's model will utilize trained community members who possess a thorough understanding of emotional crisis, the professional expertise to use techniques that will help diffuse such crises, and offer individuals a wider range of needed services.

I support the recommendation, and request that the City Council approve the requested funding (\$16,500,000 over five years / \$3.3 million per year), which has been made by CCITNYC to the City Council.

However, my support is tempered by the CCITNYC's acknowledgement that more is needed, and the amount of time described (i.e. five years), to implement the Pilot Program. For that reason, I would request the City Council and CCITNYC enter into a dialogue and consider broadening the scope and funding of this Pilot Program while shortening the time to implement it.

2. An Independent Review of NYPD Policies, Practices and Its \$6,000,000,000 Budget

An independent review of the NYPD's policies, practices, and its \$6,000,000,000 budget

is an imperative that members of the City Council have already called for, and which I support.

This should not be a "Task Force" review, like so many previously conducted. Instead, it should be a comprehensive and independent external review of the NYPD's policies, practices and budget.

Whatever it is called (e.g., "Defunding", "Reallocation of Resources", "Zero-Based Budgeting"), the details of this should be an independent external review of the policies, practices and \$6,000,000,000 budget of the NYPD.

If the City Council agrees, it should develop a specific mission statement and scope for an independent external review of the policies, practices and \$6,000,000,000 budget of the NYPD.

The review should be structured and conducted in the nature of what the Hon. Lawrence K. Marks, Chief Administrative Judge of the New York State Unified Court System has called for - - an independent review of the Court system to review the system's response to issues of institutional racism (See 6/9/20 Press Release at www.nycourts.gov/press).

Thank you for permitting me to submit this written statement.

Respectfully submitted,
Fred A. Levine

ABOLITION RECOMMENDATIONS

TO SERVE, PROTECT AND TO DO NO HARM?

The cultural problem that exists in the police department was baked in the origin of the department. Structural racism is reproduced and perpetuated by the NYPD. Violence begets more violence and fails to address the root causes of crime and interpersonal harm. We cannot train the NYPD to be social workers, educators, or mental health crisis workers. Yet we see the police called to fill these gaps. They are tasked with policing schools, responding to mental health crisis, and managing the homeless often to violent and deadly results. This is not an issue of bad apples. Derek Chauvin was a veteran police officer apparently demonstrating, for the two new officers, how an arrest should be done. Derek Chauvin had racked up 18 complaints in as many years. Officer Tou Thao was also a veteran police officer who had racked up 6 complaints in his 7-year law enforcement career. And these are only the complaints that we know about. This is the internal police culture that is self-perpetuated. Veteran officers teaching the new recruits how to become public sadists. We are living in a police state in many of our large cities. They serve no purpose and only drain city resources perpetuating the conditions that they are called on to remedy.

ABOLITION IS COMMONSENSE

Becoming a member of law enforcement is not necessary. We need to be employing people to build climate resilience, and natural disaster preparedness, fixing roads and maintain the subways. Providing free child-care and youth services. The police provide no service to the city that can justify their cost to taxpayers. Some officers will not desire or be cut out for armed street patrol. But the state can no longer subsidize armed thugs living out fantasies of grandeur.

With all the funds, energy and talent that went into the “war on drugs” any law enforcement agent will readily admit they lost the war. Placing thousands of drug users and small-time dealers in jail did little to stop the drug problem which has escalated rather than abated.

While the city works to replace the NYPD, it must compile a database of Officers who abuse³ their power. This database must be out of the control of the NYPD. All complaints should be online and open to the public. All police records of complaints must be reviewed forthwith and officers who have any complaint must be taken off the street and evaluated and fired. This will help prevent obvious problems from becoming deadly problems. Secret grand jury minutes in highly controversial cases must be released. All police complaints must be taken seriously and if founded then strict action should be taken. We can take a page from *criminological theory* in this regard:

“The **broken windows** theory is a criminological theory that states that visible signs of crime, anti-social behavior, and civil disorder create an urban environment that encourages further crime and disorder, including serious crimes.”

I understand that this theory is a fallacy when it comes to the public in general. However, I do believe that a zero tolerance is absolutely required where you have 38,000 armed and under trained individuals patrolling our streets.

Former District Attorneys and assistant district attorneys should never be allowed to become judges. There is an inherent bias against criminal defendants and in favor of the state that we cannot hope for them to overcome in every case.

Eliminate 50A.

Judges who routinely dole out excessive sentences must be removed and all cases appealed and not appealed must be reviewed and resentencing conducted where appropriate. The Appellate Divisions merely rubber stamp excessive sentences. Many cases are never appealed. And Staten Island is still part of NYC.

THE MACHO POLICE CULTURE

The muscle bound steroid robo cop must be taken off the streets as they are dangerous to the public. Steroids, human growth factor and other such enhancement drugs should be forbidden unless a legitimate medical condition exists. These substances can have negative psychological side effects.

Police Unions

Police unions must stay out and have absolutely no say or influence in police disciplinary procedures or policy. They can obtain legal counsel for a member and financial support and that's it. The unions have too much sway with the Department and the government.

Police brass should not be allowed to release press statements concerning their opinions of newly enacted laws without some government approval or oversight. They need to understand that they are subject to the law not above the law. All police statistics should come from a general oversight office and not be under the control of police brass who attempts to use them to sway public opinion. We have seen statistics released by the police department where they under reported minor crimes in order to demonstrate how they lowered crime. Then 2 weeks into January, 2020, in order to falsely demonstrate a crime wave they predicted would be caused by bail reform new statistics were released showing increase in crime. This type of behavior must be eliminated by rules of procedure regarding release of any police statements to the public.

District Attorneys

Assistant District Attorneys should be encouraged to drop charges where the evidence does not exist for a conviction. Currently if there is an arrest the party is forced to plead guilty of some offense. There should be some immunity from false arrest civil claims where there was probable cause for the arrest.

Testimony of Al Gupta
Harm Reduction Specialist
Community Access
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Al Gupta. I am a Harm Reduction Specialist at Community Access and a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

Community Access is a 46-year-old nonprofit that helps people living with mental health concerns by providing quality supportive housing and award-winning peer led employment training. Community Access serves 1,500 tenants in 22 buildings and another 1,000 participants in recovery-oriented training, education, and outreach programs.

CCITNYC and Community Access thank Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out at least \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

In my personal experience as a mental health worker and as a peer with lived mental health experience, I have witnessed that the police often escalate a crisis. Mental health crises have deep roots in trauma and discrimination. It is unsustainable to meet crisis with violence. Even with de-escalation and sensitivity training, the police are not the ones who should be responding. I have seen trained crisis workers de-escalate situations with weapons much more effectively than a police officer. The individual in crisis often is able to maintain trust with their providers and often willing accepts mental health treatment, as opposed to experiencing an often traumatic and violent police encounter and further distancing the person from feeling comfortable with the mental health system.

Additionally, I have witnessed the police responding more violently towards Black and brown people, and people in the LGBTQ+ community. I understand that there are good people who are police officers, but this is not the problem. The issue lies within the institution of policing which is deeply unjust and problematic. People with mental health concerns are already affected by police brutality at disproportionate rates. When you add factors of race, class, and homelessness status, it is clear that the people I work with are starkly impacted by systems that are not addressing the root of the problem, including the police.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51– June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed

Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed

James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed

Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded

Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded

Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed

Kwesi Ashun, Age 33- October 2019-Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City. Now.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

On _____, I was a protester going to meet up with a friend and then a larger group to protest the daily violation of my rights for existing in America as Black man. On the way there, I ran into two young boys outside of a shoe store and told them not to record anything that they saw because it could prove to be potentially dangerous not only for them but the people that they had recorded. I then went inside of the shoe store to warn the people inside that the cops were near the end of the block. When I turned around, I saw four men dressed in plainclothes. I instinctively ran before I was tackled to the ground only to open my eyes to the sound of my knees popping and a man's knee on my chest. No one immediately identified themselves to me as police officers. I wasn't read my rights or informed of what I was being charged with, but I was asked what I was doing in the store. I'm a protester. But, I'm also a Black man. This is why my story doesn't end here with me going home bruised and battered. Initially, I was told I wasn't going to be arrested. That was a lie. Instead, the officers removed my mask and dragged me back into the store so that my face could be caught on a security camera, and I could be charged with burglary in the 3rd. I spent 8 hours in a precinct, while the same undercover cops captured more people that looked just like me around the city. Early the next morning, I was taken to Manhattan Central Booking where I was held without being taken to the hospital to have my injuries assessed. I was certain I had torn my R ACL, and was concerned I may have had a possible DVT, but no one from NYPD wanted to escort "prisoners" to the hospital while there was a chance to collect more Black bodies for mass arrests. Initially, I had difficulty trying to figure out how to write this testimony because the question for me wasn't did I suffer police brutality at the hands of the NYPD but almost had I suffered enough or was I in the wrong? Was the pain that I somehow endured a fault of my own? I currently can't walk without a brace and when I talk about this I default to saying I hurt myself...but I didn't hurt myself. The New York City Police Department hurt and maimed me. So yes I was assaulted by the NYPD, but I also have been charged with burglary because I was seen and placed inside of a shoe store. Not once that night did anybody believe I was in fact a protester (except for the people who were also arrested from the same store as me) until they realized I wasn't from here and that I'd been here this entire time protesting and going to school to get my Master's degree. It's been a week, and I still wonder why they didn't believe me. Maybe it has to do with the color of my skin.

On _____, I texted a friend and asked him if he would like to attend a protest downtown with me because people didn't think it would be safe for me to go alone. They were right.

On _____, I could be seen talking to two boys outside of a shoe store. I explained that police tend to use videos on Instagram to find people they want to bring to "justice", so it was best if they didn't record people as they went in and out of the store. They looked around 12 years old and reminded me of my younger cousins. I tell them it's best to go home because curfew would start in 45 minutes, and this isn't a safe place for them to be because cops hunt people that look like us.

On _____, I could be found inside a shoe store telling people to run because cops were at the end of the block.

On _____, I was tackled to the ground while both my knees were beaten with batons to the point that they both popped, and now I am awaiting an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon to see if my ACL needs surgical repair.

On _____, I was told that I wouldn't be arrested.

On _____, I was arrested by a "special group" of undercover NYPD cops.

Went to the protest at barclays. Marched for a long time with a mask, no major incidents along the march route.

Went back to the barclays center to retrieve my bike, saw some more action. Stopped, and did some witnessing. People were being loaded onto a police transport bus. We were on the sidewalk, where we'd been instructed to be. Tensions started to rise, for a reason that i couldn't see. The bike cops pushed us up the sidewalk with their bikes, much further than i thought was necessary. I was backing up with my hands raised. At one point i got pinned against a pole and was still being yelled at to back up. I moved back as best i could but i asked the white shirt nearby "is this really the best way to deal with this?" he responded to several officers near me with a phrase that was something like "OK, take HIM."

I was pushed onto the hood of a car, i went very limp to be seen as not resisting. I was cuffed by the arresting officer, who asked the white shirt "what am i arresting him for?" because he knew i'd done nothing wrong. The whiteshirt responded something like 'ya know. Unlawful assembly, disorderly conduct, whatever.' it was clear that i was only being arrested because i'd challenged this man's authority with my question.

My mask slipped off my face almost immediately. I was not given the option to adjust it. Most of the cops were not wearing masks.

I waited in a line for a long time to get into the paddy wagon. The AO was kind, resigned.

Waited in the paddy wagon a long time. Much longer than everyone else who'd been in the van with me. The thermostat was set to somewhere below 60 degrees F, because i could see it. I eventually was asked if i was OK. The officers outside my van knew that it was taking a long time. They turned it off when i said i was cold.

Finally the arresting officer (AO) showed up, we waited in a very long line at 1Police Plaza for a long time. Roughly half of the people (cops and protestors) were wearing masks. I still hadn't been able to adjust mine and was exposed. The AO asked if i was OK, and i told him my shoulder was hurting from being in the cuffs and he added another set of cuffs in the chain to allow me greater shoulder mobility. He was polite and somewhat apologetic. At one point another officer asked him what had happened with me. The AO responded "I stood too close to Chief _____." To me, this signaled that he recognized that there was no reason for this whole thing. While in this line, there was a man who'd been in the van with me who was being released, ticket in hand it seemed. His ordeal seemed to be limited to 2.5 hours for some reason, but he was a black man with a family, so i was glad he got to leave.

Finally got uncuffed, after i'd say 1.5 hours, maybe more. Went to the big communal cell where only half of the folks were wearing masks. Long wait.

Finger printing was done on a communal machine, never was sterilized as far as i could see. All sides of my hands, no sanitizer offered.

Few more hours before i got out. I signed some papers. I was never told what i had been charged with, never given a phone call, never been read my miranda rights. I understand now that this is common in these situations.

I don't believe that officer Yacopino was out of line. I believe that the chief in question very simply targeted me because i questioned his authority. I did so while retreating, while complying and with hands raised. I was not angry. Nonetheless he felt the need to have an underling arrest me for, well, whatever. Resulting in my loss of my ability to express my right to assembly and my right to free speech.

Jail support was an amazing sight on the way out. Community support people offered me water, food, hand sanitizer, and took my information for the lawyer's guild. The things they know that you do not get in a jail cell. If it hadn't been for covid, i'd probably have gotten a hug.

There were folks in lock up who were saying that under normal circumstance, a disorderly conduct ticket would have been a 45 minute situation, a desk ticket, and release. I was held for around 10 hours and they told me that this was specifically because we had been involved in a protest. I do not know if this is true, but i'm interested in finding out the specifics of the laws involved.

If i was a cop or heavy handed politician, i would totally understand this, but i'm not, and it definitely feels like a specific attempt to target people who are using their rights to assembly and free speech to bring attention to injustices. If this is the case, it does seem like a specific step to curtail first amendment rights, and if that's the case, it should be found unconstitutional.

On June 3rd, the police arrested hundreds of people who were all peacefully marching down from a gathering at Gracie Mansion.

I was one of them.

We were marching down the upper east side of Manhattan. We just passed CUNY Hunter College.

The police tried to run over protesters with their bikes from the back of the march—like cowards. The back of the march is usually filled with people who are first-time protesters, women, and disabled folks who can't keep up with experienced marchers.

It caused people to panic.

Those of us in the middle were caught in a stampede of panicking protesters and police on bikes.

I saw cops play out their domestic violence fantasies by shoving the faces of young women shorter than me into the asphalt and punching them until they got concussions.

I saw 4 cops punching down on 1 woman. She later passed out in the police caravan and they refused to give her water for an hour.

They broke another woman's arm so bad the bones were sticking out and they still didn't uncuff her and took 45 minutes to call an ambulance.

Many of the women that were arrested with me were really young. Gen Z.

One came out because her uncle was shot by the police and became permanently disabled because they mistook him for someone else.

Another woman's ex-boyfriend was shot and killed in Maryland. They all had experienced previous trauma from the police. They had legitimate reasons to protest.

The police officers took us to central booking in Brooklyn. They were incompetent.

We had conversations with some of them about our rights and they had arguments full of logical fallacies, lack of knowledge of the laws and rights of protesters.

One of them said because of your protest the resources that would otherwise go to stopping looters are being used on you.

One white shirt looked at a young black protester who looked like they were in their teens, and made a weird racist joke that even the black and Latino cops were taken aback.

He was like there's gold in the precinct wanna go check it out?

Arresting peaceful protesters is against our first amendment right to free speech. The curfew was unlawful. Tonight the police violated our rights. They beat us and bled us just to prove a point. We all have a duty to speak up and stop their violence. Please don't stay silent.

Dear City Council,

I urge you to continue the movement towards police abolition. Regarding the bill under current consideration, I humbly submit this question for debate:

Why do police only have to show their badge number upon request? Shouldn't the expectation be on them to display their badge? It's easy to imagine a scenario in which an officer assaults a person and has covered up their badge. The assault is - thankfully - captured on video. Where is the opportunity to ask for the badge number in the midst of this violence?

--

Avery Wolff
646-641-0876

At around 8:20pm, Thursday, June 4, 2020, at 108th street and Central Park West in Manhattan, around 100-150 people were protesting peacefully as they had been for hours prior. By this time I estimate it was about 10% black people. I and other white people were purposefully standing at the front of the pack. We were stopped by a row of about 30 police officers standing in the street.

Providing no warning or instructions, the police simultaneously rushed into the pack, breaking through the white people at the front of the line. The cops who rushed past me went to a single black man located in the middle of the pack who was standing there just like we were and arrested him. The arrest of this black man who was simply standing on the street peacefully involved 5 police officers tackling him, breaking his phone in the process. The officers did not give him verbal commands with which to comply so as to avoid being tackled by 5 individuals with guns and helmets. No other people were arrested, despite there being more than 100 white people whom the officers weaved through to arrest the black man.

Peaceful people should not be intimidated nor arrested by public servants with guns, tasers, pepper spray and helmets. Peaceful people should also not be tackled to the ground with no warning by these public servants. Black people should not be arrested for actions that white people do not get arrested for.

Thank you.

Joshua Jacobs

BRITE LEADERSHIP COALITION/ENY

President: Vincent Riggins Email: blc_eny@aol.com

Re: City Council hearings testimony

Date: Tue. June 9, 2020

Chair Public Safety

Honorable Donovan Richards

My name is Vincent Riggins President of “Brite Leadership Coalition/ENY” which I affectionately refer to as the capital of Brooklyn East New York. I would like to applaud you for being courageous and unintimidated by the NYPD leadership refusal to answer questions sincerely and truthfully. The absence of the newly appointed commission Dermot Shea project a disdain or a disrespect for this committee and the important work that you, your committee, and this council have engaged in under speaker Cory Johnson. You have been working diligently to improve civility and respect between NYPD and the safety for residents of NYC and more specifically Black and Brown residents in the communities in which we live.

My testimony will center on the proposed Intros and resolutions on the agenda for today and what I believe would be an improved intent. I am not naive enough to think that we can legislate away racism and biases without reimagining our educational system. There are two bills pending in the state legislature to include African American History in the mainstream curriculum S1135 sponsor Sen. Brian Benjamin 30th Dist. and A8756 sponsor Diana Richardson 43rd Dist. These bills when made law will serve to increase civility and respect between all ethnicities and the NYPD, that’s where public safety begins. #SBP, Safety Beyond Policing.

Following is my suggested amendments (in red) to the proposed Intros and resolutions on the calendar:

Int 536A Councilmember Rory Lancman “Chokehold”

- Chokehold- should be classified as a **felony if held longer than 5 seconds, or once a person alert physically or verbally to have a challenge with breathing.**

Int 724A Public Advocate J. Williams “Recording police”

- Permit filming in their official **and unofficial** capacity **with no exceptions. Any liability should include the officer, union, and city.**

Int 0760 Councilmember Vanessa Gibson Early intervention system of officer’s activity

- Increase mental health support and evaluation, to include desk duty and rescind gun permit during the process. Some consider this to be compatible with the states civil right law 50a.

Int 6267 Councilmember Alicka Ampry Samuel Reconsidered visible shield # and rank

- Should require visible shield numbers for all officers except for undercover officers in the performance of assignment.
- Refusal to display shield numbers when requested by residents and citizens will result in an immediate 30-day suspension. Refusal to display shield number and other requested identification by an elected official will result in a 90-day suspension.

It should also be noted that I am in full support of the following Resolution:

27A Fernando Cabrera Crime of strangulation 1st degree employment procedures A6144 and S6670.

6256 Carlina Rivera Eric Garner excessive use of force prevention act 2019H.R. 4408.

I would like to request special consideration to include this written statement as my submitted testimony.

I would also like to encourage you to continue the very important work to improve Public Safety for the residents of NYC and those that have historically been continually victimized by the NYPD, Black people.

Respectfully submitted June 14, 2020

Vincent Riggins

BLACK VOICES

For

BLACK JUSTICE

In support of the

ECRB LEGISLATION

BRITE LEADERSHIP COALITION/ENY- blc_eny@aol.com

DOMONSTRAET & LEGISTLATE

**Black on Black Violence?
Ask me about it
A Situation of Oppression
Generates A High
Level of Tension And A Great
Deal Of Frustration Which
Is Generally Discharged
Against Substitute Targets,
Instead of The Real Oppressor.**

The only reason to bring up so called crime in economically depressed communities, is an attempt to avoid or set a false narrative about the creation of America and the European thief, murder, rape and robbery of land and Black bodies. A desperate attempt to survive is antithetical to compare it only to crime.

BRITE LEADERSHIP COALITION/ENY

President Vincent Riggins Email: blc_eny@aol.com Phone: 917-754-2426

How to break the "spell" of #PDVV aka "**Political Domestic Violence Victim**".

"Prioritized Community Agenda" 5/15/2020vr

We have established our own "**Prioritized Community Agenda**" to present to anyone, (candidates, black or white, democratic, Socialist, republican etc.) who want our support and votes. In NYC Democrats have the numbers so maintain your registration as a democrat but vote own agenda.

In NYC Brite Leadership Coalition "PCA" top four agenda items are:

- 1. Education-** Inclusion of **African American History** in the mainstream curriculum. In NYS bill S1135 sponsor Sen. Brian Benjamin 30th Dist. The sponsor in the Assembly is Diana Richardson 43rd Dist. Bill A8756. Sen. Roxanne Persaud 19th Dist. Has signed on as a co-sponsor. No, the pandemic does not halt the campaign. In fact, it highlights the intentional withholding of funds that was allocated for the NYC school system.
- 2. ECRB- Elected Civilian Review Board-** We believe it to be the foundation for an immediate end to unjustifiable abuse and violence against citizens and residents of NYC by the NYPD. Stay tuned for "Black voices in support of the ECRB legislation petition drive".
- 3. Repeal of civil rights law 50a,** to help provide mental health support for civil servants and law enforcement. The ability to identify officers that may have a mental or other challenge is important to society.
- 4. Human trafficking-** We are strongly advocating that legislation is written and supported by all our elected official to make kidnapping for the benefit of body parts punishable by life in prison. And if mortuaries are harvesting body parts the family must be notified and compensated at 50% of any profit derived.
- 5. Housing-** Affordable homeownership for the working class and the renovation of NYCHA through the **DARP initiative**.

Our ability to have a positive impact in our city, civically, nutritional, educationally, housing justice and a solution to violence (all kind) are worthy of our advocacy. I'll reference education as a foundation for change and increase civility. The inclusion of true African American history in the mainstream curriculum will instill a sense of pride in Black youth and increase understanding between all ethnicities. The material benefit, fewer biases, reduced violence and higher educational trajectory for under resourced communities.

Education is good to the extent that it solves your problems politically, economically, civically and socially. An educational system that fosters the infusion of strong precarity in its students is akin to social genocide. If we do not educate our children to solve the problems that will confront them, then they are being mis-educated.

Log onto the state website www.nysenate.gov search bill S1135 Vote “Yes” in support of the bill. Visit us on the web: blcenyc.com



To volunteer for “Black voices in support of the ECRB legislation petition drive”.

Call: 917-754-2426

ECRB: Email stoppoliceviolenceenyc@gmail.com

Phone: 212-222-0633

Safety

BEYOND

POLICING

#NONEWNYPD | MORE INFO AT SAFETYBEYONDPOLICING.COM

TUESDAY JUNE 9TH 10 AM

A RECORD OF POLICE BRUTALITY

INSTANCES OCCURED

MAY 29TH, 2020

MAY 31ST, 2020

MAY 29TH, 2020

Location: The Barclays Centre

620 Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11217

Time: Roughly 8 pm

MAY 31ST, 2020

I was attending a peaceful protest at the Barclays Center when the cops began circling us. We were asked to move, and the crowd was indeed moving, as quickly as we could given the mass of people. At one moment we paused because we were shoulder to shoulder, back to back, there was really no possible way to move. It was at that moment that an officer began screaming at us to move. We responded "We can't, there's no room." I had my hands held up in front of me. A police officer lifted his bike and used it as a battering ram against my body as I was saying "I can't move", and with no room to move backwards I simply took the hit directly and fully.

A black woman was shoved into the crowd and being hit by police. The police officers continued to beat her as she struggled to help her friend who had been pepper sprayed stand up, so I slid my body in between her and the batons hitting her.

I was then yanked away and thrown to the pavement and beaten by 2 other cops until someone said "She's not resisting, just cuff her".

LOCATION: ?? Lower East Side

Time: Roughly 8 pm

Several officers were brutalizing a young black boy. They grabbed him from the crowd and threw him to the pavement, there were roughly 8 officers on one man. They were all armed, the boy was not. Several of us marched up demanding he be let go. One officer walked up to me while I was several feet away still from the action and shoved me so hard I went straight into the pavement. We followed the police chanting "Let him go", and then another officer approached me and with his baton held sideways used it to ram my body, sending me flying hard into a sign pole, knocking my head pretty badly.

828 Broadway, New York, NY 10003

Time: Roughly 10:30 pm

We were kneeling.

We were told to move.

I was standing quietly with my hands above my head holding a sign.

A police officer rammed me so hard with his baton to my ribs it knocked the wind out of me.

I was then quite literally picked up by (him or another officer, unsure, it all happened really fast), and thrown behind him into a group of 3 or so officers. More baton beating. Shoved facefirst into a barricade and handcuffed.

Hello, my name is Katherine Lasley and I am a resident of Brooklyn, NY.

First, I want to thank the council for allowing this dialogue. I am writing today to address incidents of unprovoked police violence that occurred on Thursday, June 4th, 2020 in the Bronx during a peaceful demonstration. After parking on 148th and Bergen Avenue around 6:00 PM, I noticed multiple officers approaching vehicles with their personal cell phones, photographing license plates. They came up to me, put their phone in my face, snapped a shot of my tag, all before I had even left the car. I saw them pestering other civilians and did not stop until legal observers arrived and questioned them about their obscured badge numbers.

We first met up at the Hub around 6:30 pm. Volunteers were present distributing safety materials such as water, goggles, hand sanitizer, and masks. We began marching around 7:15 or so. We marched through several streets, chanting and getting cheered on by drivers and neighbors alike. Cars honked, we clapped and some people sang. This protest was entirely peaceful.

As we headed down Brooke Avenue around 8 pm, we approached a wall of police armor and bicycles. All of the bicycle cops dawned militant style riot gear, however none with visible identification. They bore shields, batons, pepper spray, guns, and plenty of protection from us, even though we were only chanting. No more than a few minutes past curfew, another army of officers came creeping into the back, therefore boxing us in. The road and sidewalk were blocked off by police bicycles. We chanted "Let us go!" regardless, hoping they would at least give us the option to leave. There was nowhere to go even if we wanted to obey curfew. Before we knew it, we were surrounded by more, fully armed officers on every single side, including helicopters. The police kept taunting us with pre-recorded messages telling us to "disperse," but made it impossible to do so.

All of a sudden, a number of officers charged in from the back, pushing all the people in the crowd together with nowhere to spread out. The police in the frontline charged at us. Hundreds of bodies were corralled onto one another, creating a stampede. Protestors were violently shoved into a merciless sea of struggling bodies, one on top of the other, with nowhere to escape. I was pushed up against the unforgiving metal of a nearby vehicle, for what felt like minutes, screaming that I could not breathe. I could not see anything in that moment except other bodies pushing each other desperate to escape, but there was no escape. The cops were lashing out. They used batons, pepper spray, and physical force to demoralize us. I genuinely feared I was going to die from getting crushed. As a concerned protestor noticed I was trapped and unable to breathe, they attempted to pull me out from the side of the car, but a bicycle cop yelled, "DON'T TOUCH THAT FUCKING CAR!" They pulled me out anyway regardless of the brute unreasonable demands to continue suffocating.

I could not stand up straight for several minutes, shaking uncontrollably, trying to come back to my senses. My breathing was heavily labored and I felt dizzy. When I finally came to, I witnessed the police, who had just previously yelled to not touch the car that was suffocating

me, now on top of it in an egregious display of unprovoked violence, senselessly beating people to the ground and spraying us all with mace. I have video evidence of them beating people whom you can audibly hear saying, "We can't leave! We're trying to get out!" as the rain of batons come down on skulls, eyes, hands, and any other visible body part. I got sprayed multiple times. I saw the police tearing goggles off the faces of protestors to make sure they could get their eyes. I saw a man bleeding out of his head on the ground calling for help, as police continued to charge. Moments later, trying to collect myself, an officer snatched me up and tied my wrists in zip tie handcuffs. They did this to every single person present at the scene, including minors and essential workers, whom the curfew was not supposed to apply to. All of this for breaking curfew.

They made us sit on our knees in the middle of the street like a bunch of war criminals for up to an hour. My hands turned purple from the plastic zipties, and my left hand is still numb. Others cried for help as they also lost feeling in their extremities. Another suffered a seizure and the police would not allow medics in to help the individual. Another had to be rolled out on a gurney with a bleeding head from baton injuries. We waited on the ground until they eventually took us to jail. It was wild sitting in a holding cell with 2 doctors (wearing scrubs) who have had to wear garbage bags for protection amidst a pandemic, and yet these riot police are out here adorned with expensive weaponry and military gear to strike against its citizens. I am left wondering why.

After sustaining multiple injuries along my ribs and chest, I had to visit a doctor to make sure it was not internal bleeding. I have a doctor's note detailing injuries sustained as well as video evidence of police abuse. If you desire to inquire further, please contact me at my email: ktlasley@gmail.com. What I witnessed that evening was a series of crimes against humanity. Of course what happened to me and everyone else that night was terrible, but this is a continuous trauma for people of color, and it is unacceptable. Defund the police. Please, I urge you, to reconsider funding for housing, education, and health. Please also consider holding those officers accountable for their disgraceful behavior. Police reform is obviously not enough, and something must change now.

Sincerely,
Katherine Lasley

Testimony of Caeli Smith
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Caeli Smith. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians

(EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

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Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

> Statement: I have a video, and would be happy to discuss this in more detail, by phone or in person. Just before 9am on Saturday, May 16, a significant number of police cars and officers descended upon the sidewalk in front of my apartment to effectuate an arrest.

>

> The black man being arrested stood, perfectly still, with his arms at his side as at least 10 officers surrounded him. The police had tasered the man and I could see twirled thread from the taser off of his chest. He did not appear armed. He did not appear to be resisting arrest or running away. He seemed scared and frozen in place. He said "Why did you taser me?" several times.

>

> To my view from above, a single officer could have easily handcuffed him to effectuate an arrest. Given the rampant COVID-19 pandemic, that would have been 1) safer from a health perspective, 2) appropriate from a force perspective. Instead, I saw at least ten officers descend upon this man in a disorganized scrum, pulling him immediately to the ground, jumping on him and each other and hitting him repeatedly. One officer joined the scene swinging a baton, trying to hit the man, but from my vantage point accidentally hit fellow officers. The officers repeatedly shouted "stop resisting", seemingly just as an excuse for the excessive use of force-- the man was in no way resisting.

>

> It was humiliating for the man. Completely inappropriate for both him and the multiple officers in light of social distancing recommendations and truly scarring for me to witness from above. Bystanders on the street shouted at the officers that the number of officers on this man was excessive. I am ashamed that I did not call from above "de-escalate" or "this man is not resisting" before he was tackled. The thought came to my mind and has been really painful to hold onto in light of recent protests.

>

> Please train officers to use as little force as possible when effectuating arrests. It seems from this example that there is little protocol. The officers did not shout "we are arresting you" or "put your hands behind your band" for handcuffs. They simply jumped on him like an animal. It was wrong.

>

>

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> New York, NY 10036-8704

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Testimony of Emily Caspari
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Emily Caspari and I am a resident of Ridgewood, Queens. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

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Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City. Now.

Testimony of Kyle Frink
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Kyle Frink. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

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Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

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I want a peer led response to mental health crisis because my partner who I live with has mental health disorders AND has experienced police trauma. She should never have to undergo further trauma while in a moment of mental health crisis. Individuals with mental health illnesses and disorders will benefit and be safer with a peer led response that can use trauma informed care to support people in crisis and listen to their needs.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

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Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY

Justice in Every Borough.

TESTIMONY

New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety

Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

June 10, 2020

The Legal Aid Society
199 Water Street
New York, NY 10038

Contact: Tina Luongo
Attorney-in-Charge, Criminal Practice
JMLuongo@legal-aid.org
(212) 577-3583

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Justine M. Luongo, Attorney in Charge of the Legal Aid Society Criminal Defense Practice. We submit this testimony on behalf of the Legal Aid Society and thank Chairperson Donovan J. Richards and the City Council members serving on the committee. We support the efforts of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC) to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting the responses from law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Substantial resources must be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises. Specifically, we support the re-allocation of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams. We urge you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

The Legal Aid Society supports the development of mental health teams that are peer driven and available 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. These teams should be the first responders to those experiencing a mental health crisis.

The Criminal Defense Practice of the Legal Aid Society is the largest single public defender organization in the City of New York.

As such, we represent the broad cross section of individuals who are arrested and become ensnared in the morass of the criminal justice system.

This, of course, includes a great many persons who live with mental illness.

In fact, as crime in New York City has decreased substantially in the last few decades, we have seen that a greater and greater share of the arrests in this city have involved persons who are living with mental illness. In short, those living with mental illness represent a larger and increasing share of the smaller pool of arrested persons.

This evolution has not been accompanied by any meaningful progress in how our city deals with mental health calls.

New York City continues to deal with 911 calls involving people in mental health crisis as calls for NYPD to confront a potential criminal. Instead we should be taking advantage of mental health experts, clinicians and peers trained to handle and de-escalate a variety of issues in ways that are both more humane and more

effective than arresting a person in psychiatric distress. We need to develop a more therapeutic and non-punitive approach that meets the immediate medical, clinical and psychiatric needs of those in our community.

The police are not mental health professionals and because of this, tragedies have occurred. Training officers on how to respond in mental health crises has not solved the problem. Since the CIT training program began in New York City in 2015, there have been at least 17 individuals experiencing mental health crises who were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead.

The health care emergency response for those experiencing mental health crises must be directed by peer advocates and clinical professionals such as those in the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and not the NYPD. Therefore, we urge you to examine the proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Testimony of Michael Andersson,
Supporter of CCITNYC,

Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

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Public Safety Commission
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Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Michael Andersson. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

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Why this issue is important to me:

This issue is very important to me as I have been directly impacted by two mental health conditions (bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder) for 23 years, and my family and I have had to interact with the criminal justice system as a result of it.

The first responders who have responded to our 911 calls were ill-equipped to de-escalate the situation and only made matters worse. Had a peer-led response team of individuals who knew what it is like to be in a mental health crisis been there to handle the situation, it would have lowered the anxiety my family and I were experiencing.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

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Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

**Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York Before the
New York City Council Committee on Public Safety Regarding Police Brutality in New
York City**

June 9th, 2020

Good Morning. My name is Maryam Mohammed-Miller and I am the Government Relations Manager at Planned Parenthood of Greater New York (PPGNY). I would like to thank Council Member Donovan Richards, the Chair of the Public Safety Committee, for holding this important hearing to address the police brutality, anti-Black violence, and white supremacist terror—at the hand of individuals who have sworn to protect and serve—that plague Black and Brown communities.

For over 100 years, Planned Parenthood has been a trusted provider of sexual and reproductive health care and education programs for communities throughout New York State. In 2019, our New York City health centers conducted over 104,000 patient visits, providing care regardless of patients' immigration status, identity or ability to pay for services. Our education programs also engaged over 19,000 people—including 1,800 youth. Project Street Beat, through their offices and mobile health center, conducted over 20,000 encounters with marginalized community members. And, in 2019, we enrolled over 6,300 people in health insurance programs.

At PPGNY, we provide care to all individuals who come through our doors regardless of their race, age, economic status, gender identity, or sexual orientation. We recognize that many of our patients come from marginalized communities that not only have been historically barred from accessing quality health care, but are often the target for police violence. This is a reproductive justice issue and illustrates the inability for Black people to care for themselves and their families in safe communities free of violence. Police violence derives from a legacy of white supremacy in this country that has deliberately and systematically denied the humanity of Black lives.

PPGNY strongly supports the package of legislation aimed at bringing much-needed reform to our criminal justice system and holding police officers accountable for the brutality they have inflicted on Black communities. For too long, state-sanctioned violence has existed in this country, and this violence is more visible than ever because it is recorded and shared in the

media. We have seen the images of Black people suffering under police violence for simply existing. Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, and Sandra Bland are just some contemporary examples of Black people dying during or shortly after police interactions with little being done to punish officers for causing their deaths. Most recently, the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor have brought about renewed scrutiny of police violence and have sparked nationwide protests calling on government leaders to arrest officers and reform police departments.

There are clear disparities in the use of excessive and deadly force that disproportionately impacts Black and Brown people. In the United States, Black people are two and half times more likely than white people to be killed by the police¹. In 2019, Black people represented 24% of all police killings even though they represent just 13% of the U.S. population². We have also seen the ways in which these disparities have manifested during the COVID-19 crisis. In New York City, police data revealed that Black and Brown people made up 90% of arrests and 82% of summonses for COVID-19 related offences in May³. We also saw police violently enforce social distancing measures in Black and Brown communities while simultaneously providing masks to individuals in more affluent areas. Even in the peaceful protests in response to the death of George Floyd, a man killed by an officer who used excessive force, we have seen officers, including NYPD, double down in their abusive behavior and violently beat and arrest protesters calling for police abuse to end⁴.

There is a deep disconnect in the ways in which the police engage with Black people and little is being done to hold them accountable. Barriers to police accountability are similar in major cities throughout the country and include shortcomings in recruitment and training, the unwillingness of fellow officers to call out their colleagues when they commit violations, and limited data collected that detail trends in use of force and abuse of power⁵. There is also limited evidence, when data is available, that administrators or prosecutors are willing to use that information to deter abuse⁶. And though many cities in recent years have acknowledged that reforms need to be made in their police departments, there is hesitancy to deal with officers who commit abuse until

¹ Roper, W., & Richter, F. (2020, June 02). Infographic: Black Americans 2.5X More Likely Than Whites to Be Killed By Police. Retrieved June 05, 2020, from

<https://www.statista.com/chart/21872/map-of-police-violence-against-black-americans/>

² Ibid.

³ Southall, A. (2020, May 13). N.Y.C. Commissioner Denies Racial Bias in Social Distancing Policing. Retrieved June 05, 2020, from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/13/nyregion/nypd-social-distancing-race-coronavirus.html>

⁴ N.Y.C. Protests Turn Violent. (2020, May 31). Retrieved June 06, 2020, from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/nyregion/nyc-protests-george-floyd.html>

⁵ Shielded from Justice: Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States. (n.d.). Retrieved June 06, 2020, from <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/police/uspo14.htm>

⁶ Ibid.

a high-profile case arises and reveals long-standing tolerance of abusive behaviors by police⁷. As evidence of police brutality continues to be readily available, it will become more difficult for government officials not to reform our police departments. That is why it is more important than ever that the New York City Council act now by passing this important package of legislation that ensures officers are held accountable for their actions.

PPGNY supports Intro No. 536-A, sponsored by Council Member Lancman, that would criminalize the use of a chokehold by an individual in a manner that restricts the flow of air or blood by compressing the windpipe, diaphragm, or the carotid arteries in the course of effecting or attempting to effect an arrest. Though the use of chokeholds by police were banned by the NYPD over 20 years ago⁸, it is still a tactic used by officers when making arrests. In 2014, we saw Eric Garner die after being put in a chokehold by an officer who continued to serve as an NYPD officer for 5 years before finally being fired last fall. This bill would ensure future offences will lead to speedy and just punishment for officers.

We also support Intro No. 0721-2018, sponsored by Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. This bill would codify an individual's right to record NYPD officers while on duty and allow those individuals to maintain custody of the recording. If their rights are violated, the individual has the right to sue. The bill would also require the NYPD Commissioner to provide periodic reporting on the number of arrests and criminal and civil summonses given to individuals who were recording police activity. Recordings of police activity have been an integral part of holding police officers accountable when they are using excessive force and we must protect the individuals capturing these important images.

We support **Intro No. 0760-2018 sponsored by Council Member Vanessa Gibson** that would create a centralized system to capture officer records including civil actions, claims, complaints, and investigations alleging improper police conduct. The bill would streamline interdepartmental information sharing and can help identify officers who have repeatedly committed offences and are in need of additional training and monitoring⁹.

Intro No. T2020-6267, sponsored by Council Member Ampry-Samuel would require uniformed officers to make their badge number or ranking visible. Individuals are also allowed to take legal action if it is determined that when they requested an officer to make their badge number and ranking visible, the officer did not comply. We support this measure which will ensure

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Fisher, I. (1993, November 24). Kelly Bans Chokeholds By Officers. Retrieved June 06, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/11/24/nyregion/kelly-bans-choke-holds-by-officers.html>

⁹ (n.d.). Retrieved June 06, 2020, from <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3474184>

information to identify officers is accessible in the case an individual wants to file a complaint with the NYPD.

The New York City Council must act now to ensure that violence at the hands of the police ends. These bills are a step in the right direction. The devastating images of individuals being harmed by the police are evidence enough there must be a serious restructuring of our police department that ensures all New Yorkers are safe. We can not sit idly by and wait for the next crisis to arise before we act. We thank the Council for introducing this important legislation and look forward to working with you to ensure a fairer and just city for all. Thank you.

###

Planned Parenthood of Greater New York (PPGNY) is a leading provider, educator, and advocate of sexual and reproductive health care in New York State. PPGNY offers a wide range of services at its 30 locations across 65% of NYS - including gynecological care; birth control; cancer screenings; pregnancy testing; STI testing and treatment; HIV prevention, testing, and counseling; transgender hormone therapy; and vasectomy. PPGNY is also proud to provide abortion services to anyone who needs compassionate, non-judgmental care. PPGNY is a trusted source of medically-accurate, evidence-based information that allows people to make informed decisions about their health and future. As a voice for reproductive freedom, PPGNY supports legislation and policies that ensure all New Yorkers have access to the full range of reproductive health services and education.

It has been years now since Eric Garner died saying, "I can't breathe". No one can continue to say that chokeholds are safe after we all witnessed that horrific death. It is an abdication of your responsibility to serve this city on city council for you to allow police to continue to use chokeholds to restrain people during an arrest when they have proven that they lack the judgment and discretion to exercise this form of lethal violence responsibly. We cannot afford to lose another life this way.

Testimony of Dr. Sahar Khoshakhlagh
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Dr. Sahar Khoshakhlagh. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

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CCITNYC supports redirection of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with "peers" (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Reason being that I was a victim of an accidental shooting by the NYPD on the evening of September 14, 2013 in Times Square. Thankfully the bullets that struck my backside by the NYPD, only injured me with a graze. Two officers fired repeatedly at a man who was exhibiting unstable behavior and had been acting erratically for some time, throwing himself in the middle of traffic and behaving in a way that anyone dealing with such behavior would recognize as inwardly focused and internally driven. The recorded footage showed that the man was never threatening anyone.

I am writing this not only because the police shot me, but because this incident highlights a serious dilemma that the NYPD should make a priority to address. As a mental health practitioner, we focus on the importance of remaining calm, listening closely, and ensuring that our own facial expressions and body posture convey assurance and security rather than threat. Everything we do during a crisis matters. You cannot put out fire with more fire.

Thus, even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what CCITNYC has been documenting for years when the NYPD responded to people in emotional distress. Police are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

- Mario Ocasio, Age 51– June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed
- Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed
- Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed
- Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed
- Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed
- Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed
- Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed
- James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed
- Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed
- Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed
- Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded
- Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded
- Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed
- Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Thank you,
Sahar Khoshakhlagh, PsyD, LMFT

BRITE LEADERSHIP COALITION/ENY

President: Vincent Riggins Email: blc_eny@aol.com

Re: City Council hearings testimony

Date: Tue. June 9, 2020

Chair Public Safety

Honorable Donovan Richards

My name is Vincent Riggins President of “Brite Leadership Coalition/ENY” which I affectionately refer to as the capital of Brooklyn East New York. I would like to applaud you for being courageous and unintimidated by the NYPD leadership refusal to answer questions sincerely and truthfully. The absence of the newly appointed commission Dermot Shea project a disdain or a disrespect for this committee and the important work that you, your committee, and this council have engaged in under speaker Cory Johnson. You have been working diligently to improve civility and respect between NYPD and the safety for residents of NYC and more specifically Black and Brown residents in the communities in which we live.

My testimony will center on the proposed Intros and resolutions on the agenda for today and what I believe would be an improved intent. I am not naive enough to think that we can legislate away racism and biases without reimagining our educational system. There are two bills pending in the state legislature to include African American History in the mainstream curriculum S1135 sponsor Sen. Brian Benjamin 30th Dist. and A8756 sponsor Diana Richardson 43rd Dist. These bills when made law will serve to increase civility and respect between all ethnicities and the NYPD, that’s where public safety begins. #SBP, Safety Beyond Policing.

Following is my suggested amendments (in red) to the proposed Intros and resolutions on the calendar:

Int 536A Councilmember Rory Lancman “Chokehold”

- Chokehold- should be classified as a **felony if held longer than 5 seconds, or once a person alert physically or verbally to have a challenge with breathing.**

Int 724A Public Advocate J. Williams “Recording police”

- Permit filming in their official **and unofficial** capacity **with no exceptions. Any liability should include the officer, union, and city.**

Int 0760 Councilmember Vanessa Gibson Early intervention system of officer’s activity

- Increase mental health support and evaluation, to include desk duty and rescind gun permit during the process. Some consider this to be compatible with the states civil right law 50a.

Int 6267 Councilmember Alicka Ampry Samuel Reconsidered visible shield # and rank

- Should require visible shield numbers for all officers except for undercover officers in the performance of assignment.
- Refusal to display shield numbers when requested by residents and citizens will result in an immediate 30-day suspension. Refusal to display shield number and other requested identification by an elected official will result in a 90-day suspension.

It should also be noted that I am in full support of the following Resolution:

27A Fernando Cabrera Crime of strangulation 1st degree employment procedures A6144 and S6670.

6256 Carlina Rivera Eric Garner excessive use of force prevention act 2019H.R. 4408.

I would like to request special consideration to include this written statement as my submitted testimony.

I would also like to encourage you to continue the very important work to improve Public Safety for the residents of NYC and those that have historically been continually victimized by the NYPD, Black people.

Respectfully submitted June 14, 2020

Vincent Riggins

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission

June 9, 2020

Testimony of P. Jenny Marashi, Esq.

Steering Committee Member, CCITNYC, Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform Responses to Mental Health Crises

My name is Jenny Marashi. I am a lawyer with a civil rights practice in the Bronx. I am here because I represent victims of police misconduct. Thank you for hearing my testimony in support of the CCIT-NYC pilot project proposal. The proposal was created over the period of two years. It was created with the input of a steering committee of over a dozen organizations and people, each serving communities impacted by the current NYPD response to mental health issues. The massive energy, effort, and time of those involved in creating the proposal, alone, would have cost the City over three million dollars! And yet, just three million dollars is the entire cost per year to implement this project that provides 24/7 access to mental health teams in two of the most saturated precincts.

Three million dollars is also the approximate amount the City of New York has paid in litigations brought by me in representing my clients against the NYPD. It is not because of any strength or weakness in my or opposing counsel's litigation strategy, or the City's hard stance and no pay position on some civil rights cases. It is because Officers, in a majority of cases, are called to do something they have not been properly trained to do. About one third of my cases involve NYPD interactions with people undergoing a mental health crisis. The NYPD policy for interacting with the mentally ill is so fundamentally flawed, it leads to devastating outcomes. While I anticipated my heartbreak over hearing my clients' experiences, something I had not anticipated was just how sad I was becoming taking money from New York City for these preventable cases. I wanted to find a solution to end the tragedy occurring after NYPD responses. I wanted to actually help our City end its cycle of bleeding victims and money, not just hold a cup under the leak.

That is why I got involved in the work of CCIT-NYC. I strongly believe this proposal is a solution for redirecting funds to a place where experts can take on this public health issue.

To call in a police force while someone is undergoing a mental health crisis is shocking, reckless, and deliberately indifferent. The City of New York, and its Officers will continue to be sued and people will continue to be arrested, get into a prison system ill equipped with mental health care, denied medical treatment, and even killed. Sixteen people in the past four years alone. Thousands of others have been falsely arrested and beaten to a pulp. Dozens have committed suicide in precincts and prisons. I know this, because my colleagues and I have represented them. Even sitting across from my adversaries, from Corporation Counsel to the Comptroller's Bureau of Law

and Adjustment, we have had conversations, wondering, “Why isn’t the City doing something about NYPD’s mental health response?” Judges in federal and state courts have questioned this practice numerous times, one even agreeing that it sounds unconstitutional, but, here we still are.

You all actually have the power to make the change that is needed here.

The CCIT-NYC proposal rightfully takes the responsibility away from the NYPD, and places it within the mental health community. In turn it serves all New Yorkers. Including our young officers who are not mental health professionals. The CCIT-NYC proposal has been created by a dozen experts with input from about eighty organizations -each with members who live and work in our communities. This proposal will provide those undergoing a mental health crisis with a two person team to de-escalate and to administer professional health care and peer support.

We have entered a new era. New York City has always been a leader in the US. Let’s get this CCIT-NYC project implemented! For three million dollars a year, we can run a promising pilot that has the oversight and support of its members and a robust and well represented steering committee. Let’s let mental health professionals respond to mental health issues! Let’s use this opportunity to rebuild this City!

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/

P. Jenny Marashi, Esq.



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LOU MATARAZZO
Legislative Director

Committee on Public Safety
New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

June 12, 2020

Chairman Richards & Members of the Committee on Public Safety:

My name is Paul DiGiacomo. I am the President of the Detectives' Endowment Association ("DEA"). I have the great privilege of representing more than 19,000 active and retired New York City Police Detectives. Just a few short weeks ago, I had the opportunity to address the Council's Committee on Civil Service & Labor with regard to a proposal to provide health benefits to the surviving families of City workers who died from COVID-19 illnesses which were contracted in the line of duty. The issue was and continues to be of particular significance to the DEA, as six (6) of our members have already died from COVID-19. And while that proposal sits in Committee, leaving families of people who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty without healthcare coverage in the middle of a global pandemic, I am dumbfounded that the Council is prepared to rush to enact the proposals considered at the June 9, 2020 hearing of the Committee without any meaningful dialogue with law enforcement unions or law enforcement professionals.

Just as concerning are calls to "abolish" and "defund" the police, to bust police unions, and to disavow and return "tainted" political contributions from law enforcement union political action committees that seem to dominate the public discourse over the past few weeks. This rhetoric is antithetical to the democratic process and democratic values, and is intended to undermine and delegitimize police and their unions. As you consider this legislation, I offer the following perspectives of the DEA:

Introduction 536-A

Introduction 536-A would make it a misdemeanor for any person to use a chokehold or other similar unlawful method of restraint to effect an arrest. The New York State legislature has passed, and the Governor has signed, Assembly Bill A.6144/Senate Bill S.6670B, criminalizing the use of chokeholds and similar restraints by Police Officers and Peace Officers. This State law will provide



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Legislative Director



greater penalty than is proposed by Int. 536-A, rendering it redundant and moot. Beyond that, however, the proposal is not sound policy.

The New York State Penal Law currently authorizes the use of physical force, including in some circumstances the use of deadly force, by a Police or Peace Officer when making an arrest or in preventing an escape of a person from custody. The law is a recognition of the inherently dangerous nature of a Police Officer's job. A Police Officer should not be prevented from defending himself or herself and be subject to criminal liability while making an arrest if the subject resists and threatens harm to the Officer. This authorization to use physical force, however, is not unlimited nor a license to use it indiscriminately. A "reasonableness" standard applies in all circumstances, and if the use of force is not reasonable, a Police Officer cannot assert a defense of justification under the Penal Law.

Chokeholds are prohibited under the NYPD Patrol Guide. NYPD training instructs Police Officers on other methods of restraint. Criminalizing this conduct, notwithstanding the Penal Law's authorization of deadly physical force by a Police Officer in certain circumstances, however, will only serve to cast doubt — potentially fatal doubt — in the mind of an Officer faced with a split-second decision to use justifiable physical force. As drafted, Int. 536-A establishes a strict liability standard for use of a chokehold or other unlawful restraint. It would not matter whether an Officer intended to apply a chokehold or unlawful restraint, nor would it matter whether the subject suffered any injury.

Introduction 721-A

Introduction 721-A would codify the right to record Police or Peace Officers in their official capacities and provides a private right of action for infringement of the same. As the summary of this bill acknowledges, it is lawful to record police activity in public. The right to record is constitutionally protected. Body-worn cameras are prolific. While recording police activity is permissible, interference with police activity is not. It is a dangerous situation for everyone — Officer, person in custody, and onlookers — when an onlooker attempts to stand in close proximity to Officers making an arrest. We are concerned that this proposal would only encourage interference with police activity, whether intentional or inadvertent. Additionally, we are concerned that a private right of action will



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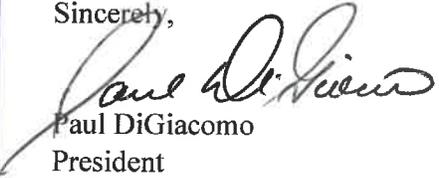
encourage nuisance lawsuits that will unnecessarily consume precious time and personnel to defend and litigate.

Preconsidered Introduction 6267

Preconsidered Introduction 6267 would require the shield number or rank designation of a uniformed Officer to be visible and would provide penalties for the failure to comply with requests to make the same visible. The bill would establish a private right of action to bring a suit and authorizes punitive damages for violations of the requirement. The NYPD Patrol Guide requires that an Officer's shield number be visible. Disciplinary sanction is available for violations of the procedure as appropriate. This proposal instead unnecessarily creates significant potential liability that is disproportionate to the misconduct. It will encourage frivolous litigation and consume precious Department resources.

For these reasons, the DEA recommends disapproval of Introductions 536-A and 721-A and Preconsidered Introduction 6267. In addition to the concerns I have shared about the legislation, however, I am also gravely concerned about recently released crime statistics from the week of June 1, 2020. These statistics show that violent crimes in New York City have increased significantly: we saw 13 murders last week, compared to five during the same week of the year prior; and we saw 40 shootings (which is the highest since 2015) as compared to 24 during the same week last year in 2019. Those are incredibly troubling numbers. As the tenor of the anti-police sentiment and the calls for abolishing and defunding the police grow, I urge you consider those increases. And I urge you to think about the progress that has been made in making New York City the safest big city in America. We cannot afford to lose that distinction.

Sincerely,


Paul DiGiacomo
President



I spent 9 hours in this city council meeting, and am sending my written testimony now. I want to say, that the PUBLIC should always get to speak first. The self aggrandizing, empty speeches of most of the Council, and the BOLD FACED LIES from the NYPD took 5 full hours, while they hymned and hawed over minor police slaps on the wrist, like when a chokehold is permissible, cops covering their badges, or what happens "when a cop uses a racial slur". A joke, both in the seriousness of these particular issues over the systemic issues, and because every single person present knows that the NYPD does not give a damn about legislation, that they do as they so please. On top of this, we heard them lie to us about the conditions in detainment and the lack of PPE, to people WHO HAD SPENT HOURS IN DETAINMENT. A shameful, disgusting bit of mass gas lighting. Moreover, the absence of the Mayor, of Commissioner Shea, and the absence of ALL NYPD for the public testimonials speaks volumes about this. An absolute mockery of this city and its public. I am disgusted beyond anything I could every convey.

Not that it will be read or taken into account, but here is my testimony.

On Friday, May 29th I attended a protest that began at Barclays Center. We peacefully marched toward Bed-Stuy, when NYPD blocked off the street. Officers seemed to be making arrests. As I was standing in the road, I was bashed in the head by an officer with a shield. I have video of this moment, though not what ensued. 50 or so officers formed a line across the road, and although there were hundreds of people behind us, they moved forward in formation and violently hit us back with their shields. There was no way to retreat. All 50 or so officers were using their batons, in a thrusting motion, aimed at our stomach level. At one point I was nearly pushed 10 feet down into a stairwell. The officers attacking saw that I was being pushed over, heard me beg them not to, and continued. Protesters were literally pushed together like sardines. NYPD wore no facemasks. We were pepper sprayed, and while my friend was leaning against a wall, blinded by mace, a male officer ran up and cracked her rib with a baton. Officers again lined up 10 feet from us, and after a few minutes, they again ran at us without warning, full speed, swinging batons. I still cannot believe that this was real life. Unfortunately, this was just the first of many assaults I have experienced this week. I have not damaged any property, I have not broken any laws, I have not hurt anyone or done anything besides peacefully occupy the streets of my city.

This has been the most horrific week of my life. The events I experienced were not the acts of a few "bad cops", but of an over armed, poorly trained militia, funded by our taxes, to the tune of 6 BILLION dollars. Over and over, while marching in many ORDERLY, PEACEFUL protests, I have seen NYPD take a calm crowd and violently escalate the situation using intimidation, pepper spray, batons, shields and bicycles to beat unarmed citizens, simply for occupying our own streets. I have administered first aid to a man who was bleeding from multiple wounds after being bludgeoned and thrown against the wall and pavement. I have sheltered in the lobby of a building with 20 other New Yorkers after our peaceful protest was violently dispersed by NYPD. I

personally saw those squad cars drive into protesters. Over 40 people in my community were arrested in ONE NIGHT, two were hospitalized . I have video of friends being kettled and beaten in the head repeatedly, while other officers blocked any means of escape.

The NYPD has no place in our city. They cannot alleviate the social problems that make up the greater part of their job. They can only respond with force. This force does not answer to anyone but the police union itself. I will never again feel safe on the streets of New York City while this violent gang is loose on the public.

I have also compiled testimonials from friends who could not be here today.

-Melanie Burrel

Tuesday, June 2nd

14th and 5th Ave 10 PM

I was marching up 14th St in a group of about 100 orderly protesters when a group of maybe 100 NYPD officers blocked our path. We attempted to continue marching down 5th avenue, when about 20 NYPD officers charged into our march without warning and began making arrests, beating protesters severely with batons. I witnessed multiple extremely violent arrests. The crowd dispersed in panic, and I saw the cops pursuing terrified protesters for blocks. Eventually I was tackled to the ground, pinned face down as they continued to beat me, although i was fully restrained and not fighting back. I was held down by four officers who did not state why I was being placed under arrest. They put me in BOTH handcuffs and zip ties, so tightly that it left an open wound on my wrist. In the course of arrest, my pants were ripped and my butt was exposed. The four officers, all male discussed my ass and laughed. None of them were wearing masks. They attempted to search me but reluctantly complied when I requested a female officer, who searched me in a very violating manner. I was thrown into a van and held for about 30 minutes, but I was eventually let go with a ticket because they wanted to make room for more protesters. My handcuffs and zip ties had been applied so tightly and poorly that it took all four officers to remove them, eventually sawing the zip tie off with a pocket knife. I heard them say "watch out, you'll fuck her up" as they cut at my restraints. I was left with multiple injuries and an extremely large and painful bruise on the back of my leg which I have a picture of that i would like to submit.

-This is an account from a friend who wished to remain anonymous due to fear of retribution

Sunday May 31st

Union square, 12:30 AM

We were gathered on the side of the street in a group , NYPD had dispersed our march but protesters were grouped on the sidewalk, attempting to engage in peaceful discussion with the officers who were present. NYPD suddenly charged into the crowd without warning, swinging batons, with no dispersal order. I was shouting for police to stop hitting fellow protesters. I was grabbed by three Policemen, thrown to the ground

and pinned. (on a side note, this speaker is not a large person, and certainly did not need the entire weight of three large men to detain them) I was violently cuffed and asked officers to loosen restraints multiple times as i was unable to feel my hands. I repeated that they were hurting me several times and was ignored. 2 hours later a different officer finally loosened my restraints slightly. I have nerve damage on both hands. For the past week I have lost sensation in my dominant hand, experienced shooting pains and tingling, loss of coordination, involuntary twitches. This affects my work and livelihood. I also have road burn on my elbow and shoulder. I was charged with "obstructing traffic" although I was arrested on the sidewalk.

In custody, i asked my arresting officer why he had to hurt me when I was not hurting anyone, during a peaceful gathering. He responded "I had to hurt you so other people wouldn't get hurt"

-Jesse Lipper

Saturday, May 30th, 5 PM

Bedford and Tilden

This began as a peaceful march, and as it progressed NYPD interrupted multiple times with pepper spray, unprovoked. Protesters ran away from the pepper spray and mostly avoided the assaults, and continued moving forward. At one point three cops approached three women and three teenaged boys in the crowd, seeming to target them amongst others for no apparent reason and began beating them with batons. They were swinging batons like baseball bats. They hit one woman until she was bleeding badly from the head. At this point, the crowd became panicked and extremely upset, and began to resist the attacks of the police and to push back. No civilians were armed, but at this point some destruction of police property happened in response to the beatings. There were no "outside agitators", it was just unarmed civilians, but the NYPD clearly took an orderly march and escalated it as much as possible, then continued to attack with mace, batons, and shields. They were both swinging batons and jabbing protesters with them. As they made arrests, I saw multiple officers place their knees on the necks of civilians they arrested, often piling 5 cops on one unarmed person. On May 29th, at another orderly march, I specifically saw this happen to a young black man, teens or early twenties, who was tackled by 4 cops, thrown to the ground and an officer pressed one knee to the back of his neck, and one knee on his back for about three minutes, without interruption, using his full weight on the boy. I have footage of this event, which i would like to submit.

Saturday June 6th 6:30 pm

This Saturday June 6th I went out in support of BLM in Whitestone, Queens. Myself and approximately 50 people were standing on the corner of Clintonville St. and Cross Island pkwy, holding signs, when Officer Evangelos Gallatas drove up and flashed a well known white power hand sign. We questioned the officer on why he did this, but he refused to speak on it further, just smirked. He would not deny he was a white

supramacist, but would not say anything more. As he left, he flashed the symbol once more and drove away. His badge number is 28484, he is in the 109th Precinct. I have heard this officer may currently be under investigation. I have video of the incident I wish to submit.

Dan Elm
Monday June 1
Times square 4PM

During a peaceful protest, Cops used crowd control and kettleling, intimidation, panicked protesters. Civilian driver got into a minor conflict with a protester. Dan and other protesters attempted to intervene and NYPD openly pepper sprayed the entire crowd without warning, inducing panic. As crowd dispersed in panic, NYPD pursued with batons drawn.

Daniel De Lange
District 34
Brooklyn, NY

Testimony in regards to meeting of Committee on Public Safety (July, 9 2020)

I appreciate all the laws proposed in this meeting's agenda, but I think many would agree that these proposals do not go far enough in curtailing police brutality.

Particularly, I would like to draw attention to police accountability and police funding, as well as the testimony of Deputy Commissioner Tucker and his associates from the NYPD.

Although not listed in the agenda, I heard multiple council members discuss measures to make reviews of officer conduct more thorough, and currently there are discussions by the state legislature to repeal 50-a, which shields police misconduct records from scrutiny by the public eye. I do not think I need to go into detail on why 50-a is reprehensible, and I think it's very clear that it must be repealed. But even if 50-a is repealed, and even if we increase measures to review police misconduct and activity, it seems that all current proposals rely on reviews conducted by and within police departments. Given that a key tenant of police culture is to protect their own (over the interests of the people they are sworn to "protect and serve"), it seems unwise to leave the task of reviewing police conduct up to police departments, in this case the NYPD. You can tell the NYPD that they must conduct more thorough reviews of police conduct and that they can no longer hide this information from the public, but how can you count on them to be honest and carry out these tasks truthfully, especially when they have shown in the past that they cannot be counted on to hold their own accountable. I would propose that police misconduct be reviewed BY AN OUTSIDE COMMITTEE, not from within the NYPD. This way we can better assure that officers are held accountable IMPARTIALLY, and not by fellow officers who will no doubt omit details of their misdeeds.

As to police funding, I don't see that this is proposed here, and perhaps this is more suitable to a finance meeting, but because the NYPD is a direct threat to public safety (as we have seen countless times in their murder of New Yorkers, particularly those who are Black or Brown, and also in their widely recorded misconduct, abuse of power, and brutality towards peaceful protestors in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd), defunding them, and therefore lessening their threat to NYers, is a matter of public safety. The NYPD must be defunded and restructured, and their roll in our community must be greatly reduced, with many of their duties relegated to social service departments more suited to serving the people's needs. I thank Council Member Carlina Rivera and Public Advocate Jumaane Williams for pushing for this. We need to reduce the police budget by much more than \$1 billion. I hope to see more action on this in the future.

I would also like to comment on Deputy Commissioner Tucker's testimony during the meeting. First, shame on Commissioner Shea for not showing up. Thank you to Council Member Donovan Richards for calling out Shea for not showing up and for sending a Black man in his place to act as a shield. And thank you Council Member Richards, Speaker Corey Johnson and all other members for your hard questioning of Tucker and his associates. The NYPD's testimony was despicable. They dodged questions, rambled and spoke empty, and took no responsibility for the NYPD's actions. It's clear from their comments that the NYPD does not

plan to make any concessions or offer any real changes or solutions to the issue of police brutality. Tucker defended the NYPD's actions at every step, offering weak excuses (for instance, claiming the stress of COVID-19 could cause an officer to act violently—we're all under stress from COVID-19, but that is not an excuse for beating someone and pinning them down with a knee, i.e. Officer Francisco Garcia). Tucker and his associates did not clearly acknowledge that the NYPD has any issues with violence and brutality, particularly towards Black and Brown people, that need to be addressed. He wouldn't even firmly commit to holding officers accountable for not wearing masks. If the NYPD won't concede to such a small thing, how can we count on them to hold their officers accountable for larger instances of misconduct, such as MURDER and RACISM. The NYPD's testimony today is clear evidence that they are not willing to control their own officers' violent tendencies, or address issues of widespread aggression, violence, and racism that pervades NYPD culture and practices.

Please, council members, I ask you to continue pushing for police reform far beyond the proposals discussed today. We need to drastically defund the NYPD and institute much stronger measures for holding violent and racist officers accountable, as well as conducting reviews of officer misconduct OUTSIDE and INDEPENDENT of the NYPD.

Daniel De Lange
District 34
Brooklyn, NY

Hello, my name is Cyd Nova and I am a resident of Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn

First, I want to thank Corey Johnson and the council for opening a door to address police abuse of protestors over the past 10 days.

On Friday the 29th I was at a march to protest police murders. I joined the march at Fort Greene and was with the march as it went down Dekalb and then was pushed onto Lafayette.

The first thing that happened that I want to document is that protestors were standing in the street, there was a lot of confusion and it seemed that police were attempting to kettle us. My friend, who does not want to testify, for fear of retaliation, was standing in the road looking around for where to go. I witnessed how a police car, without any verbal warning, while his back was turned accelerated towards him. I yelled out at him, alerting him and he rushed out of the way but was missed by less than a foot by a car whose speed would have caused clear physical damage.

The second experience I want to share was, around 20 minutes later, the police were yelling at us to move on. A very small woman in front of us was attempting to stand her ground, and a male cop moved towards her and threw her to the ground. Myself and my friend both moved towards her but before we could reach her he was pushed into a car by a police officer who beat him three times with a baton, cracking one of his ribs. I was pushed to the ground, and hit by a baton in the chest by an officer who clearly intended to hit me again but was stopped by other protestors and a fellow officer of his. Both of these male officers were screaming verbal insults in our faces without masks on. They were the only people I saw without masks at this protest.

I saw other instances of police throwing people to the ground and then beating them and police cars accelerating into pedestrians. These are just the three instances that I have the clearest recollection of. We have a video of the second instance.

The community is told that protestors are agitating violence, but who is it that is getting hurt? The 'agitation' that I witnessed was refusal to move or comply with orders, this is a nonviolent resistance tactic. It was met with actions that caused injury and could have caused death. The commissioner recently released a memo clearly endorsing any and all actions that NYPD personnel wish to take against protestors and there are hundreds of recordings of police talking about taking down protestors from the perspective of hunters. We need the city council to take a clear and unwavering stance

Thank you

Cyd Nova

On Friday, May 29 I attended a peaceful protest at the Barclays Center. At Barclays, the protest was overwhelmingly peaceful. When we began marching, in protest of the police violence rampant across the United States and in New York, we were met with cars honking in support and people cheering us on from their homes. Some even left their apartments to march with us. We posed absolutely no threat to the community, and when we reached the park community members were cheering and chanting along with us. This continued for a long time, we marched peacefully until it started getting dark. There was no curfew at this time, but at one point police set up a barricade on a street we had marched down. A row of many officers stopped our peaceful and lawful marching. Then, they started charging at us with no warning. They were spraying pepper spray and pushing people down who did not run fast enough. The police were spraying and beating anyone who did not run for their lives. They did not attempt to de-escalate and I could not get close enough to see their badges or names. There was absolutely no warning and it created a terrifying scramble from what began as a peaceful and community-oriented protest.

The only ask was for the violent and racist police force to go home so we could continue our march and demonstrate for the resounding message: Black lives matter, and we as an entire community are in pain that there has never been justice for those killed by police violence in New York, like Eric Garner. We were grieving as a community the loss of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Instead, the police chased us down the block and continued to stand blocking the street, creating an intimidating “stand off.” The entire crowd chanted for the police to go home, and there was a healthy amount of space between the cops and the crowd. The police would not answer about why they were being so aggressive. Again with no warning, the cops charged at us, ostensibly because a protestor had thrown an empty plastic water bottle. The cops should not be allowed to beat and attack protestors when someone limply tosses a plastic bottle in their direction. The amount of force and sheer terror they were creating made us leave the scene. My friend had been hit with a nightstick, I had been indirectly sprayed because I was trying to help a woman who was directly sprayed in the face for not running fast enough. We were not breaking any rules. We were not being intimidating.

I am a Brooklyn resident studying to be a mental health counselor—I am the least violent person in the world. I posed absolutely no threat to anyone and yet we were indiscriminately chased and brutalized by police. Videos of this night, and of more recent protests, are circulating around the internet. New York City needs to denounce the violence of the NYPD and hold them accountable. The entire U. S. is watching major cities like New York and Los Angeles for leadership, and they are horrified at what they are seeing. Please, stand for us and protect us by holding the police accountable.

June 9, 2020

Testimony of
Ruth Lowenkron, Disability Justice Director
on behalf of
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
before
the Council of the City of New York
Committee on Public Safety
regarding
New York City's Response to
Individuals Experiencing Mental Health Crises

Good morning. My name is Ruth Lowenkron and I am the Director of the Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today regarding the critical issue of how New York City must reform its system for responding to individuals who are experiencing mental health crises by eliminating the police from the equation entirely.

The City must ensure that individuals who experience a mental health crisis receive appropriate services which will de-escalate the crisis and ensure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of all other New Yorkers. Only those who are trained in de-escalation practices should respond to a mental health crisis, and the most appropriate individuals

to respond are health care providers and mental health advocates¹. Police, who are trained to uphold law and order are not suited to deal with individuals experiencing mental health crises, and New York’s recent history of its police killing 15 individuals who were experiencing crises, and seriously injuring two others, in the last four years alone, is sad testament to that. Eliminating the police as crisis responders will result in people who experience mental health crises recovering more quickly, becoming connected with long-term healthcare services and other community resources, and averting future crises².

The scores of people experiencing mental health crises who have died at the hands of the police over the years is a microcosm of the police brutality that is being protested around the world today. Disability is disproportionately prevalent in the Black community and other communities of color³, and individuals who are shot and killed by the police when experiencing mental health crises are disproportionately Black and other people of color⁴. The City Council simply cannot stand by while the killings continue. Now is the time for major transformations. Now is the time to remove the police as responders to mental health crises. Lives are literally at stake.

The recently-renamed [Correct Crisis Intervention Today – NYC](#) (CCIT-NYC), of which NYLPI has long been a member, has developed the needed antidote. Modeled on the [CAHOOTS](#) (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) program in Eugene, Oregon, which has successfully operated for over 30 years without any major injuries to respondents or responders, CCIT-NYC has drafted a proposal which will provide 24/7 responses to mental health crises by emergency medical technicians and trained

¹ Martha Williams Deane, *et al.*, “Emerging Partnerships between Mental Health and Law Enforcement,” *Psychiatric Services* (1999), http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&doi/abs/10.1176/ps.50.1.99?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed.

² Henry J. Steadman, *et al.*, “A Specialized Crisis Response Site as a Core Element of Police-Based Diversion Programs,” *Psychiatric Services* (2001), http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.52.2.219?utm_source=TrendMD&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Psychiatric_Services_TrendMD_0.

³ Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, “Accessible NYC” (2016), https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mopd/downloads/pdf/accessiblenyc_2016.pdf.

⁴ CCIT-NYC, Testimony before the Committee on Public Safety (June 9, 2020).

“peers” – those with lived mental health experience. The police would not be permitted to respond unless the mental health crisis response contacts the police for assistance because the person experiencing the mental health crisis is taking action which is causing serious bodily harm to self or another person, or the person wields a weapon to credibly threaten imminent and serious bodily harm to self or another specific person. More details about the proposal are attached as Exhibit A. Notably, the proposal was drafted prior to the pandemic and the massive protests of police abuse, and the proposal suggests a slow phase-in with a pilot in two police precincts to be studied over five years. Given the current need to reform the New York Police Department en masse, NYLPI strongly urges immediate implementation of the CCITNYC proposal in all precincts city-wide.

Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at (212) 244-4664 or RLowenkron@NYLPI.org, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss the implementation of the CCIT-NYC proposal to eliminate the police as first responders to individuals experiencing mental health crises.

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About New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

For over 40 years, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) has been a leading civil rights advocate for New Yorkers marginalized by race, poverty, disability, and immigration status. Through our community lawyering model, we bridge the gap between traditional civil legal services and civil rights, building strength and capacity for both individual solutions and long-term impact. Our work integrates the power of individual representation, impact litigation, and comprehensive organizing and policy campaigns. Guided by the priorities of our communities, we strive to achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, create equal access to health care, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for low-income communities of color.

NYLPI’s Disability Justice Program works to advance the civil rights of New Yorkers with disabilities. In the past five years alone, NYLPI disability advocates have represented thousands of individuals and won campaigns improving the lives of

hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. Our landmark victories include integration into the community for people with mental illness, access to medical care and government services, and increased accessibility of New York City's public hospitals. Working together with NYLPI's Health Justice Program, we prioritize the reform of New York City's response to individuals experiencing mental health crises. Last week we celebrated our second court victory forcing the New York Police Department to turn over the body-worn camera footage from the officers who shot and killed an individual experiencing a mental health crisis.

EXHIBIT A



CORRECT CRISIS INTERVENTION TODAY

FIGHTING TO TRANSFORM RESPONSES TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

Piloting a Peer-Driven Mental Health Crisis Response Program

The need:

The New York Police Department (NYPD) began providing Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training in June 2015. In the four and a half ensuing years, sixteen mental health recipients were fatally shot by the police, and four others were shot and arrested.

Not surprisingly, many mental health recipients, family members, and health providers fear calling 911 because of these and other similar tragedies. This causes many people to delay reaching out for help until circumstances have escalated to a critical stage.

Mental healthcare responses to mental health crises are universally considered the best practice. For example, the leaders of CIT international – the group, consisting primarily of police which created CIT training 35 years ago – now argue that only a mental healthcare response is appropriate for a mental health crisis, [police leaders say send in mental health workers](#). In the CIT International’s [recent best practice guide](#), they note that even a co-response model (police and mental health workers) is an inappropriate response because it still involves the police.

Although New York City created a taskforce to determine an appropriate mechanism for responding to mental health crises, the initiatives put forth by the taskforce do not systematically address how to best respond to the *180,000 crisis calls per year* received by the NYPD. The taskforce failed to recognize that responding to mental health crises is a public health issue, and it continued to view the NYPD as the first responder for the vast majority of crisis calls.

In response to the taskforce’s suggestions, the City proposed adding only five mobile crisis teams to respond to crisis calls. However, the minimal increase in mobile crisis teams does not even come close to serving a city of 9,000,000 people and countless visitors. And critically, the mobile crisis teams cannot respond to 911 emergency calls. Mobile crisis teams also do not have a means to transport people to drop-in centers, hospitals, or other appropriate healthcare resources. If transport is required, mobile crisis team members must call 911.

In addition, mobile crisis teams at best respond to the immediate crisis at hand, and do little to ensure the mental health recipient is connected to longer- term community resources. Mobile crisis teams do not always have a peer on staff and utilize the no-longer acceptable "medical model," which often focuses narrowly on medication rather than a person's ability to recover and live well. Moreover, mobile crisis teams consist of five staff members and are relatively expensive.

New York also has Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT teams) which consist of one peer – an individual with lived mental health experience – and one clinician. But HEAT teams are only used by police for areas of outreach that do not involve any active risk, and, like mobile crisis teams, they cannot be deployed to 911 mental health crisis calls and they cannot transport anyone.

Where would the pilot be located?

In order to provide complete coverage to a given geographical area, the pilot will be located in two police precincts with the highest number of "emotional health crisis" calls (formerly derisively referred to as "Emotionally Disturbed Person" or "EDP" calls): Midtown South's 14th Precinct with 4,356 mental health crisis calls in 2018 and Brooklyn's 75th Precinct with 5,428 mental health crisis calls in 2018. The selected precincts are among those with the highest number of mental health calls per capita.

What would the peer-driven mental health crisis response teams look like?

The new mental health crisis response team would embody existing best practices in non-police alternative mental health crisis response, and consist of one peer trained as a crisis counselor and one emergency medical technician (EMT). Having a peer on the team is essential, as a person with lived experience, a person who has "been there," can best relate to the fear of an outsider responding in a moment of crisis, and can prove that recovery works. An EMT worker is needed as many crisis calls may involve physical health issues which are masked by the mental health crisis.

The mental health crisis response team would be recruited in accordance with established hiring guidance developed by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

The mental health crisis response teams will consist of peers who have worked with people in crisis, such as those who have worked in crisis respite centers, and also have experience in de-escalating crises. It would be desirable for the peers to either have lived or worked in the areas in which they are hired to serve.

The teams must operate 24/7, 365 days a year, in three consecutive shifts per precinct (8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 4 p.m. to 12 a.m., and 12 a.m. to 8 a.m.), with two teams in place for the day and evening shifts, and one team for the overnight shift. Since each team consists of two people, the staffing need for the pilot requires 38 total FTE's for the two precincts for all shifts.

In addition, the pilot requires 1 Project Director, 2 Supervisors and 1 Administrator.

The pilot also requires two vans per precinct so that the team can transport individuals to drop-in centers, safe havens, the new support and connection centers, urgent care centers, or hospitals.

What type of training will the pilot provide?

The consumer affairs office of DOHMH will be responsible for training all mental health crisis response teams, as well as all NYC Well staff involved in the pilot. In addition, DOHMH's consumer affairs office will be responsible for training all 911 operators as the operators are likely to respond to mental health crisis calls.

DOHMH's consumer affairs office can contract with an independent, peer-driven entity that delivers training such as the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS) or People, Inc.

How would people call for the mental health crisis response team?

The pilot will establish a new number dedicated to mental health crisis calls such as "WEL" or 988, which anyone can call. The calls would go to NYC Well's hotline and will be staffed by NYC Well staff who would automatically send the calls to the mental health crisis response teams. Since NYC Well operators will be dispatching mobile crisis teams in the next few months it will be cost-effective to have NYC Well also dispatch the mental health crisis response teams.

What would the average response time be for the mental health crisis response teams?

The average response time for the mental health crisis response teams will be the same as the current average response of police to non-mental health crises – or less time.

Under what circumstances may the operator at NYC Well or the mental health crisis response team involve the police?

The presumption is that all calls to the 988/WEL line will go to the new mental health crisis response teams. If one calls the 988/WEL line, one wants a non-police health response, and one should receive a non-police health response.

However, once the NYC Well operator refers the call to the mental health crisis response team, and the mental health team believes police are required, the team may contact the police. The

team may only contact the police when the following exception applies: the person is taking action which is causing serious bodily harm to self or another person, or the person wields a weapon to credibly threaten imminent and serious bodily harm to self or another specific person (hereinafter referred to as “the Exception”). Items such as a pocket knife or scissors do not constitute such a weapon.

In instances where the Exception applies, mental health teams should be dispatched *in conjunction* with the NYPD.

When there is doubt in the call taker’s mind as to whether the Exceptions applies, a mental health team should be sent -- *not* the police. The mental health team on the scene can then determine if police are needed.

When two callers describe the circumstances differently, and one of the callers describes the circumstances as constituting the Exception, the police should not be sent; the mental health team should be sent instead. If there are more than two callers, and the majority describe the circumstances as constituting the Exception, the police should be sent – together with the mental health team.

Call takers should not automatically take the word of a caller over the word of the person in crisis, in terms of when to send police, but rather must carefully weigh any differences in descriptions of the crisis to determine the appropriate response. The person experiencing the mental health crisis should be believed as much as the person calling 911.

Mental health teams will respond if a person experiencing a mental health crisis is alleged to be likely to cause imminent and serious bodily harm to self or to a specific other person, and the person making the allegation is at a different location from the individual experiencing the crisis.

For a mental health crisis in a residential setting, the relationship between the individual calling 911 and the person experiencing the crisis is an important factor to weigh, in order to respond to the crisis. The caller may have instigated the person experiencing the crisis or made false allegations about the person.

It is up to the mental health crisis response teams to call for police back-up, and they may only do so if the above Exception is met.

All mental health crisis response team members will carry police radios hooked into the police dispatch system which permit immediate calls for police back-up when needed.

How will calls to 911 be diverted to the mental health crisis response teams?

Although the new mental health crisis number will be highly publicized (see below), individuals may, out of habit or lack of knowledge of the new number, call 911.

Mental health crisis calls received by 911 will be routed to the mental health crisis response teams under the same protocols as are used by NYC Well and as set forth above.

If it is determined by the 911 dispatcher that a police response is required pursuant to such protocol, NYPD must dispatch a co-response team -- a police officer together with a healthcare worker. The police must advise the caller whether it will be a mental health crisis response team or a co-response team which will respond to the call.

The radios that the mental health crisis response teams wear will also allow police to call the mental health teams if the police become aware of a person experiencing a mental health crisis.

The police *must* call the mental health crisis response team if the police became aware that the person involved is experiencing a mental health crisis and the Exception is not met. The police must advise the caller whether it will be a mental health crisis response team or a co-response team which will respond to the call.

How long will the pilot last?

The pilot will last five years, thereby allowing sufficient time for start-up and evaluation.

If after 18 months the data reveal the pilot is having a positive impact based on established metrics, two additional pilots will be funded at that time.

How much will the pilot cost?

The pilot will cost roughly \$3.5 million to \$4.0 million annually for the two proposed precincts. Costs are estimated.

Notably, Eugene, Oregon, which is the size of one New York City police precinct, uses a similar mental health crisis response model which includes two workers and has an annual budget of \$1.9 million.

The pilot requires training and data collection/evaluation (see below), which is not part of the Eugene budget, but is pivotal to determine how the pilot is working and what changes need to be made to it. Additional costs above those in Eugene will also be incurred by the pilot in order to keep salaries commensurate with the cost of living in New York City.

Which city agency will run the pilot?

The pilot will be run by the Consumer Affairs Department of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Who will monitor the pilot?

The pilot will be monitored by an oversight board consisting of peers (constituting 51% of the board) and staff of NYC Well, the support and connection centers, the crisis respite centers, DOHMH, NYPD, the New York State Department of Health (DOH), the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH), the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS), the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA), the New York City Department of Corrections (NYC-DOCS), New York State Department of Corrections (NYS_DOCS), the New York City Fire Department (FDNY), the District Attorney for the relevant borough, the Public Defender for the relevant borough, the Office of the Comptroller, the Community Board for the relevant precinct, the Public Advocate, the relevant Borough President, City Council, and the New York State Legislature.

How will the pilot be monitored?

The oversight board will:

- hire an independent evaluation entity
- review data from the pilot project
- suggest changes to the pilot
- meet at least quarterly
- issue meeting agendas
- publicly list all agendas
- issue minutes of meetings
- publicly list all minutes
- ensure all meetings are open to the public
- pay stipends to those members who are not receiving a salary for participating in oversight board activities

There will be one oversight board for all pilot precincts.

How will data be collected?

Data will be collected and analyzed by an independent evaluation entity every three months once the pilot is operational. The data will be provided to the oversight board which will also have the right to request additional data, as needed.

How will the pilot be funded?

Primary funding will come from New York City's budget. New York City should also reach out to New York State for funding, possibly from money allocated statewide for CIT but never used for New York City.

How will the pilot be publicized?

NYC Well, the NYPD, and all other City and State agencies who comprise the oversight board will work closely with CCITNYC and other advocates to develop an extensive list of agencies and individuals who will receive direct notice of the pilot. In addition, NYC Well will utilize its best efforts to obtain extensive media coverage of the pilot, and will prominently promote the pilot via social media and other campaigns to raise awareness amongst the public in the identified precincts.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this testimony in light of recent events where police officers across the United States have shown unwarranted use of force against the people of this country. We have seen elderly men being pushed to the ground and not a single police officer amongst many not even pause to check if he is ok in Buffalo. With regards to this same incident, the original report made lied about the situation saying the man tripped when it was clearly caught on video that the frail man was forcefully pushed. If this was not caught on camera would justice have been brought forward for this poor man? In countless other events, police officers have used their weapons to break glass and pull civilians from their cars tasing them repeatedly for no reason, referring to the two college students stuck in a traffic jam in Atlanta. Interactions between the police have led to violence. Civilians are getting hurt and dying in their hands. Police officers need to be trained to de-escalate encounters and not use their weapons whenever they please for no good reason. They must also not lie about encounters. This is wrong. The people of the United States do not want to live in a police state akin to what is seen in fascist states. The people of the United States want to be free.

We are in dire need of reform as our personal liberties are at stake. Police officers must be held accountable for their actions. The way immunity is given to police officers must be scrutinized. William Barr does not support these reforms because it will “result in police pulling back.” However, I do not believe this is true. Look at the example of medical professionals. They purchase and pay for their own malpractice insurance. If a medical professional makes a mistake in providing care, their license is on the line and they can very well loose it. All the hard work they did in medical school (or dental, or nursing) is erased with one error. There is not even a fraction of this accountability for police officers doing their jobs. Hard earned tax payer money is used to settle out law suits of misconduct. I do not want money taken out my earnings to be used to settle someone else’s errors.

For these reasons, I am imploring you to think about a system that holds its constituents accountable, that is transparent and that is just.

1. Immunity for police officers should be reformed to hold them accountable for their actions.
2. Tax payer money should not be used for settlements in lawsuits of police misconduct. This money should be rediverted to other areas of the budget (public education is great place to start)
3. Repeal 50a – there must be transparency in the system.

Thank you,
Rachel Margariti
5133 surf ave Brooklyn NY 11224

My name is Claire Severine and I am a resident of Washington Heights. Prior to this month, my only significant interaction with NYPD was a negative one. I witnessed a man in my building strangling his girlfriend outside the door of my apartment, threatening to kill her. I called 911. When the NYPD officers arrived he ran out the backdoor of the building, she went upstairs. They made no attempt to intercept him, ascertain her wellness, and LAUGHED as they shuffled out of the building.

My opinion sank lower on May 30th, when I marched from 125th Street. When our group came to Trump Tower at around 5:00PM, there was a significant police presence, they let us through to the street in front of the tower before suddenly and seemingly arbitrarily deciding the protest was "unlawful". People were given nary enough time to move to the sidewalk before officers began tackling and beating them.

On June 2nd I joined a group that started in Foley Square. At 9:44PM we encountered a group of officers in Times Square. Several had their badge numbers covered and body cams turned off. When we hit the area of 24th and 6th, everything went wrong. I was whacked with batons and shoved off to to a side street. There, I witnessed officers drag a petite woman out of her car and beat her. The male passenger in the car was pulled out face down. Several officers pushed him to the ground. In the video I took, you can see an officer PUT HIS KNEE ON THIS MAN'S NECK. I'm unsure what happened next because officers formed around him to block off the view and then made a line to begin pushing us all back. Another group of officers slammed a man's face against a building. My legs are covered with bruises but I'll be okay. As a white woman, I was lucky. As I limped to the train, an officer told me "You're breaking curfew, get home safe, have a good night." Where is the concern for the safety of my black and brown brothers and sisters?

On June 5th, at 7:40 I found myself with a group of protesters at Central Park West and 72nd. Much of our group had dispersed at earlier stops in the march and we were very small in number. A significant police presence cut off the street behind us and a ridiculously large number of police formed up in front of us. I would guess a hundred in front. Egregiously outnumbered. The organizers made the decision to get us to the subway before curfew because we felt ourselves in clear danger. As we waited at 72nd Street (AC) Station, at 7:45, the next train wasn't due to come until after 8PM. At that time a gang of cops came down and informed us we were violating curfew. We remained calm and reasoned to a white-shirt officer he could hardly expect us to teleport home. When the train came, he told us anyone who didn't get on the train would be arrested. Frighteningly fascist behavior.

The reforms put forward are, I hope, well intentioned, however they are ultimately spineless particularly when one considers the gleefulness with which the NYPD has broken the rules time and again. I echo the call of my colleague, Sarah McEneaney, "get your tongues off the boots of the NYPD". I do not know what kind of sociopathic mind it would take to hear, see, read the pain of the your fellow NY-ers, and not realize systemic change is necessary for this systemic problem. 1 billion dollars over 4 years is a drop in the bucket. The people of NYC deserve nothing less than a concrete plan to disarm, defund, dissolve, and abolish the NYPD. We will vote you out. All power to the people.

Dear NYC Council Public Safety Committee Members,

First, I want to say thank you to Speaker Johnson, Councilmembers Rivera and Van Bremer, Public Advocate Williams, and any other official who has put themselves on the front lines with protesters.

My name is Patrick McDonnell. I work for a theatre company on the Lower East Side, I'm a proud alum of Brooklyn College, and I've lived in Flatbush for five years. I'm tired of being terrorized by the NYPD. Fearing I'll be assaulted by cops - beaten, run over, tear gassed at a protest. That I'll be put under surveillance for exercising my right to protest.

I'm tired of seeing that healthcare, education, mental health, culture, transit, and more programs being cut. That there was a moment during the crisis where hospitals had to make open asks for ponchos and q-tips because they were desperate for PPE and testing equipment. Across the city, millions of people don't have a home. Don't have food to put on their table. All of these things are public safety issues that will only be exacerbated by budget cuts, and the current economic crisis.

Meanwhile, the NYPD gets \$6 billion in funding to run an intelligence agency, have an array of military grade resources, and near impunity to assault people and instill terror in its citizens. There was a more decisive action from our mayor when MACY's got looted than there was to COVID or any single instance of police violence since this protest started. And that response was to set a curfew that endangered the lives of New Yorkers, and gave the police even more power to arrest and assault people.

It's grotesque.

These reforms are a start, but we know that the police must be defunded. That all the bodycams and de-escalation trainings won't change the fact that most officers don't have an anger management problem or don't understand how de-escalation works. They know how to hold it in until they want to do it. They'll flout it when they want to. They know that like Daniel Pantaleo, they are so well insulated from consequences, at most, the worst thing they may face is getting fired. The NYPD have shown, time and again, that they exist to protest themselves.

The marches will continue until my friends can go to protests because they feel like they won't be killed by the police. The advocacy will continue until we have elected officials willing to interrogate the link between capitalism, the police, and racism, and build a new system. The action will continue until other public services receive the funding the police do. We need budget justice, and we must take radical action to ensure that public safety in the city is not in the hands of the NYPD.

Sincerely,

Patrick McDonnell

June 8, 2020

I am in full support of the proposed bills to criminalize the use of chokehold by police officers and to create standardized police discipline guidelines. I would like to ask, however, what additional measures are being considered for addressing the roots of police brutality in addition to the symptoms.

Is implicit bias testing included as part of the psychological examinations to enter the NYPD? If not, why not? Even if a police officer is deemed able to make sound judgement calls, how can equal justice be guaranteed if one officer's bias leads them to incorrectly deduce that a situation may become violent?

Is psychological testing administered to NYPD officers on an ongoing basis? If not, why not? Even if police officers exhibit rational judgement upon entering the police force, it is unreasonable to expect that the continued stress of working as a police officer would not take a psychological toll. Failure to swiftly and pre-emptively identify the negative impacts of police duty is not only a disservice to police officers by setting them up for burnout - it in turn leads to higher reactivity in police officers and endangers the very citizens they are enlisted to protect.

Even if implicit bias testing and ongoing psychological testing are already part of NYPD protocol, I ask for a reform requiring more stringent testing to pre-emptively eliminate the potential for racialized police brutality.

Christina Sterrett Caliz

Daniel Szymczyk's Testimony Before the City Council's Committee on Public Safety

Dear Members of the Committee on Public Safety,

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony today. I am a citizen of District 40 in Brooklyn at 220 East 18th St., Apt. 2G, Brooklyn, NY 11226. I am entering my second year at Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College where I am on track to obtain a Master's in Social Work, and I am also the Founder and Executive Director of The HIV League, a small non-governmental organization serving the HIV community in different capacities. I have been protesting in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protests since Friday, May 29th, and I felt compelled to testify on the police brutality I have experienced and witnessed on both Friday, May 29th and Monday, June 1st.

On Friday, May 29th, I was a part of the protests that started at Barclays Center and went down Dekalb Avenue. While I was at Barclays Center, I witnessed many peaceful protestors get pushed to the ground by many police officers by them using the barricades to push protestors to the ground. I also witnessed and experienced the macing of protestors at many moments, when it seems like there was no reason for us to get maced at all. Many people around me were struggling to open their eyes from the direct contact they had from the mace. I assisted one protestor by pouring constant water on their eyes to try and flush out the mace. They were so red, I was questioning if their eyes were bleeding or not.

Later on when the protest progressed onto Dekalb Avenue is when I witnessed many police officers directly attacking protestors. There's a very vivid memory of one female-presenting protestor being punched in the face by a full grown man-presenting cop multiple times. The protestor managed to escape, and when the cop looked up and locked eyes with me and the people on my sides, the cop started to charge towards us. We managed to run away from him, but it was incredibly close. Scenes like this were going on all around us. It felt like we were in some kind of war, and the cops were the attackers while the protestors were simply just trying to defend themselves from the cops and their tactics.

On Monday, June 1st is when I witnessed police brutality on multiple protestors. I witnessed many arrests occur, and when the arrests were happening, the cops who were literally tackling protestors they chose to arrest. Sometimes, when a team of five cops were zip-tying one protestor, four of the five cops would beat on the protestor with their batons. It was incredibly difficult to witness, but it was impossible to report these cops since they were all covering the numbers on their badges.

I am testifying about these occurrences when it comes to the current legislation you have on the table regarding the NYPD, specifically the budget. We are seeing that the NYPD is, in fact, terrorizing our communities through excessive force and we need to decrease the amount of funding for the NYPD by at least \$1 billion since they

shouldn't need the tools they use to use excessive force on civilians like they have recently done. This funding can be used to increase other programs New Yorkers depend on every single day, which is even more important in the age of COVID-19. I hope that this testimony will allow you to see that the NYPD needs to be defunded while necessary governmental programs need to be funded at a higher level.

Again, thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. If you need to reach out to me, you are able to do so at 828-467-4025 or danielszymczyk13@gmail.com. Have a great rest of your day!

Regards,
Daniel Szymczyk

Dear New York City Council,

My name is Nell Baldwin and I am a family medicine resident physician in the Bronx. On June 4th 2020, I attended a protest in the Bronx where I witnessed and experienced police violence. While I have witnessed police violence at protests across the city over the past week, I would like to try to share in depth my experience in the Bronx.

I attended the protest as a street medic – someone trained to provide medical care for people at protests. I have had training outside of my medical training to act as a medic and volunteered at other events in this capacity over the past five years. I wore scrubs so that I would be clearly visible as a medic and carried first aid supplies, an ID badge from the hospital I work at, and a letter attesting that I was part of the medical care/ jail support for the protest - a role that is considered an “essential worker.” I chose to provide medical support for this march because as a family medicine physician I have seen how police violence and racism harms Black people. I was especially worried about police violence in the Bronx based on experiences my patients and community have shared with me.

When the march reached Brook and 136th street, police blocked us from moving forwards. This was at 745pm. I was towards the back of the crowd and noticed the police were also blocking the us from the back. People were unable to disperse for curfew. At 800pm, officers advanced towards those of in the back. I was thrown to the ground by an officer who pinned me on the ground. I covered my head to avoid injury. When I was stood up, my hands forcibly held behind my back, I saw that police had also arrested another medic in scrubs and an older gentleman who was a legal observer. I was placed in handcuffs.

I saw a young man with a head wound that was bleeding. People behind us started screaming that their eyes were burning. I told the officer who detained me that I was an essential worker, a doctor, and was here to provide medical care. He did not respond to me. He would not look at my letter attesting to my role. He did not wear a mask and once pepper spray or mace was used on the crowd, sneezed frequently close to my face. I heard the sound of people crying in pain and could see others emerge from the crowd in handcuffs, including several young women. I saw several other people bleeding from the head. Several people were coughing and having difficulty breathing.

I heard several people, including a young woman near me, say that their cuffs were too tight. I saw many swollen hands, and several hands that turned purple or white. My own hands quickly went numb because of how tight the cuffs were-- and my right thumb is still numb now. After an hour some officers did remove some peoples’ cuffs. Often they had difficulty fitting the cutting tool between the wrists and the cuffs because there was so little space. The process of removal was extremely painful. During this time I witnessed someone with what appeared to be an asthma attack. Another person was coughing so hard they vomited several times. None of these people were uncuffed or offered medical care.

I was placed in a van with 10 other people who had been arrested at the protest. We were driven to Queens. I was placed in a cell with 8 other “females,” my cuffs still on. I was one of three people who still had a mask. Several people’s masks were contaminated by pepper-

spray. Others' masks had been removed by police officers. After about an hour my cuffs were cut off from my wrists and I was placed in a cell with between 15-20 other "females." At this point my wrists were swollen with marks and bruises from the cuffs. My hands were numb. One woman in my cell was type 1 diabetic and was not able to check her sugar or administer her insulin. She felt dizzy and was worried her sugar was high.

There was one dirty toilet in the cell. There was no soap or hand sanitizer. As a doctor who has treated hundreds of patients with COVID-19 at the epicenter of the pandemic in New York, I was deeply concerned about the crowding and lack of sanitation in the cells. I was released from jail just before 1:00 in the morning. Several of the young women I was in a cell with struggled for hours to find a safe ride home to the Bronx.

I am a family medicine physician. I attended a protest to provide medical services to people practicing their rights to free speech. Instead, I was violently arrested by the NYPD and witnessed ongoing violence against the people around me. While the City Council considers today's resolutions, I urge you to also consider that none of the resolutions discussed today would have prevented the violence I experienced and witnessed from the NYPD.

Dear Sir:

I recently read that the NYC council was wanting to make drastic changes to the Police Department.

I do hope that reform happens to better the lives of the officers, their families, and all New York residents that they serve.

I hope they consider implicit bias testing and psychological counseling for the difficult jobs that the police department has in keeping New Yorkers safe. This would likely increase funding to the departments, but would be the first step in repairing the horrible effects of systemic racism.

Thank you for your service and for your time.

Many blessings,

Robin

To the Committee on Public Safety:

Please take what Speaker Corey Johnson said to heart. I hope you adopt all six measures before you: Initiative 536-A, Initiative 721-A, Initiative 760-A, T2020-6267, Resolution 0027, and T2020-6256. But I sincerely hope that this is not where your work stops. None of these reforms will do much good if we do not divest from the NYPD and invest in black and brown communities. These reforms need to be steps on the way to abolition of the NYPD as we know it. It is unacceptable that the NYPD's budget is more than the budgets for health, homeless services, youth development, and workforce development combined. Take money out of policing and give it to the communities of color that need it most. More importantly, make sure this money goes directly to initiatives that are led by Black and Brown New Yorkers. I don't want my tax dollars going into funding a racist and militaristic NYPD. I want my money invested in the communities that need it most. Right now, there is so much momentum and hope for real change. Please don't be a roadblock to this change. Please use the power you have to effect real systemic change.

Public Safety is having resources for the public, so everyone can be healthy and cared for. Public Safety is defunding the NYPD. The NYPD faces close to zero budgetary cuts while youth & environmental programs are completely eliminated. Jails, prisons, and police will not keep us safe, prevent our communities from contracting coronavirus, provide us with protective gear, or meet any of our most basic needs. It is unconscionable that the city would prioritize the expansion of surveillance and policing over the health of NYC residents in the midst of a deadly pandemic. To survive this pandemic and its aftermath, Black and brown communities need resources that don't look like police. Police do not need to be armed if doctors and teachers barely have the supplies they need. How is this system helping anybody? How is upholding and overfunding a systematically racist institution at its core public safety?

The city budget is currently being negotiated and it's critical to fight against proposed cuts to Summer Youth Employment Program, schools, health, and social services. We are currently experiencing a public health catastrophe. Black and brown low income communities are dying at disproportionate rates. We cannot allow the underfunding of the resources our communities desperately need while increasing NYPD's budget. The NYPD needs immediate demilitarization, and the immediate reallocation of money and resources towards public education, public healthcare (including mental health services and public housing), among many other things that the vast budget of the NYPD can afford to cover.

Public safety is something that the NYPD clearly does not prioritize. In these past few weeks as well as many decades/centuries before, the police has consistently disrupted communities and targeted marginalized groups. Public safety needs to rely on community-based models that provide safety and support for those who need it, and in things that break the systemically racist cycles of incarceration and policing in black and brown neighborhoods. Public safety is long term and long lasting positive change. There is no equity in a budget that perpetuates overpolicing while shortchanging our most vulnerable New Yorkers.

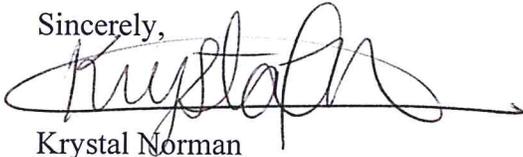
DEFUND THE NYPD.

June 10, 2020

To the New York City Council,

I believe police officers have a lot of responsibilities in their job field and it is difficult for them to do all aspects of it with genuine effort. A lot of unnecessary lives are being taken and I believe making their work load less may aid in avoiding the loss of innocent lives. I do believe another form of public safety should be available to take on none criminal challenges that arise in the community, this way the police only have to focus on criminal activity. I believe the money taken from them should be used towards higher education as well as mental health, disabilities and addiction. Hopefully, this will assist in solving the problems we now face with police officers and public safety. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Krystal Norman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Krystal Norman

Testimony of Emily Steiker-Epstein
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Emily Steiker-Epstein. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51– June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed

Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed

James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed

Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded

Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded

Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed

Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

**Testimony of Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD
President and CEO of Fountain House****New York City Council Hearing
Public Safety Committee
Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

Thank you to Chairperson Richards and the distinguished members of the Public Safety Committee for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Dr. Ashwin Vasani and I am President and CEO of Fountain House. I am writing today in support of the pilot project proposal of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations—of which Fountain House is a member of the Steering Committee—whose mission is to transform how New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system. **We urge you to examine our proposal, which is included at the end of this testimony, and reserve \$16.5 MM over the next 5 years to pilot this important mental health crisis response program here in New York City.**

Fountain House, since our founding in 1948, has long understood that sustainable recovery from mental illness and social isolation takes a community of support. People living with mental illness at Fountain House work together, accompanied by staff, to regain confidence, build social connections, learn new skills, and find greater independence, dignity, and hope for the future. We operate innovative programs in the areas of employment, education, health and wellness, housing, and the arts, as well as partnerships with healthcare networks, criminal justice organizations and other services. For these reasons, Fountain House is both a form of community-based social therapy as well as a traditional social services agency.

Because of the effectiveness of its approach and its advocacy efforts, Fountain House has become the most widely replicated community-based model for people living with mental illness. Today, more than 300 affiliated programs serve over 100,000 people in the US and in more than 30 countries – all operated by people living with mental illness – helping members build self-esteem and live with dignity.

In 2016, Deborah Danner, a Fountain House member, was shot and killed by an NYPD Sergeant while she was experiencing a mental health crisis in her Bronx apartment. Her death rattled our entire community as members and staff alike searched for solutions to prevent atrocities like this from happening again. These important conversations highlighted the need to remove law enforcement from responding to people experiencing a mental health crisis, especially in communities of color where tensions with police are already frayed. In those communities in

particular, where many of our members live, an arrival of a police officer is already an escalation of the situation.

It is clear that substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises. As you will see in the proposal, CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with peers who will respond, 24/7 – rather than the police – to people in crises and support them in accessing critical services to ensure their mental health.

The mental health community urgently needs a new peer-inclusive, healthcare response to those experiencing crises. **We respectfully ask you to allocate \$16.5 million of these funds to this five-year pilot project which will be a first step in creating a wider systems change to decriminalize mental illness and better support people in crisis.**

Thank you for your considering this important request.

Sincerely,

Ashwin Vasani, M.D., Ph.D.
President and CEO
ashwin@fountainhouse.org

I was participating in the Williamsburg march around 9:20. It was peaceful, nothing thrown, people weren't aggressive or getting in cops' faces, as far as I saw. I had my bike with me and figured I'd lock it up if things seemed to be getting intense, but so far it seemed very calm. There were helicopters circling, a lot of police surround and sometimes blocking our path, but we avoided confrontation. I could only see my fellow protesters, and they weren't escalating, so it seemed like we were well within our rights to continue our protest.

I had stayed out past curfew knowing I might get a summons, thinking it would be noble to hold the line and defy the threat of violence, but knowing full well when it came to the point that I'd be too chicken to follow through. And so I was surprised to find myself being maced, trying to film my female 5' friend who was on the ground in a pile of bikes surrounded by cops, with a large white-shirted officer running at me, pointing and yelling "her". They yelled at me to get on the ground, I got on the ground. I was cuffed with zip-ties, loosely until someone instructed the officer to make it tight enough to be painful.

Trying to piece together the chaos afterwards, we think what happened was the line of police came up behind and one of them tripped over a bicycle. Either she fell into my friend, or another officer knocked her down. I turned back to help my friend disentangle herself, and out of vengeance or self-defense (I'm 5'6 and about as threatening as a potted begonia), I was pepper-sprayed. The effect was horrible and lasted for hours- I was wearing contact lenses. Foolish in hindsight, but again, I just didn't think I was the type of person to be pepper-sprayed. The other protester taken with us (a white man) was hit repeatedly on the head when he was on the ground. My friend and I end up with bruises and no bicycles, the loss of which was not recorded at the precinct.

Parts were unclear what was malevolence and what was incompetence. They didn't have anywhere to put us, so we were walked down the street and waited until a van was found. When we arrived at the 90th precinct, the officers there seemed somewhat baffled by who the officers who'd taken us were, our condition, and what we were doing there at all.

We were held and locked in the cells for two hours, issued summonses, and released. Waiting for my stuff in the lobby, a handsome young officer very sincerely asked if I'd been helped yet.

We know that it could have been much worse, and we were protected by our privilege. It is a fraction of the response at protests in communities of color, and what the normalized violence of daily interactions with the police there are. I'm issuing this testimony to add to the clamor: After sitting by passively for the initial looting, the NYPD response to the growing peaceful protests took calm crowds exercising their first amendment right and turned them into scenes of chaos. The curfew was at the very least ill-advised, and at worst an unconstitutional smokescreen for brutality.

To Whom This May Concern,

As a law-abiding citizen and a frontline NYC healthcare worker, who pays THOUSANDS of dollars in taxes, I am furious at the thought that NYC is even considering "defunding the police". The police department can have all my tax money if it means keeping us safe. Have you thought of what defunding the police department actually means for our state? What is more infuriating is that our incompetent elected officials think it is okay to do so. We need law enforcement officers, we need cops in schools, we need cops enforcing the law, we need the NYPD.

Just last month, we were all applauding frontline workers, including law enforcement, for being on the frontlines of COVID19. Why has this changed? Because a citizen passed away in Minneapolis ...who happened to also be a criminal? To clarify, just because someone is a criminal does NOT mean that they deserve to die, regardless of their race. However, the system racism this country faces will not be fixed by defunding the police department. I do not support any budget cuts and I can't imagine any law-abiding citizen would. With that said, I stand against racism, but defunding the police department is not the answer. Let us support the NYPD.

Best Regards,
Gina Abdulahad

To Whom This May Concern,

To add to my testimony earlier, I want to support positive change. I want to end racism. I want us all to be united. No one should live in fear because of their skin color, this is not the America that I know and love. However, I would kindly like elected officials to think of others ways to end systemic racism as I fear that defunding the NYPD will cause an increase in crime and take away resources from victims subjected to rape, kidnapping, etc. I worry that schools will have an increase in crime without law enforcement officers.

Best Regards,
Gina Abdulahad

On Saturday, May 30, 2020 around 5:00pm EST, an NYPD helicopter used military disperse type tactics on peaceful protestors in the Flatbush neighborhood. (Specifically off the streets of Tilden and Bedford where the COVID testing site was being held in the Sears parking lot).

Our rally began around 1pm closer to the entrance of Prospect Park, where we stood for a few hours listening to speakers. I was among the crowd with hundreds of peaceful protestors that began marching down Flatbush Ave deeper into Brooklyn. As this was one of the earlier protests taking place in Brooklyn, we did not have specific #BLM leaders leading the march. I believe the NYPD took advantage of this situation and strategically led us down towards Tilden and Bedford where they quite literally herd and trapped us.

I was towards the front of the march when I realized we were being set up to a nonescape zone. The march attempted to move north up Bedford, but we were being blocked by the NYPD. I then saw with my own eyes, officers (wearing blue riot gear) motion to the marchers with their hands to then turn south on Bedford next to the Sear's parking lot COVID testing site, where again there was no safe exit. The crowd began to fill in this space and put their hands up. Suddenly, an NYPD helicopter that had been tailing the march began to come disturbingly close to the crowd. We all assumed the helicopter was going to possibly land in the Sears parking lot (that is how close it was to the top of this protestor crowd). Instead, it came right above the crowd, swooped down so low that the entire debris and trash from the ground came rushing up on us so quickly and violently, we had no idea what was happening. The helicopter then came down a second time and the crowd collectively ducked.

Slowly protestors were able to leave the area back North on Bedford as did the group I was with. We then witnessed an unidentifiable man with a purple backpack break a car window and run away. What ensued next will forever haunt me. We left the crowd and suddenly (we counted) anywhere from 10-20 cop cars both marked and unmarked began flying down Bedford towards the crowd. We knew of protestors who were then sprayed and arrested.

I'd like to persistently state that this crowd was peaceful. And while trying to move toward North Brooklyn, we were not able to due to NYPD forces blocking us. NYPD helicopters would never use this tactic on white neighborhoods. I have included below NYC helicopter landing codes. There are actual protocol and permits needed for a helicopter to actually LAND. So please explain to me how endangering a crowd is excusable. It's not. It was reckless, and I want those operating that helicopter to be held accountable as I'm sure they are breaking their OWN NYC fire and police codes. Thank you.

1. The Fire Department and the Police Department may temporarily suspend or cancel the helicopter landing operation if conditions exist that endanger public safety.

Helicopter Landing Permit

Permit Description

- Permit to Operate Helicopter Landing (Outside Approved Heliport/Helistop)

Cost of Permit

- \$315.00

Permit Length

- 30 Days

Application Requirements

PERMIT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In addition to compliance with the requirements of the New York City Fire Code, New York City Fire Department Rules, other City, State, and Federal rules, regulations, laws, and codes, the above permit, issued by the New York City Fire Department to conduct a helicopter landing operation in New York City, is subject to the following terms and conditions:

2. The Applicant shall obtain authorization from the New York City Department of Buildings as a condition precedent to the Fire Department's issuance of a Helicopter Landing Operation Permit.
3. The helicopter landing operation shall only be conducted during daylight hours under Visual Flight Rules (VFR).
4. At least two weeks prior to the scheduled landing date, the Applicant shall schedule a pre-landing meeting at the proposed helicopter landing site with the building owner, and the following New York City government agencies: The Fire Department, the local Police Department precinct, the Police Department Aviation Unit, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Buildings if required
5. The Fire Department will conduct a pre-operational site inspection of the proposed helicopter landing area to determine adequate clearances, and the amount of equipment and number of firefighters needed to supply fire protection. Use of the proposed helicopter landing site is subject to Fire Department approval.
6. The Applicant shall provide the Police Department with the ability to monitor communications between the helicopter pilot and the ground during the landing operation, in addition to Applicant's responsibility to enable the Fire Department to monitor these communications pursuant to **Fire Code Section 1110.7** (PDF).
7. The Fire Department may restrict the day of the week and/or the hours of the proposed landing operation.

8. The Fire Department and the Police Department may temporarily suspend or cancel the helicopter landing operation if conditions exist that endanger public safety.
9. The Applicant must promptly notify the Bureau of Operations, Public Transportation Safety Unit (PTSU) of the Fire Department at (718) 999-2066 if for any reason the helicopter landing operation is to be cancelled.
10. The Applicant will be responsible for the cost of providing fire protection at the landing site. An hourly fee per Fire Department apparatus, as set forth in **Fire Code Section A03.1(23)** (PDF), is required. The Fire Department will bill Applicant for the costs of fire protection at the operation site and the Applicant shall promptly remit payment.

On Wednesday, June 3, 2020, I was one of about 200 peaceful protestors in NYC who were arrested for violating curfew. After 5 hours of marching, with no violence and no NYPD reports of destruction of property, our group of approximately 2,000 (NBC New York estimate) was broken apart and surrounded by police between 50th & 51st Streets and 3rd Ave. This occurred at 9:02PM, according to my watch.

We walked in peace, we kneeled in peace, and despite all this, I still witnessed police brutality against my cooperative peers for violating curfew by one hour. Immediately upon my arrest, I asked my officer what I was being charged with, and he stated, "Disorderly conduct and breaking curfew." This was later changed to just "violating curfew." This is my account of the events, and I have called out any facts that I learned from peers and did not personally witness:

The arrests began before the 9PM rush: A White woman with a sign saying, "I WILL BE YOUR HUMAN SHIELD," who stood peacefully between the protestors and the police and/or vehicles throughout the march, was one of the first to be plucked from the crowd around 8:50PM. A man walking his bike next to me as we turned on to 3rd Ave was told by an officer, "You can't have that here, come with me," and was taken away. Another protestor I spoke with later said that she was separated from the larger group by the officers on bikes. They followed her and others down 51st St saying, "Go home," before officers from the opposite side said, "Get on your knees" and arrested the group.

When police rushed us after 9PM from both sides of 3rd Avenue, I knelt with most others and we all put our hands up and said, "don't shoot." I was facing north, and a line of police in riot gear on bikes formed a barricade in front of the officers behind them. Again, there was no violence and no destruction preceding this. I confirmed this with my arresting officer immediately after being apprehended. I also asked him if he believed there was an issue in his institution, if he saw the validity of these protests, and he said, "I really can't answer that with my camera on."

I was at the front of the group on my knees facing north on 3rd Avenue. Officers arrested us one-by-one, picking us from the crowd of peaceful protestors. Though I was not physically harmed by my arresting officer, I witnessed police shoving my fellow protestors. This occurred during these arrests and in the rush preceding: people on bikes were knocked over without being told to stop and of my peers were violently shoved to the ground as we were corralled. I've spoken with several other protestors from the same event since that night, some arrested, some allowed to leave. From their various vantage points, all testify that they witnessed the NYPD pepper spray and beat peaceful protestors with batons.

I spent approximately 8 hours in custody, 6.5 spent handcuffed in zip ties. (9:05PM-3:29AM, only having them cut once around 9:30PM to have my backpack removed. They were then re-zipped and my arresting officer was instructed to make them tighter by another officer. Yes, they do hurt as much as people say.) I spent over one hour on a bus with 26 seats and 25 people, three of whom declared that they were healthcare workers - two in their scrubs and one with the fact marked on his shirt. There was no social distancing and no way for them or for any of us to fix our masks if they had fallen off/been removed for photos before boarding. My mask remained

off for the entirety of my time on the bus. Several of my peers I met later were picked up earlier than I was, and they estimated spending 2-3 hours on their buses.

We stood in a line outside of the precinct for approximately 2-3 hours due to the obvious lack of coherent process and overwhelming number of “bodies,” as they so kindly refer to us. While there, my officer seemed apologetic and even directly said “this is ridiculous,” “there’s usually a designated precinct open for mass arrests like this, but for some reason it’s closed,” and even, “sorry about this,” when having to remove the shoelaces from my sneakers. (Important reminder: I am a small, White woman. My officer trying to joke with me and apologize, and his friend asking me about my work/personal life does not and did not happen to all apprehended persons. This is White privilege. And if he actually was sorry, he would have shared these opinions with his superiors - I asked, and he had not done so.)

A woman of color in line behind me was bleeding from a gash in her knee, her ankle twisted and swollen from being tackled while standing on the sidewalk - all because, as she and her two cousins stated, they were leaving a separate protest at Gracie Mansion at 8:15PM to hail a cab. Though an officer offered first aid, she (understandably) said, “I don’t want any of you to touch me.”

The blatant disregard for the pandemic throughout the process was clear: my arresting officer wore no mask, along with the vast majority of his peers. About 15 minutes after my arrest, I asked why he wasn’t wearing a mask while being within 6 feet of me. He said, “I already had COVID and have the antibodies.” When asked if he knew about the new strains that the CDC announced it was monitoring in April (2019-nCoV), he said no and simply replied, “it’s optional for [NYPD] to wear masks.” I asked him if all the other officers without masks (again, the majority), had been tested for antibodies. He said he didn’t know. Mayor de Blasio’s June 2nd Executive Order enacting the curfew first lists an extension of the May 9th State of Emergency due to the threat of COVID-19. The NYPD did not make that aspect of our safety a priority.

Note: the vast majority of protestors wore masks. The few who didn’t have one were often offered a mask by protestors handing out supplies. We actively care about the safety of our peers – the NYPD did not show this last night nor in any of the other five protests I’ve participated in over the last week.

I was released at 4:30AM, and a non-profit organization greeted me a block away from the center and asked if I needed a ride home. They had tables with food, water, first aid, information on legal support, and more.

4:30AM. The MTA shuts down at 1AM now with COVID hours. I was an hour’s walk from home in another borough, alone, in the dark. They showed me love, they called me an Uber to get home safe. Did the NYPD ensure that I would get home alive after arresting me for a peaceful protest? No. These volunteers are the heroes of that night and every night. I got home safe at 5:30AM because of THEM.

All lives can’t matter until Black lives matter, and the NYPD must be held accountable.

Testimony of Hope McLaughlin,
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Hope. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

As a former public school teacher, I witnessed first-hand the critical need for more mental health resources—particularly in low-income communities, where children and residents of all ages do not have the resources that they need and are therefore statistically more likely to experience trauma (which of course causes emotional distress). In the school district where I worked, only a small handful of mental health professionals were employed to serve the entire district (12 schools), and those employees had very limited resources to even provide proper support to students. Often, school security guards and police were called to “address” student behavior that really required immediate in-person support from mental health professionals. The root of the behavior (usually trauma of some kind) would of course go unaddressed—the students were unfairly punished with inappropriate consequences (sometimes violent in nature), missed out on valuable class time, and did not have anyone to process their emotions or the experience with. Almost all public schools lack the mental health resources necessary to support their students, and police cannot be called upon to respond to people in emotional distress; their history of responding with violence puts vulnerable people in danger. If mental health professionals were called instead, they could de-escalate many situations that police officers escalate with violence. The same applies outside of the school environment. The positive impact that a program like this would have on a community with high trauma and limited mental health resources would be tangible and long-lasting, to say the very least.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years

when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51— June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

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Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed

James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed

Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded

Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded

Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed

Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

I am a resident of Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. The City Council must defund the police. Police shouldn't get the lions share of community resources. They must be reduced to more equitably distribute community resources to education, health, housing, food safety, and other social safety nets, which will provide more public safety than any amount of armed police. Not only should police funding be significantly reduced, but the idea of public safety needs to be totally redefined. There are entrenched racist policies and practice that will require not only the removal of Commissioner Dermot Shea, who has commanded, watched, and refused to acknowledge the police's brutal use of force against protesters. But also the total restricting of the police department and, if that's not possible, dismantling of the NYPD.

A dangerously high NYPD budgets have allowed cops to kill, arrest, and harass black and brown people with impunity and to arm themselves with equipment that was designed for a battle field, which then causes police officers to treat the public they are hired to protect as the "enemy." And the police's view of the enemy has overwhelmingly been black and brown people. I will no longer, and should have never, supported candidates for elective office that do not promise and act to defund the NYPD.

Clare Wiseman

I am writing as a White resident of Barnard College faculty housing looking out on Morningside Park. The scourge of police hostility to human life was put on full disgusting display following the death of Tessa Majors outside the booth of a "public safety officer." From the language used by police union spokespeople, to the systemic racist practices of NYPD deployment in my neighborhood, to individual officers' ongoing disregard for public safety, health, and life itself in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic—the NYPD and the carceral system that feeds it is deleterious to society. Some additional personal testimony, in reverse chronology:

In 2018 I began recording the scene on 110th St. in Manhattan in which 20 police officers surrounded a Black man who was suffering a drug overdose. They ultimately guided him to an ambulance. Multiple passersby thanked me for recording, but what really struck me was that the guy who'd called 911 also thanked me for recording the police actions. He wasn't sure he'd done the right thing, calling 911 for his friend dying before his eyes. How many people die because calling 911 might incur the homicidal wrath of the NYPD rather than the salutary aid of first responders who value life?

In 2017 our two year old daughter posed a question to the "public safety officer" in that very booth where Tessa Majors would one day seek and be deprived of help: What are you doing? His answer: Guarding the president. As in Columbia U. president Lee Bollinger. My husband and I laughed bitterly over that answer. NYPD, security guards, and all armed officers backed by the power of the State are inherently anti-public safety. They are

occupiers of public space, entrusted by powerful elites to protect the interests of those elites at whatever cost, including the cost of human life.

In 2015 our family's Latinx babysitter, a single mother, relayed her experience with calling 911 after her teenage son, who was struggling with mental illness, threatened suicide with a kitchen knife. The police arrived, and when she opened the door, they barged in, grabbed her son and dragged him out into the hallway, where they proceeded to pin him down. He called out to his mother, whom the police barricaded in her apartment. He called out, "I can't breathe!" She begged them to release their grip, explaining he was asthmatic, explaining he needed an ambulance. This was not long after NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo's murder of Eric Garner. Eventually they had her assist him calming her son. She regretted calling 911.

In 2010, in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, my Black neighbor's apartment was unlawfully invaded by two NYPD officers who mistook him for someone they had a warrant for. They pinned him to his stove and cuffed him while his 12-year-old son called his mom on the phone and told her through tears what was happening. One officer implored his partner to acknowledge their mistake and leave, but the alpha officer refused. These White NYPD officers charged my neighbor for resisting arrest over the crime of carrying an open container of alcohol. These Einsteins wrote down my neighbor's apartment number as the scene of the crime—so obviously they were in full violation of his rights and actually put the fact of their unlawful entry in writing in their police report. He successfully sued the city. It enrages me that I pay taxes

for the ongoing sustenance of such troglodyte police.

In 2007, also in Crown Heights, another Black neighbor, Carol Simon, was mistakenly gunned down in a dispute between rival gangs. The NYPD, completely absent from the neighborhood in the days preceding the shoot-out (when tensions might have been de-escalated by trained officers of a true public-safety system), appeared in droves and stuck around for weeks, guarding the front door of our building 24-7. The hostility of these NYPD officers to all residents of our building was eye-opening, to say the least. In my naivete about their motives for being there, I asked a young blond officer if they'd made any progress in the investigation, and the young officer replied that this was just what happens with "these people." His contempt for my Black neighbors—and for me as a White person for living among Black people—was chilling to the bone. He looked like he was barely 20 years old. Over time, I've come to realize that his disposition—of contempt for the public he allegedly serves—was not an exception but the rule.

It is time to divest from police. Please consider joining the Abolition movement. Imagine how many lives might be saved if the resources we waste on a homicidal racist system were poured into salutary community initiatives and aid.

Dear councilmembers,

My name is Sam Isenstein and I am a resident of Bed Stuy, Brooklyn. I live in a brownstone near the intersection of Hancock St. and Tompkins Ave. I am writing about a disturbing event that transpired in the early morning on Wednesday June 3rd, at approximately 12:15 A.M. My wife and I were watching television in our apartment when we heard a number of car doors closing, a scuffle, and doors slamming on the street.

Upon looking out of our window, we saw no less than six police officers standing outside the next door building. The officers were surrounding one of our neighbors on the sidewalk. Another of our neighbors leaned out of the building's window, having just gotten inside. He was shouting at the police to get off his property, as they were standing on his stoop. The officers did not comply, and continued to aggravate the situation verbally.

I leaned out the window and held my phone out to begin recording. One of the officers looked up at the noise of my window opening, and shone a high-powered flashlight at me — and kept it on me, preventing my phone camera from recording effectively as they surrounded and intimidated our neighbor. The police never stated why they were there, what they were doing, who they were looking for, or why they were questioning this man — in clear violation of the NYS Right-to-Know law. They had arrived in two unmarked cars and did not announce themselves as police, rushing at the neighbors as they sat on their stoop having a conversation.

After about ten minutes of intimidation, a garbage truck turned onto our street, and the police immediately got into the two unmarked cars and drove away. We spoke with our neighbors afterwards, who were understandably shaken by the experience. We are shaken as well. We witnessed a completely unnecessary show of force and intimidation, at the taxpayer's expense.

Where do our priorities lie? How can we make the decision to spend money on brutality and unnecessary policing, and not on necessities and infrastructure and education, and still call ourselves a functioning society? Please take this testimony into account as you work through the difficult and necessary days ahead, and know that you have the support of the people and the community — if you choose to defund the NYPD. I would also like to voice my full support of Proposed Int. No. 721-A, and all the articles contained within.

I watched the live testimony on the morning of June 9th, and was beyond disappointed with Deputy Commissioner Tucker's, and the other officers', responses to questioning. And I thank the council members who are holding the NYPD to task as they flagrantly violate our rights. We are demanding nothing less than accountability.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. Though this website only allows for written testimony, I have a video of the incident that I am happy to make available upon request. I only ask that if video is requested, I am provided with notice to obtain consent from the neighbors who were the victims in this incident.

Sincerely,



Sam Isenstein

Public Safety Testimony

Isha Kathuria
Manhattan, NY 10026
June 8th 2020

To The New York City Council,

I am testifying to inform you of an incident I witnessed on Sunday, June 7th 2020 at 2:50PM at the intersection of 70th and 5th. I was on the sidewalk waiting for a peaceful march to pass by and witnessed an NYPD officer use unwarranted physical intimidation against someone I believe to be an organizer.

Two organizers followed behind the group of protesters to keep the NYPD motorcade at a slight distance and stopped for a few seconds to allow for more space. Two officers (driver and front seat passenger) in the front left car of the motorcade (blue Ford), left their vehicle and made sudden, aggressive movement toward **only** the male organizer who was either Black or a non-Black POC. One of the officers also seemed to move his hand to his hip, implying that he would pull out a weapon. The other organizer was a white female, and they did not seem to have the intention of intimidating her. The officer also yelled back to the others "we have to get them." Another officer behind them instructed to stand down and then they got back in the car.

This concerns me for several reasons:

- 1) The officer should not have left his vehicle unattended
- 2) If the goal was simply to keep the organizers moving, there were alternatives that could have been exhausted prior to the use of physical intimidation
- 3) Had all other alternatives been exhausted, physical intimidation and threat of violence were still unnecessary, as the protesters were entirely peaceful and posed no risk to the officers or general public safety
- 4) The officer clearly singled out the Black organizer (it would not have been acceptable or warranted had they lunged at both organizers or singled out the white female either)

Unfortunately, I was unable to capture footage, but still wanted to bring this to your attention, as it concerns public safety. Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony.

Sincerely,
Isha

Dear City Council,

I write to you to express my concern regarding current policies governing the New York Police. There are some which I believe are harmful, ineffective, and unfair. Please consider revising, repealing, or replacing these policies with more sensible ones.

The first and most specific policy in question is the civil rights law in article 5, section 50A, which concerns the personnel records of police officers, firefighters, and correction officers. This section states that “All personnel records used to evaluate performance...shall be considered confidential and not subject to inspection or review without the express written consent of such police officer... except as may be mandated by lawful court order.”

Considering that the primary function of police officers is to “protect and serve” the public, I don’t see why it should be that the public does not have immediate access to an officer's record, which may include complaints, violations, or even crimes. If time and time again an officer is abusing their power, shouldn’t that be something the public is made aware of? Why should we have to wait until a court mandates the release of the records, especially considering that the court holds police officers in higher favor than the general public? It seems hypocritical that the police department has unconstrained access to the criminal records of the public, but we are unable to see the history of their violations.

Cops who have clean records would be unaffected by the repeal of 50a. It is only those who have a history of abuse of power whose wrongdoings would come to the light of day. But isn’t that what we want? Justice and accountability for crimes should not be reserved for the public. Police officers should be held to the same standard of conduct that the public is. We can’t know for sure that they are until we are made aware of their conduct, which could very well include crimes gone unpunished. Please repeal 50a.

The next grievance is less specific but equally important. It concerns the process for becoming a police officer, with which I believe there are flaws. Before I outline the requirements, I want to remind the reader of the tremendous responsibility that is bestowed upon a police officer. They are tasked with operating lethal weapons (and using them judiciously), dealing with mentally unstable and often violent criminals, administering aid to endangered citizens, and enforcing laws which are agreed upon by society. Since these are such great responsibilities, we should be extremely selective about who we entrust with them. Are we?

Currently, according to the nyc.gov website, the entire list of requirements for becoming a police officer spans a shockingly brief *six* bullet points. *Anyone* who meets these requirements can become a police officer. Five out of these six requirements are purely objective measures (like passing a written test or medical screening), meaning that the decision to hire is almost entirely devoid of the consensus of a hiring officer, the public, or any other entity that is concerned about the motivations or character of the candidate. The only remotely scrutinous requirement seems to be a vague “character assessment,” which even the NYPD candidate booklet does not adequately describe. The great number of officers whose conduct both on and off duty is questionable indicates that this mysterious “character assessment” is not sufficient.

The result of this lax hiring policy is that it allows people to become officers who are not ready for the tremendous responsibilities listed above. Sometimes, it’s the motivations that are poor. It is obviously possible for someone who wants unearned “respect” to become an officer so that they may exert power over others. I am not saying that this is a majority of cops, but we shouldn’t have a policy where it is possible for this person to become one. We have seen countless examples, especially in recent weeks, of the abuse of power that is obviously a result of these poor motivations. It is an established tenet of psychology that without a strong moral background, great access to power corrupts. Some part of the hiring process should place greater weight on the psychological history of the applicant, as well as their motivations and morals, be them implicit or explicit.

Another area in which the hiring process falls short is its minimal requirement for education. Currently, 45 credits (equivalent to about three semesters) of higher education are required, with a minimum GPA of 2.0 (an average of a C in every class). While I understand that college performance is not a perfect indicator of intelligence, these are certainly low standards for a person who will be required to make quick, rational decisions that implicate human life. I also think it is of utmost importance for an officer to have an understanding of the role they play in society they choose to serve. A background in political science, philosophy, or psychology that could be a part of the police training program would be helpful.

An even more important requirement for a police officer should be an understanding of the laws that they are expected to enforce. At no point in the Police Officer Candidate Resource Booklet is there a description of the laws and procedures that an officer is supposed to be familiar with. There is also no indication that they will be required to learn them at any point. Although there is a written assessment, given that it is designed for a borderline high school educated person to be able to pass, I doubt it gives due diligence to the complex system of laws and rights that takes years for lawyers and judges to master. At what point in their career do they learn of such things? I imagine it is part of the curriculum, since officers must be able to recognize when a crime is actually being committed. If the law is not completely understood, though, then it becomes up to the officers discretion when to detain a citizen. We have seen how catastrophic the results of this can be. This has become painfully obvious in the last few weeks, when protestors who seem to be obeying the law are arbitrarily detained or even assaulted with non-lethal (or sometimes lethal) force.

I trust our legislators to generate the policies that will address some of these issues. Although I mostly outlined the problems with the current policies, I think that the solutions are fairly straightforward. We need better systems to hold police officers accountable for their actions, and in some cases, crimes. We also need to be far more selective with whom we bestow the tremendous responsibility of policing. More emphasis needs to be placed on the motivations and the education of our officers. While this may decrease the total number of qualified officers, the increased quality and efficacy of the Force would mean we need less policing. Please make it a priority to create legislation that addresses these problems.

Sincerely,
Jared Torres, a concerned citizen

May 30th Sat 5 pm Bedford and Tilden This began as a peaceful march, and as the march progressed NYPD interrupted multiple times with pepper spray, unprovoked. Protesters ran away from the pepper spray and mostly avoided the assaults, and continued moving forward. At one point three cops approached three women and three teenaged boys in the crowd, seeming to target them amongst others for no apparent reason and began beating them with batons. They were swinging batons like baseball bats. They hit one woman until she was bleeding badly from the head. At this point, the crowd became panicked and extremely upset, and began to resist the attacks of the police and to push back. No civilians were armed, but at this point some destruction of police property happened in response to the beatings. There were no outside agitators, it was just unarmed civilians, but the NYPD clearly took an orderly march and escalated it as much as possible, then continued to attack with mace, batons, and shields. They were both swinging batons and stabbing protesters with them. As they made arrests, I saw multiple officers place their knees on the necks of civilians they arrested, often piling 5 cops on one unarmed person. On May 29th, at another orderly march, I specifically saw this happen to a young black man, teens or early twenties, who was tackled by 4 cops, thrown to the ground and an officer pressed one knee to the back of his neck, and one knee on his back for about three minutes, without interruption, using his full weight on the boy. I have footage of this event, which I have also submitted to the council.

Testimony of Jillian Lipman
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Jillian. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

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We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

As someone who is not neurotypical, who has experienced more than one mental health crisis in my life, I know how important it is to have access to someone in the medical field. It is so important to also have community-- peers who have experienced something similar in their lives, someone to be there and say, “this isn’t permanent. You are going to be okay. I am here to listen.”

EMTs get 180 hours of training that is specific to medical interventions and they know how to help. This is their field. This is not a radical statement, this is just a truth. If someone is in a crisis and needs medical help, send someone who is a trained emergency medical technician.

I know that as a white woman I have greater access to medical help and more positive outcomes when seeking medical help in general. I have been taught that I can count on the police when I need help. But I also know that when black people call the police asking for help when they or their loved ones are experiencing a mental health crisis, they are far more likely than I am to experience hostility, violence, or worse. People who need help do not need someone with a gun. People who need help do not need someone that they fear. People who need help do not need a department who has proven time and time again that they are not able to help in these situations, but actually that they often escalate the situation, resulting in black death.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

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Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed

Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded

Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded

Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed

Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

**Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.
Now.**

My name is Joey Cannizzaro. I'm a resident of Brooklyn and a victim of NYPD brutality.

In February of 2010 I was walking with my ex boyfriend in Bushwick at around midnight when two men dressed all in black got out of an unmarked car, pushed us against the wall of a building and began searching our pockets. We assumed we were being robbed so we struggled to escape unsuccessfully. They said they were police so I asked to see their badges. The officers refused. I then began to demand they show me their badges it to me to prove they were police. Instead one of the officers unholstered his gun, held it up in front of my face and said "this is my badge, faggot." They called us faggots the entire time, pretty much every time they addressed us, making it clear the attack was motivated by homophobia, that it was a hate crime. Now we were convinced they were not police officers so we were screaming for help at the top of our lungs, screaming for our lives. My ex managed to escape and ran down the street before being caught and dragged back. The officer who had me continued to harass me, slammed me against the wall if I struggled, threw me to the sidewalk and handcuffed me, leaving me face down on the frozen ground with bruises on my face and arms from the abuse. I continued to scream for help and for someone to call 911 when a woman looked out her window in horror and went back inside to do so. A marked police car arrived and I thought the men would run away, but I heard them talking to the police and the next time I could see what was happening the two men who had started the attack on us were gone and two uniformed officers continued their abusive behavior, calling us faggots, throwing our bodies around painfully when they moved us, and handcuffing us so tightly that I was in terrible pain and ended up with scrapes on both wrists. I called them homophobes several times and they just laughed at us. However when we got to the police station where we would be held, one of the officers pushed me up against the car, reached around my body, and groped my crotch while pressing his groin into me from behind. I had already been searched thoroughly more than once.

The abuse continued at the hands of the entirety of precinct 90. This is no exaggeration. They continued to call us faggots even in view of their supervisor. They would yell or bang on the bars to wake us up anytime we drifted off for a moment. Several officers took photos and videos of us while they mocked us, calling us both faggots and my ex boyfriend (who has red hair) Carrot Top and saying they "had to show their friends this."

Eventually we were transferred to the central holding cell in downtown Brooklyn. Here we were held in a small cell with 20-30 other people in disturbing conditions. The toilet was broken and overflowing with feces. One of the other cellmates threw up blood on the floor. He was denied medical attention and no one came in to clean up the feces or blood or vomit. Many in the cell were yelling for them to do something about it and they responded by telling us to shut up and confiscating the only jug of water available to us as punishment. It was not returned while I was in captivity so we were without water for hours. The total amount of time was upwards of 20 hours before we were allowed to see a lawyer, a public defender who had no interest in my story about what happened and told me I needed to plead guilty in order to get out without a criminal record and that it would be dangerous to do otherwise. Don't speak in front of the judge he advised me. They let us go with the stipulation that we not be arrested again in the following 6 months. The only law we broke was that they found an empty pipe in my coat pocket which they accused me of using to smoke marijuana. They also charged us with resisting arrested even though they were violating our constitutional rights by searching us without cause or consent and

even though possession of paraphernalia was not and is not an arrestable offense. We were not under arrest. This seems to be why they didn't pursue charges against us.

After the incident I was so traumatized that, though I desperately wanted to sue, I was unable to even think about entering another court without being overcome with panic. I began crossing the street and shaking with anxiety when I saw police. I regret terribly that I did not even try to get justice or prevent these men from hurting other people. But since the entire department participated in the abuse it seemed impossible to prevent that or win a lawsuit. Furthermore the "arresting officers" were not the men who began the attack; those men disappeared when the other officers arrived and no one would identify them to us, making it impossible to pursue them. And now the statute of limitations appears to be up so I can't pursue justice now that I'm capable emotionally of doing so.

I have spent the last 5 years receiving intensive trauma therapy to try and heal the acute PTSD I have from the incident. It still prevents me from living a normal life and severe panic episodes and flashback episodes have disabled me and made me unable to maintain my job as a college professor. Because of this I have been barely able to work or support myself.

I truly hope my testimony will play some small part in changing this predatory police system, one so corrupt that entire precincts not only cover up sadistic behavior but encourage and participate in it as a group. I will never be able to get back the parts of my life and my self that I lost because of the life-threatening terror I was subjected to, but I pray that those who read this testimony will feel my pain, and that of so many others, and decide that the police as we know it should be abolished in favor of public safety services with robust accountability.

Sincerely,

Joey (Joseph) Cannizzaro

Hi

I spoke at the recent meeting but as I spoke very late in the day I wanted to add to the record if possible. Recently I started attending the peaceful protests to end police brutality. I had heard about how two nights before a friend had to stand between protestors and the cops from beating them. This was in Manhattan.

On June 4th I attended the peaceful march from cadman plaza over the Brooklyn bridge into Manhattan and went through foley square. Crossing the bridge there were many cops in riot gear - many without masks. I asked why and was ignored.

I witnessed a black man trying to engage with cops and saying “he was in pain” with what all is going on, and is this a joke to them. It was heartbreaking to see cops with this attitude and smirking, not caring at all.

The worst came when we got to foley square where a lot of cops were. We came to a standoff of sorts as they decided to make a wall around us. The worst that was done to police was words. That was it. No threats of violence from any protestor. I tried to engage the cops and ask why don't you wear masks? It makes us feel you don't care about us. One cop, a short rotund man just smirked and went , “were supposed to social distance too,” and I said there are many feet between us.

I did as many white protestors do and stood in front as we addressed the cops. Two in white shirts were at front no masks. And there was one cop there, who I later found out was a retired cop. Why do the police need more help?? I am told by a fellow protestor that he was there with his brother “haggerty.” This man looked like he had roid rage and I was very afraid as he kept squeezing what I think may have been mace or something in his hand.

I asked him at one point why he wasn't wearing a mask and was told he gave it “to one of you.” I offered him an extra to which he refused . All of the cops were aggressive in stance and holding their batons at ready for the great crime of at most people raising their voices to them.

I am including a link to video of this cop I mentioned. He also tried to incite violence and this black woman tried to call him on it. He looked so enraged we all encouraged her to walk away as I was very afraid he would attack her. I even mentioned this to the protest leader and when said cop say me talking about him his look terrified me. A white shirt also put his hand out and told me to step back when I went to put a comforting hand on this protestor.

<https://twitter.com/youlovechic/status/1268717579629211649?s=21>

I am attaching other photos . More of cops without masks. The last one is from grand army plaza, the rest from cadman plaza and the manhattan. Also, a friend, Laura Heywood, spoke to cops at the NY 10th precinct. She shared that she was out and about in the morning and came across cops without masks. She asked politely why and was informed they were “over it,” and when she asked , “don't you care about the protestors” the response was no.

If a cop can not handle wearing a mask, and isn't serving and protecting, they must resign.

Thanks very much - I appreciate the council pushing to hold the police accountable.

I am also very disturbed by habeas corpus being revoked. Only one person, council member Menchaca brought it up. This must be addressed as it puts us all in great danger and gives the police even more power.

Johanna Griesé
Resident of Sunset Park, Brooklyn

--

Johanna Griesé

Actress | Singer | Producer | Director

[Theatrical Reel](#)

Starring as Catharina in *Mysteries at the Museum* [HERE](#)

Now starring in Book Trailer for "[FACE](#)" by Jessica Helfand

[Twitter](#) || [Instagram](#) || **IMDB || [Facebook](#) || [Backstage](#)**





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LIVES
MATTER**

Brooklyn
Academy of
Music



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WORK
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Newmark Knight Frank

GREGORYS COFFEE

Phone





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Honorable Ruben Diaz Jr., Bronx Borough President

MS. EVONNE CAPERS
Board Chairperson

MR. JOHN SANCHEZ
District Manager

6/9/2020

New York City Council Committee on Public Safety
Council Member Donovan J. Richards, Chair
June 6, 2020
Re: Intro 536-A

Good Morning Chairman Richards and Members of the Committee on Public Safety,

My name is John Sanchez and I am the District Manager of Bronx Community Board #6. I am writing to you all in order to express my full support for Intro 536-A, which would effectively ban the use of chokeholds within the New York Police Department (NYPD) by establishing chokeholds and other such restraints as a misdemeanor.

Our community board consists of an extremely racially and ethnically diverse population within the culturally-rich South Bronx, including Bathgate, Belmont, East Tremont, and West Farms Square. Given recent events and mass protests concerning the asphyxiation of George Floyd by former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin, issues concerning police accountability and banning the excessive use of force are salient within our community and high priority for our constituents.

This legislation takes major steps in ensuring the safety of city residents and visitors by barring the use of the chokehold and other such restraints by the New York Police Department and instead, requiring the Department to utilize alternative, safer de-escalation tactics. A multitude of other cities have already eliminated the usage of the chokehold in favor of less lethal methods, including Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and several others. Statistically, these cities have seen great success in decreasing police killings per capita by approximately 22% after banning the utilization of the chokehold and such restraint measures ([Source: Campaign Zero](#)).

While chokeholds are currently banned under New York Police Department policy, there are still numerous citations and videos documenting their continued usage by officers. This legislation would directly prevent this excessive use of force by criminalizing the use of chokeholds and other deadly techniques as a misdemeanor, which would hold officers accountable outside of just the police department. I fully support this legislation and urge the committee to recommend approval to the full Council.

Sincerely,

John Sanchez
District Manager
Bronx Community Board 6

Honorable Ritchie Torres,
City Council Member, 15th Council District

Honorable Rafael Salamanca Jr.,
City Council Member, 17th Council District

On Tuesday, June 2nd at 8:13 pm I watched from my window on W. Broadway in Lower Manhattan three black teenagers with skateboards cross from the Southwest corner of Broome Street in to the Southeast corner of Broome Street. They were approached by four police who came from the Northeast corner of Broome at W. Broadway. The officers, two men and one woman began speaking to them. At this point I went downstairs to see what was going on and from my door could see these kids had been zip tied and searched or patted down. Ten to twelve other people were out at this time, some filming the incident - 13 minutes past curfew - but these people - mostly adults - were told to simply go home and were not approached or arrested. These three people who were arrested and taken away were not given the opportunity to leave or go home, from what I could see and hear.

-Kathryn A. Parker

212 960 8955

The following is a full account by me, Logan Boynton, of the police brutality and misconduct I and my partner, Kelsey Barnhart, received while peacefully protesting on June 3rd, 2020. I have included as many relevant details as I remember. Photos of the injuries I received from the police are included after the account.

The protest started at Washington Sq Park at 4pm and moved NW in the streets--thousands of people, peacefully chanting and showing support. There was no violence. We were at the end of the group, offering water bottles to people (14th St and 8th Ave) when we saw a young black man being roughly arrested, surrounded by dozens of cops, in a situation that didn't seem right. We stopped to film (standing on a median) and witness in case the cops got violent. While we watched, another man of color rode by on a bike and said something in support of the protest to the cops, and immediately multiple cops swarmed him and shoved him off his bike. Kelsey ran forward to try to help him and was angrily thrown by an higher-ranking officer in a white shirt, before being pinned and zip-cuffed. I saw this and ran towards him, but didn't get far before another cop shoved me down on top of an NYPD bike and then pinned and cuffed me. This was in the span of maybe 1 minute. Six of us total were put into a hot van, including the original man, the man on the bike, and two more protest attendees (one of which was literally told by the officer handling her "I don't know why you're being arrested.") While we were waiting to be put in the van, we overheard the white shirt officer saying things like "We'll charge this one with assaulting an officer, and her with resisting arrest" but when we asked what we were actually being charged with, no one would answer.

We were held on two different busses for three hours (all the while with incredibly painful and tight zip cuffs) before being taken to a Brooklyn containment facility. We were then processed and put in holding cells until we were finally released at 4:30 am.

Miscellaneous additional things:

- **TIMELINE** (hazy, because we didn't have watches or phones, but periodically asked officers) **4:30** we were arrested and put in a sweltering van. **5:30** we are moved to a (thankfully cooler) bigger bus. This one had literal dried blood on several plastic seats. We were taken to Brooklyn and at **7:30** brought into the precinct. Processed in various stages with no accurate updates or info from **7:30pm-4:30am**. Saw dozens of others brought in and out of holding during that time, mostly curfew-related. Most of them were arrested less than 20 minutes after 8pm curfew, and had been peacefully protesting. All were young (20-35) and pretty diverse.

- While waiting on the bus to be brought into the precinct, one of the officers asked us verbatim, "Were you paid to protest? What's your stake in this?" Which completely baffled us.

- When Kelsey was brought into the precinct, the first thing they did was sit him down in front of FBI agents, who interviewed him and said they would **PAY HIM** for "any tips about organized harm coming to the NYPD." I wasn't interviewed.

- The first two women I saw brought in for breaking curfew were women of color. One was 3 blocks from her house, filming the arrest of the other. Cops did not listen to her when she said she was nearly home.

- The **WHOLE** time, we were not told what we were being charged with. I only know that it's officially "Obstruction of Government Admin" (whatever that means) because my arresting officer put my

paperwork down where I could read it. When I asked him specifically, while being fingerprinted, he said "Obstruction something, I don't know, I wasn't there" (mind you, he was the one holding my arm while putting me in the police van.)

- Kelsey got the same charge I did, but in the report, the white shirt cop straight up LIED and said he "jumped on an officer." Even our arresting officer sounded dubious. Kelsey is slender and doesn't weigh much, and there is no way he would win in a physical match with this cop. I only wish we had been able to see the guy's name and badge number. While cuffing Kelsey the guy got in his face and said "You think you're so tough, huh?"

- One of the men arrested with us had his bike with him, and he told us the FIRST thing the cops did before arrest him was LIE and say his bike was stolen--he has had that bike for years and rides it constantly. (note, he is black. See how easy it was for the NYPD to come up with this? It happens all the time.)

- We were not allowed any communication during the whole 12 hour ordeal. I asked about a phone call and was told they "didn't have phones there."

- When we were first arrested, though we couldn't get any straight answers, our arresting officer 100% told us we would likely get nothing more than a summons and would be released before curfew at 8pm. The first one of us to be released got out at midnight. While in the holding cell, at maybe 9pm, I asked an officer and she said I "definitely wouldn't spend all night" there. I got out at 4:30am.

- The man on the bike was released earliest with only a summons, thankfully (probably the cops realized there no way to justify what they did.)

- I have many, many bruises but got off significantly easier than others I saw/heard about. A woman in the holding cell said one person she was detained with had her arm VISIBLY broken while being cuffed, and it was nearly an hour before cops called an ambulance.

I hope this provides some insight to how absolutely insane this whole circus is. The amount of confusion, misinformation, and straight up lies from the NYPD during the whole process was reprehensible. This was our first protest ever, and also our first time breaking quarantine since 3/15, so it was crazy that we would be targeted as if we were instigators.

Also, dozens of people were filming us being arrested but I haven't been able to find any footage, I am still looking! I am tall, white, with a shaved head, and I was wearing a black v-neck t-shirt, maroon leggings and mask, and grey crossbody backpack. Kelsey is also tall and white, with shaggy light brown hair, and he was wearing a red hat, black mask, black long sleeve shirt, grey sweats, and black backpack.



Online Testimony

To: New York City Council, Committee on Public Safety
From: Sara Elena Solfanelli
Date: June 9, 2020
Re: Public Safety in New York City

Now is the time to bring to life an equitable, bold vision for public safety.

For far too long, we have relied on an antiquated system that was designed not for “public safety”, but rather to protect the property rights of a few at the peril of many. The system of “policing” was built around entirely different concepts of “property”, different threats to “safety”, and uninformed about and unconcerned with how the system would adapt and evolve as society changed and communities developed.

Our present-day “threats to safety” would be unrecognizable by those who created the police force – in fact, they would likely look at our society and our communities in awe and admiration, questioning why we would even need any type of “police force” as they created it to combat the issues at that time.

We have the benefit now, backed by science and data, to understand that quite often an individual’s alleged unlawful behavior or activity (or inactivity), is far better addressed by people with expertise, training, and licenses than by someone who has learned “laws and procedures” with the purpose of making an arrest. Specialized task forces should be handling more than 90% of the matters that our current police system is called to combat.

Let’s stop asking police to be therapists, mediators, doctors, counselors, and baby-sitters. Police do not have the experience or skills to talk to someone with mental health concerns or abuses substances. Police do not have any interest in moving a homeless person off a bench, with no support as to where that person can find safe shelter. Police should not carry a deadly weapon to stop a car that has a broken taillight. Police do not have the training to de-escalate, without force, a dispute between unarmed, angry neighbors.

But there are people who have studied, trained, and developed specific skills to handle all of the above.

When there is an active shooter, we need a specialized force to respond to that immediate, open, objective threat to public safety. That can be a form of our police.

When there is someone attacking people on the street with a weapon, we need a specialized force to respond, who has the training to observe, investigate, and act through the lens of racial justice and providing safety to victims. That can be a form of our police.

Let's be clear: we do not need -- and should not have -- the police respond to situations where there is no immediate, violent threat to someone's life. And when there is a perceived immediate, violent threat to someone's life, the absolute number one priority of the police should be to preserve life – EVERYONE'S LIFE – no matter who the individual is. Use of force should be clearly, unequivocally, the last resort.

The police should be small, nimble, and specially trained for specific circumstances and only called upon under those circumstances – and they should not be a “force”, which implies power and violence. Police should be required to earn a license or degree, that can be revoked when they violate their professional responsibilities and duties, just like a lawyer or a doctor.

And like a doctor, police should take a hypocritic oath, vowing to preserve and save any life of any person, no matter who they are or what they allegedly have done... and no matter the color of their skin.

From LA, CA to Richmond, VA, we have seen how specialized task forces have drastically reduced the police's use of force.

Look to Camden, NJ, where they eliminated the police force entirely, recognizing that a new system, specific to our current-day problems and communities, was needed. Crime has dropped, community trust has begun to build, and people are starting to do the work that they are trained to do, equitably, without unnecessary violence or brutality. There is a long way to go still, but they have started.

New York City has been the model to the rest of the country – and the world – on how to re-build, re-envision a better place, and come out stronger. This is the time to do that with public safety.

NYC can reallocate funds from an outdated police force that does not accomplish its perceived present-day purpose, which is a disservice to both our communities and the police officers. Shift funding to programs that will address the root cause of minor, non-violent crimes:

- eradicate poverty by providing safe, clean, community-based housing to all New Yorkers;
- provide legal representation to anyone at risk of losing their secure housing;
- invest in education to ensure that every child, no matter their zip code, receives an equally robust education with a curriculum that accurately teaches our country's history;
- develop and place social workers and counselors in all of our schools and community centers;
- create task forces of mental health experts and advocates to assist anyone in need of securing mental health care, particularly when they lose employment or are discharged from jail or prison, and securing income lost due to their health;
- train counselors to work with people who suffer from substance abuse to rehabilitate in a safe, secure place with a secure future;
- decriminalize work that adults choose to engage in consensually and safely;
- protect small businesses and create an environment in which they can work without harassment, like street vendors and domestic workers; and
- create specialized task forces to respond to 911 and 311 calls, rather than the police, as appropriate to the complaint.

I have hope that we are living a historic moment in time, that future generations will look back and recognize that there was a long overdue revolution that resulted in a safer, healthier, more just New York that was the envy of the world.

Please, do the job to make it happen.

Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

Testimony of Matt Kudish
Executive Director
National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City
(NAMI-NYC)

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for the opportunity to submit this testimony today.

My name Matt Kudish and I am the Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC). For nearly forty years, NAMI-NYC has been committed to helping families and individuals affected by mental illness build better lives through education, support, and advocacy. Through our free classes, support groups, public education programs, and Helpline, we were able to impact the lives of over 19,000 people last year.

Unfortunately, far too many New Yorkers—especially Black and Brown New Yorkers—have experienced traumatic interactions with the NYPD. If our leaders are serious about supporting mental health in NYC, they must seriously consider the mental trauma caused by decades of racist policing, excessive force, and systemic oppression. The last few weeks have seen our city in turmoil and have forced us to think about the future of the NYPD and the appropriate role of law enforcement. NAMI-NYC stands with protestors and community members, and we believe that our city **MUST** change the way we view public safety and policing. A crucial step towards transforming policing is holding police officers accountable and these bills are a much needed first step towards that goal. By improving transparency and limiting excessive force, these reform bills can help build accountability and trust between police officers and the communities they serve.

NAMI-NYC believes it's time we rethink public safety in this city. We believe that mental health, education, health care, and other social services are key components of public safety, and must be well funded. For far too long we have burdened police with solving nearly every problem in our society. As a result we have made a difficult job even harder, by asking police officers to become involved in issues they don't have the training or capability to handle.

NAMI-NYC understands that this hearing is specifically about the reform packages presented, and while we support and appreciate these reforms, we need City Council and our leaders to go further. We must strategically divest from NYPD and invest in much needed community services, with an understanding that by investing in areas such as mental health and housing we are investing in a healthier and safer City. By reducing the police budget, we can finally fund critically needed services like community mental health care, more housing for homeless New Yorkers, and increased resources for students. For example, Correct Crisis Intervention Today NYC (CCITNYC), a mental health coalition that NAMI-NYC is a part of, has created a pilot program that would transform the way NYC responds to mental health emergencies by replacing police officers with mental health peers and health care professionals. This initiative, proven successful in other parts of the country, has the potential to save lives and help connect people in need to mental health resources, and could be funded through funds redirected from NYPD.

NAMI-NYC appreciates the City Council's work to increase transparency and accountability in the NYPD and we look forward to these reforms being passed. We also look forward to working with council members to create and pass a budget that protects vulnerable New Yorkers, and invests in communities.

Testimony of Lauren Stander
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Lauren Stander. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

I am a social worker who has heard countless horrific accounts of my clients being abused and traumatized by police as first responders. I want to see a future where trained mental health professionals can offer the support needed in a crisis situation instead of cops who use force and often taunt and berate the individuals they are responding to.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51– June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed

Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed

James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed

Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded

Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded

Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed

Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now!!!

Theodore Hanna
Committee on Public Safety
June 9, 2020

**In Relation to Chokeholds and Other Such Restraints:
Proposed Int. No. 536-A, Proposed Res. No. 27-A,**

Introduction

Thank you, Chair Donovan Richards, and the council members on the Committee for Public safety. The mayor and many council members are refusing to confront the demands of protesters and hoping that looting can distract people from the obscene violence of the NYPD.

The proposed resolution and intro are a toothless PR stunt when actual accountability is the only way forward. You have power. You have a responsibility to the people of New York who are trying to be heard. The NYPD serves us, you serve us, you don't serve them.

I am a resident of Brooklyn and I live near a police precinct I've seen from my window police charge and attack people. I've seen a flood of police cars and officers storm in and out. All of this violence and waste has done nothing but expose the NYPD for what it is, unaccountable and afraid.

As a result of COVID and bad planning, last April, the Mayor proposed major budget cuts for the fiscal year 2021, especially to life affirming departments such as education, housing, health and youth programs, while refusing to slash the NYPD budget by any significant margin.

This is where you have real power. Lack of housing is a public safety issue, failing schools is a public safety issue. No matter how much money you pour into the NYPD it will never solve these issues. I urge you to shed past failed ideas like new jails and military weapons and move towards an ethical and equal reallocation of the NYC Expense Budget, away from the NYPD, and towards social services and education programs, effective at the beginning of FY 21, July 1st.

It's time to defund the NYPD's harmful expansion into homeless services, schools, youth services, mental health, and other social services where police don't belong. It's time to protect investments in human services, the social safety net, racial and economic justice, and the vision that all New Yorkers deserve to thrive. Historically, the city government has spent far more on police than on public health, homeless services, youth services, and other vital agencies. That disturbing disparity has continued under Mayor de Blasio's tenure and the outcomes have been predictable. There must be an emergency council meeting among city officials regarding this matter. Governor Cuomo has doubled NYPD presence and has provided hazard pay and overtime further crippling the budget. Funds that were denied to frontline workers during the ongoing pandemic. I am asking that city officials lobby the same amount of attention and effort towards finding sustainable, long-term change.

Thank you,

Theodore Hanna

Letter from a 3rd Grade

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Alexandra Lewis and I am a third grade teacher at Achievement First North Brooklyn Prep Elementary School in Bushwick. One of students, Robert Ballinger, wrote an incredibly important letter last week in response to the events occurring in New York and around the country, and asked me to help him share it with you. Please see below for his thoughts and please respond if you're willing to me and his mother (CC'd).

Thank you so much in advance.

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Robert Ballinger. I am 9 years old and I live in Brooklyn, New York. I am a Black and Dominican kid and I wanted to express how I feel. I feel like a lot of people of color haven't been heard so I feel like I have to take a stand as a growing kid who knows a lot about his history and I wanted to ask for change and a new environment that doesn't promote police violence and brutality for people of all kinds of races. I feel that Black people or people of color are racially targeted by the police. As a child, I have watched videos on YouTube and on TV of a bunch of things happening. My eyes have witnessed a lot of violence from behind a TV screen and social media. I've witnessed people go to jail, I've seen a lot of brutal stuff that has come at the hands of the police. For instance, protestors for George Floyd, they've been run over, tear gassed, they shot rubber bullets. When you think about the stuff that's happening currently, you think of violence. We've all seen the video of George Floyd, and that hurts. Yes, the police officer who murdered him by placing his knee on George's neck got arrested and the other three officers were arrested. They have all been arrested and charged but still, we need justice. We need justice for other lives in the past which have been taken by the police, which have been taken by white police officers. Another person whose life was cut short due to police brutality was Eric Garner. Eric was a man that was allegedly suspected of selling single cigarettes. He was also a Black man. He was placed in an illegal chokehold while being arrested that made it difficult for him to breath and stated "I Can't Breathe" 11 times before they let go and placed him on his side. I think this is exactly like George Floyd,

mainly because of the word that they both said, 'I Can't Breathe". Secondly, they were choked, George with a knee on his neck and Eric with a chokehold. Black people have been tortured decade after decade and the people are sick of this. I just want you to know how I feel and explain my feelings. Not trying to disrespect anybody or get anybody angry, I just want to get somebody to listen to me and get my point across to someone, anyone. Not trying to say that the police are always biased, but some cops, completely overstep their boundaries. Some cops are good. I know there are good cops and then there's bad cops. But if you're reading this message, I want you to know I'm not protesting, I am practicing my first amendment right of freedom of speech. I want to ask that if you can please quiet down police violence and make sure the people who are doing stuff like this get the punishment, they deserve so families and communities feel like they can get justice. Personally, most people think the cops are not okay. They just go around killing people and don't get charged. This feels true. All these years that we've seen something happen to a black man, it's racial and violent. Each day, everybody has to wake up and check their social media and see "rest in peace" to this and "rest in peace" to that and "Black Lives Matter" but I haven't seen a Black man get justice yet. Police should be trained not to kill people with their bare hands or knees because their badges are their shield of protection. This makes me sad, it makes me angry and it makes me mad that people are dying because someone else takes their life. God is the one that has the power to do that. This has been happening for too long and since our country was started. I hope you get where I'm coming from. Please help bring change.

From,
Robert Ballinger

To Deputy Chief Elena Goldstein. Of The Civil Rights Bureau, Office of the Attorney General

I was arrested Saturday. Words do little to express the things I saw. I hope this is a productive channel to recount my experience.

- 9pm I was Cycling on East 1st + Bowery behind the protest.
- I had broken no laws, no curfew was in effect.
- I was ripped from my bike, pushed to the unpaved ground by a large group of Police.
- I was punched in the face, until I put my hands behind my back.
- "My bike!" they echoed "not anymore"
- Zip-tied, I watched a nurse pushed hard to the ground
- and a young brown-skinned man **slammed to the sidewalk.**
- He stood up, head bloodied, yelling "I'm done with this country."
- We were lined up and placed on a corrections bus,
- **Masks were taken from prisoners**
- **Nearly all the police had no mask on.**
- 2 hours went by as we sat on the bus outside the pearl st precinct
- The police took out their phones to check their social apps, play gambling games, and test their family. (this felt irresponsible). They talked with each other about the long hours and whose "**body**" was whose.
- One Police mentioned to the other my **body cam is dead** the other one mentioned "**mine died at 7**".
- the man that had yelled (named Nikko) was begging that his arm was in a lot of pain.
- The nurse pleaded Nikko was losing consciousness. She said "it looks like a concussion" and advised that they get help and keep his head up.
- The police ignored him.
- 10 minutes later he was fully passed out and began shaking. **He was in a seizure.**
- The Nurse yelled help him,
- Now an officer responded. They went off the bus, retrieved another officer and carried him off.
- Shortly after we left the bus and stood in line outside the precinct. A police officer joked with a prisoner about **playing "call-of-duty later and shooting it out"** (which I found deeply concerning)
- The officer escorting me mentioned he was going to "**throw us in a cell**".
- We moved through the line for an hour, eventually, I was walked to a holding cell.
- The room was full, moved to the back near the toilets to find a place to stand.
- The water cooler was empty and those at the front were repeating, again and again, a need for **water**
- In the beginning, it was approximately 40 people then climbed to 70+ men in the cell.
- It was hot and began to smell like spaghetti.

4 June 2020

- Not long after I was there, the **Trans-Woman that was on the corrections bus was placed in the male cell. (This is both deeply concerning and dangerous.)** She was shaken, she wore a pink yamaka and moved a number of times to find a place with fewer men yelling. When they finally called her name not long before mine she darted out of the cell.
- For 4.5 Hours I stood. I watched.
- A young man in his early twenties screamed, every 20 minutes.
- Many many people's head arms knees where bloodied they used the toilet paper as an appendage.
- I watched a teenager blinded by gas ushered to the unsanitary toilets to wash and dry his eyes with toilet paper to no avail.
- Others echo water!
- I watched a policeman laugh when someone said the phone didn't work.
- I looked through the windows of the cell, an arrested woman was hopping on one foot as she moved through the precinct, the place was packed,
- Again, Most officers didn't wear masks.
- 3 hours in brought water.
- We all naturally formed a line until the bottle was empty.
- 3 hours in Nikko the man who had experienced the seizure was brought in half-conscious and sat half-sitting up. I walked over and offered him a cup of water.
- At 5:05 My name was called. I exited the cell.
- The escorting officer asked me to sign the original piece of paper and said **"Your arrest is void"**.
- He walked me to the desk they passed the paper over and walked me outside,
- He asked (**now what do I do?**) another officer said "he's free to go."
- For a half-hour, I walked back to Bowery to the closest precinct on E5th (as was recommended) to claim my property (my bike)
- The police officer when I arrived asked me where I was arrested and then spoke to me like a dog, repeating questions I had no answers for. He said it's not here. I respectfully said, "It's been a long night and that I'd just call in a day or two".
- As I walked away and opened the door, he yelled antagonistically; **"I'll see ya tonight!"** I looked back as he smiled."

These layers of casual cruelty and formal violence were demoralizing, dangerous and require an immediate systematic review. If you would like to discuss this in more detail please reachout.

Regards.

Brandon Nygård

To the New York City Council Members,

My name is Cory Bush and I am an educator and doula-in-training in Brooklyn. I have attended four #BlackLivesMatter protests last week and weekend, distributing water, hand sanitizer, food, and PPE to keep my fellow New Yorkers hydrated, safe, and in good spirits during this time of both national and local turmoil. At each and every protest that I attended I witnessed almost ZERO NYPD officers wearing face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The few officers who were wearing masks were wearing them improperly (often tucked under their chins), and I even witnessed a few take their masks and put them on when they noticed that their photo was being taken. Comparatively, every single protester was wearing a mask. This behavior on the part of the NYPD is childish, malicious, and absolutely unacceptable. I would go as far as to say that the choice on the part of the NYPD to not require officers to wear masks is being used as a weapon in order to spread COVID-19 to thousands of New Yorkers.

New York City has been the epicenter of this virus since it arrived in the United States, and it is absolutely deplorable to have those whose job it is to “protect and serve” appearing unmasked in public spaces. This lack of oversight is allowing the NYPD to be vectors of the virus. Considering these marches are largely occupied by Black and brown members of the community, this is even more heinous due to the fact that COVID-19 is disproportionately killing Black and brown folks. When my friends and I asked the officers why they were not wearing masks, not a single officer responded. Some even smirked or laughed at us. Ignorance is no excuse as it has been made abundantly clear through the many media campaigns that wearing a mask in public is required.

In addition to the NYPD’s utter disregard for public safety, I have witnessed many officers covering up their badge numbers, some going as far as to cover up their names from their uniforms. As we have seen this across the country, this is an effort to prevent accountability. Reporting reckless and dangerous behavior is completely impossible when you cannot identify who specifically is maliciously terrorizing your community.

I urge the City Council to defund the NYPD and allocate their funds to schools, housing, mental health services, public hospitals, and crisis intervention programs. We have tried reform in the past and it is ineffective, every time. The time has come to defund the police and we will not rest until our demands have been met without compromise.

Sincerely,

Cory Bush

June 10, 2020

Esteemed Council Members,

My name is Logan Clark, I am a 32 year old straight white man, I am a City employee, and I was assaulted by NYPD officers on Saturday, 5/30/2020.

I attended the protest over the recent deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd held by several Black and Latino community groups that Saturday at the eastern edge of Prospect Park. Following the rally a large number of us continued the protest by Marching through Flatbush. Throughout our march we were confronted by growing numbers of police, which led to moments of extreme tension and unadulterated police violence.

The first moment happened perhaps twenty feet from me, as the police snatched a woman near one of their vans. The crowd surrounded the officers, and they were immobilized for quite some time. In an attempt to break the protestors apart, an NYPD helicopter flew dangerously close to the tops of buildings, whipping up dirt, debris, and tearing signs from protestors hands. After it became evident that this was not working, a wedge of baton wielding police forced their way through the crowd to the other officers. This set the stage for a standoff at the corner of Bedford and Tilden that I believe many of you are familiar with, at least in images, if not as a result of your attendance.

The protestors stood face to face with the police for several hours, alternately giving and taking ground. The police pushed using their batons, dispersed pepper spray without warning, and beat and arrested several protestors. After consultations with the Public Advocate and mayoral staffers, the police retreated to the southwest corner of the block, placing metal barriers between themselves and the protestors. Following their retreat, the protest moved north on Bedford, damaging police abandoned police vehicles as it traveled.

Lines between the officers and protestors re-established themselves at the corner of Bedford and Church. My partner and myself were on the southeast corner of the street facing a line of police in front of a Shell station. While there, the police violently arrested a young latina woman for merely taking a photo of them. They needlessly pushed another man after the man was told he could pass through their line. The situation was extremely tense with the center of the intersection and the north and west sides experiencing even more extreme bouts of violence. The police rushed those parts of the crowd several times. Eventually, the police turned our line that had been facing south and pushed us eastward on Church. The lines reformed for a brief moment before all hell broke loose.

Similar to moments prior in the night, the police ordered us to move, and began pushing us with their batons to enforce their order. We moved, telling them that we were complying. They became rougher, and without warning I briefly saw an officer with his hand up and a canister of pepper spray in hand, I turned eastward away from the officer but still caught pepper spray on the left side of my face, with some of it in my left eye. I moved away from the officers as best I could, reaching a small gap in the protestors.

I was facing away from the officers, with my hands near my face, when suddenly without warning I was struck on the left side of my head. I turned to see a tall white officer winding up for another strike with his nightstick. I shielded my face with my arms, and I was struck repeatedly on my arm, though I couldn't tell you how many times. My glasses fell to the ground, I shouted out "My glasses!" and tried to reach down for them, but they were crushed under the feet of an officer. I was then pushed up against the brick wall

and told to leave the area. I tried to comply and was violently shoved up against the wall again. I stumbled away and was pushed onto the hood of a car and into the street. At that point the officers had essentially broken through the line of protestors and were everywhere, resulting in a general melee. I was pushed again and again as I tried to leave the area. Finally reaching a safe distance, I put my hand to my head where the officer had hit me, and my hand came away covered in blood. I called out for a medic, and was almost immediately seen by two nurses covering the protests. They moved me to the comparative safety of a nearby apartment building, where the medics and the residents of the building continued treating me. They flushed my eyes and washed my wound, ran through concussion protocols with me, and instructed me to seek additional medical care to document my injuries.

I went to the ER at NY Presbyterian in Park Slope where I received two staples for the laceration on my head, a booster tetanus shot, and verified that my left arm was not broken. I had welts that would fade to bruises on my left arm, my left leg, my right hip, and my ribs. Nothing permanent, thankfully. I got off lucky. It's more apt to say I got off privileged. Other people, many Black, had been arrested, and beat even more severely.

It should be noted that in the ER, there were numerous NYPD officers not wearing face masks in compliance with guidance and regulations. When I asked if they needed to wear masks like everybody else, they told me to "Mind your own fucking business." Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect, indeed.

Following my discharge, I took a cab home that night and got home at 3 in the morning. I don't know what I would have done if I had ended up in the hospital later that week, after the Mayor implemented his pointlessly dangerous curfew. Walk and risk arrest? Stay at the ER and risk being exposed to COVID by maskless cops?

I cannot emphasize enough how dangerous it became for everyday New Yorkers to exercise their First Amendment rights under the Mayor's curfew. The scenes of that Saturday seemed to play out endlessly over and over again over the course of the next week on social media and the news. Nightsticks, batons, and arrests, and for what? Charges that the District Attorneys refused to prosecute? Meanwhile the Mayor told us all that our eyes deceived us. That there was nothing there. That outside agitators were to blame. The man is a feckless coward, a damned Quisling, all too content to surrender a city calling for justice to a de facto police occupation force.

I implore the City Council to act with moral urgency and vote against any budget that cuts NYPD's allocation by any number less than one billion dollars in FY21, any budget that does not substantially limit NYPD overtime, and any budget that does not meaningfully cut uniformed headcount. Enough of their violent ends. Stand with our communities. Stand with our Black and Brown neighbors. Deliver justice to your constituents. Reject this spineless Mayor's toothless gestures. Stand for a budget that stands for New Yorkers.

Logan Clark
Bed-Stuy

Hi,

My name is Lucy Rose Edelstein and I'm 22. I'm writing to share my experience with police brutality last week in Brooklyn. I went to a George Floyd protest at the Barclays Center on 5/29. I was supposed to meet up with my friends but upon arrival, my data switched off and I couldn't communicate with them. The protest was peaceful for 2 hours until a few people started throwing (disposable) water bottles. This led the cops to begin pepper spraying, macing, tasing, and hitting protesters. Everyone was choking and coughing and some were crying in pain. I decided to move up to the front because I'm white and I knew, or I thought, that the police were less likely to attack me. Once again, protesters and cops got into it, this time knocking down the barrier between us. After being sprayed several times, I decided to leave the group and try to find my friends. I walked into the street where I saw them and together, we began protesting in the traffic. Buses and cars were honking in approval but the cops yelled at us over megaphones to get out. I had my hands up when I was attacked by a large cop who slammed my head to the ground (I'm skinny so no amount of force would ever be necessary) and began hitting me. My water bottle was kicked out of my hand. My friend tried to come to my rescue but she was tackled as well. I was not read my Miranda Rights and I had no clue what was happening. I was arrested and held for hours without water or my medication. A week later, I am suffering from a concussion that doesn't fade with Tylenol and I am seeing a neurologist tomorrow. Not once did I even attempt to provoke the massive line of cops. I was protesting for a movement that I believe in and I was met with violence.

Thank you for reading,
Lucy

Anything "rules" for the NYPD are bound to fail

Hi, born-and-raised NYer here. Never viewed the NYPD as particular helpful growing up, even to white folks like me, but have recently awoken to how lawless and morally rotten the organization as a whole is.

Given this, I've been pleased to see changes proposed – for example cutting an initial \$1B from their budget – but I have to stand up and echo many voices pointing out that in addition to strong, punitive measures, we cannot rely on "rules" for the NYPD to follow. It's been proven time and again that the organization simply does not follow rules – from deescalation to turning body cams on to delivering FOIL data.

As one example, changing the law to require them to share badge numbers is futile, if not fully counterproductive. Police are required to share badge numbers and business cards today.....yet somehow people get yelled at, mocked, or even beaten up and arrested for asking. **The question is not about what band-aids we can put on (which the PD will immediately rip right off), but about how we can treat the cause of all these symptoms. We need to reform a system that has proven to be truly rotten from its core.**

In the short term, this must mean implementing new, severe methods of accountability that do not fall within the NYPD – for example, any officer caught obstructing their badge number is automatically sent before by an independent disciplinary council, and then strictly disciplined, if not fired. In the long term, this must mean pursuing a massive defunding and complete rethinking of justice in our city – which for too long has proven to be anything but.

Thank you – please let me know if you need any additional information to accept this testimony.

Alex Marcus

Brooklyn, NY

My name is Maria Lindsey. I am a white, 34 year old resident of New York City and live in Harlem in Manhattan.

On Thursday June 4th between 8:05 and 8:10, I was a victim of violent police brutality at the junction of approximately 109th st. and Frederick Douglass Blvd./Central Park West. I had been peacefully protesting and marching with a group since 3:30 pm. Our route started at Gracie Mansion on the upper eastside, then to fifth Avenue, then down and around to Columbus Circle and then up Broadway and over to Central Park West (with some weaving in and out of side street neighborhoods in the upper west side). The entire time our group was marching it was non-violent and peaceful. We were overwhelmingly supported by the public. I didn't have one interaction where I saw the public voice concern or anger over our position— in fact it was the opposite— the public was honking their horns, banging pans and chanting with us from their windows. Let it be known these protests have been by the people, and supported overwhelmingly by residents of New York City who didn't directly participate. This was my third protest this particular week and I never witnessed violence or anything close to violence by anyone marching or protesting. In fact since this incident of being a victim of police brutality I still have yet to see one single act of violence on the side of the protestors and I've been all over New York City protesting since this time.

Throughout our march our group was completely swarmed with NYPD. Police in the front, in the back, following us in cars and on bikes. Everywhere. Around 7:10-7:15 our group reached the Museum of Natural History. We knelt and the police lined the steps in full riot gear, they essentially surrounded us on all sides. I directly witnessed certain police officers laughing at us or shaking their heads in a disapproving way. It absolutely felt like they were out for blood, and little did I know that was about to happen less than an hour from this moment.

We continued our march and more police in full riot gear started getting closer. They had hundreds of zip tie handcuffs strapped to their belt. The majority of them were not wearing face masks, whether they had a drop down face shield or not. Someone who I assumed was the head officer, a woman with blonde hair and dressed in black slacks and a white shirt, was also never wearing a mask. She marched in front of us and led the officers from around Columbus Circle and on. She was on the phone the entire time. It was clear to me looking back on my observations of her phone calls that she was getting directives on how to handle us. She was not in charge- I could tell she was getting something from someone higher up the entire time.

Around 8:00 pm we were marching up central park west. We were a few blocks away from where the incident of police brutality would take place. At this point it was almost curfew. Peacefully protesting the curfew and engaging in civil disobedience against the curfew was a choice. The curfew was an unfair mandate by the mayor and was clearly being used as an easy and direct way to punish peaceful protestors. Not only protesters but it was unjustly punishing all New Yorkers, especially people of color

and essential workers. Staying past curfew to make this point was a choice of mine and I was willing to do that in a peaceful way and to deal with the consequences, which I thought would be any of the following; a citation for being out past curfew, peacefully being arrested, or peacefully being asked by police to disperse and go home. I naively assumed these would be the entirety of possible options. It honestly did not occur to me that in those few minutes past curfew the police would go with the option of causing harm and inciting violence.

The Incident of Police Brutality:

Our group was marching up towards the traffic circle at Frederick Douglass and 110th st. At approximately 8:05 the police circled in front and then came from behind and on the sides. At this point, our group was very small, maybe 30 to 50 people at the most and most had already dispersed. Looking back I can't even understand how our group was even a problem to these officers since it was dispersing on its own anyway, and all of us were peaceful and non-violent. When the police circled in front they completely blocked the few of us who were left off. This caused us to march right up to them. We all had our hands up, myself included and we were all lined up. I was not in the very first line, but the second line back and maybe 6 feet away from the line of police officers. Not one police officer made an effort to communicate with us at this point. No police officer made any announcement or asked us to disperse. No police officers even said anything like "leave now or we will arrest" or "it is now curfew" etc. To anyone without a clock or a phone, they wouldn't have even known it was curfew since the police did not announce that and essentially just came at us by surrounding us and herding us into one trapped group.

This next moment will be seared into my brain for the rest of my life. Suddenly out of nowhere, and with a clear directive the police charged us at full speed hands out grabbing and pushing and shoving. I remember that their initial sprint was enough to basically have their bodies on a full angle, as if they were starting a 100 meter dash track race. It was all quick, maybe a few seconds but I have a snapshot in my head still of the scene. They were led by another - who I assume - head officer who was in a white shirt and black slacks, and then the full militarized and riot gear police on the sides of him. The faces of the police officers and this head officer were terrifying. I was shocked at how quickly they were "out for blood". I would describe the expressions on their faces as excitement mixed with revenge. I now know that this police violence was a directive given to them given the reporting that came out of all burroughs the next day of almost exactly the same story of the police inciting violence around this time. Our group was so small that there was no press to report on what happened to us, but I know there are city cameras up everywhere and you could witness this for yourself at this exact time on the security cameras for this section of the street.

I was hurt when this mayhem and stampeding caused and carried out by the police shoved me down onto the people behind me, one of which had a bike. Luckily since all of our hands were up, I didn't come crashing down on my head, and my hands hit first when we were all shoved down by the police. When I was shoved down with such force from this stampede which was incited and caused and carried out by

the police, my knees became numb and my hand was cut up and bleeding and my feet were tangled on the ground with this bike. The fact that I was tangled up in a bike that was behind me should tell you that none of the protestors, myself included, were expecting anything violent. If that were true this person with the bike would have ridden off or moved it out of the way — this is why the way this escalated was shocking and confusing to everyone who was remaining in this group of peaceful protesters. Luckily right after I fell, a kind woman who was there in the protest group immediately came and reached out to me to help me up and asked me if I was okay. I was in shock but thanked her for helping me up and getting me to safety. I was limping since my knees were so badly injured and walked to the central park side to look at what had happened and to get myself to safety to avoid any further violence from the police, which I was now terrified of at this point.

At this time the police had managed to grab one kid out of the group and make him the scapegoat for all of us. There was no reason to arrest any of us, yet this young kid now has to deal with the “justice system” when he did not start violence and was the victim of police violence. His things were scattered all over the ground and he was being wrestled to the ground in a violent and dehumanizing way. After watching this scene in shock, I suddenly realized that I needed to clean up the blood that was dripping off my hand. Luckily I happened to live a few blocks from where this all happened and walked home slowly. I texted three friends this story right after it happened and they would be willing to verify this. I also saw a friend within 15 minutes after this happened who helped clean up my injuries and could verify and back up my accounting of events and my injuries.

In basically 1 minute the police had caused utter violence and harm on the streets. We had managed earlier with a group upwards of 2-3 thousand people to peacefully protest without one incidence of violence— yet in 1 minute the police caused this kind of harm amongst its citizens that it is supposedly there to protect. I would like the following pictures of my injuries (some from different days to show the progress of how badly I was bruised) to be documented and filed in this report because the police can no longer just get away with this type of behavior. Today, June 12th, more than a week later, I’m still dealing with these injuries. The bruising and swelling on my left knee in particular was black and purple and taking up the entire knee cap and surrounding skin. It is still purple and swollen a week later. I have never received a physical injury from another person like this in my entire life.











Statement by Matthew Robert Gehring
Re: Events of June 4th, 2020 @ 485 Central Park West

On Thursday, June 4th I was in the bathroom as my wife heard commotion outside our building at 485 Central Park West, New York, NY 10025 and told me to come down as soon as I was out. We found each other downstairs and went across Central Park West to where we saw 6 protesters being confronted by nearly 20-30 police officers. At around 8:15, my wife and I remained witnesses to the peaceful protesters. The officers then told them they were out past curfew and started arresting them, bringing in nearly an additional 30 police officers. As a white-shirt police officer approached us, we went back to our front steps at 485 Central Park West. I have a video of this interaction. After a few minutes of continuing to witness the arrests from the front steps, I was again approached by a white-shirted police officer and told I was being arrested for being outside past curfew. Again, I was on the front steps of my co-op building in which I own my apartment. I was thrown over the railing of my steps and handcuffed. I did not resist arrest. There is video of this arrest. Outside the police van, I was patted down and the arresting blue shirted officer (Last name Purcell: Badge 5796 to the best of my recollection) stripped me of my keys, wallet and cell phone. As this was happening I was facing a white-shirted police officer (Last name Green or Greene to the best of my recollection) and as I looked for his badge number he shoved my shoulder to look the other way and said "get the fuck in there" (to the best of my recollection) referring to the police van. I was detained in a police van alongside my wife and delivery bike rider for the delivery company Caviar. We were taken to the 24th precinct and stood with a group of protesters inside. I was taken by Purcell (who had now taken off his badge and uniform) specifically for booking. Purcell showed me my wallet, cell phone and keys. He made a showing that he could count the cash to prove he wouldn't steal any. This happened several times over my interactions with him. I was then patted down again, pockets out-turned and taken to a back cell on the first floor, separating me from my wife. I was un-cuffed, asked to take my laces off of my shoes and my belt off. I was then placed in a cell with another male protester on the first floor. After 10 minutes in the cell, I was then offered hand sanitizer by Officer Purcell. Another officer took me out of the cell, patted me down for the third time and up to the second floor where I was placed in a larger cell with 8 other men after being patted down a fourth time. This number grew to 15 over the next hour. Two men were without masks and only after several requests, they were given masks. I was taken out by Officer Purcell and given a court summons. I was told by Officer Purcell that there would be a warrant for my arrest if I did not respond by October 2nd. I was reunited with my wife outside and walked straight from the 24th precinct to 485 Central Park West.

On Sunday May 31st between the hours of 7:00PM - 9:00PM I, Matthew Gibbs, testify that I witnessed a number of officers with their badge numbers covered with black strips at a peaceful march originating at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. I have clear video evidence of the officers with badge numbers covered that I will provide.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Matthew Gibbs
06/08/2020

On Saturday, May 30th, 2020, I was part of a peaceful protest which began at Ocean Parkway and Parkside Avenue. The group marched down Flatbush ave. and toward Tilden Ave, at which point a group of us were surrounded and “kettled” by the NYPD. We witnessed a “show of force” with a low flying helicopter kicking up debris overhead. The officers formed a line and came at protesters from all sides, beating us with their batons and physically pushing us down on the ground and then up against a barrier on the sidewalk. I was hit on my buttocks and upper right arm. I witnessed a protester being hit in the head with a baton, resulting in a bloody injury. The police were not allowing medical intervention.

This protest was a peaceful action. At no point did I witness any property damage or physical attacks on the police from the protestors. I did not witness any rocks being thrown, graffiti or other vandalism. I witnessed the police charge the demonstrators with no provocation and little regard for the safety and property of residents on the block and protestors. I also witnessed an officer steal a bike from a protestor.

Melanie

Tuesday June 2nd

14th and 5th Ave 10 PM

We were peacefully marching up 14th St in a group of about 100 orderly and peaceful protesters when a group of about 100 NYPD officers blocked our march off. We attempted to continue marching down 5th avenue, peacefully when about 20 NYPD officers charged into our march and began making arrests, beating protesters severely with batons, I witnessed multiple extremely violent arrests. The crowd dispersed in panic, and I saw the cops pursuing terrified protesters for blocks. Eventually I was tackled to the ground, pinned face down as they continued to beat me although i was fully restrained and not fighting back. I was held down by four officers who did not state why I was being placed under arrest. They put me in BOTH handcuffs and zip ties, so tightly that it left an open cut on my wrist. In the course of this, my pants were ripped and my butt was exposed. The four officers, all male discussed my ass and laughed. None of them were wearing masks. They attempted to search me but reluctantly complied when I requested a female officer, who searched me in a very violating manner. I was thrown into a van and held for about 30 minutes, but I was eventually let go with a ticket because they wanted to make room for more protesters. My handcuffs and zip ties had been applied so tightly and poorly that it took all four officers to remove them, eventually sawing the zip tie off with a pocket knife. I was left with multiple injuries and an extremely large and painful bruise on the back of my leg which I have a picture of that i would like to submit.

My Dear Council Speaker Corey Johnson,

I hope you are well and remain so. I refer you to the New York Times article "A Black Police Officer's Fight Against the NYPD" dated 2/18/2016.

The quota system, although outlawed, is still alive in our current policing and must be abolished. It remains a central initiator in pressuring the disproportionate arrests, searches, and summonses on predominantly communities and people of color. The quota system must be banned. And, police officers who are advocating for the ban must be protected from retaliation within their departments. Please Councilman Corey do your utmost. This is Important. Thank you.

Antonia Manuela

My name is Parissah and I am an educator and researcher living in New York City for the last 10 years.

Over the course of the last 10 days I have witness and experienced unprecedented levels of violence from the New York Police Department both under the justification of social distancing and as response to the protests in New York City.

On Friday May 29 my partner and I were brutalized by the police. We were with peaceful protesters as we were chased through the streets by police cars that threatened and ATTEMPTED to drive through protesters. After police vehicles failed to stop for the protests a group of us stood our ground and refused to move so they would not drive through protesters, officers repeatedly struck me with their cars. After doing this 4 times an officer who would not be identified TACKLED me and my partner (both under 140 pounds) and the officer who was a man over 200 pounds and I was beaten by 5 police officers with batons. I still have bruises after almost 10 days and a massive cut on my knee that has impeded my ability to walk. My partner's ankle was sprained. only ONE police officer had a mask. I also witnessed officers almost taizing a biker who did not understand their instructions after NO warning.

I have a number of other experiences over the course of the last week. Being hit with batons after standing on a public sidewalk just observing the police. A friend being pepper sprayed with no warning. A PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER HIT IN THE HEAD WITH A BATON AND CALLED A "BITCH" BY A MEMBER OF THE FORCE.

This despicable behavior is proof of a violent abuse of power.

--

Parissah Lin
202.812.0409

My name is Lin Yuan and I am a resident of Brooklyn in District 33. Last April, NYC Mayor Bill De Blasio proposed major budget cuts for the Fiscal Year 2021, especially to education and youth programs, while refusing to slash the NYPD budget by any significant margin.

I am emailing today to demand that an emergency budget meeting is held to reject the Mayor's FY21 proposed budget and that NYC defund the NYPD by \$1 billion. I urge you to pressure the office of the mayor towards an ethical and equal reallocation of the NYC expense budget, away from NYPD and towards social services and education programs, effective at the beginning of FY21, July 1, 2020.

Governor Cuomo has doubled the presence of the NYPD on New York City streets. I am asking that city officials lobby the same amount of attention and effort towards finding sustainable, long term change.

Maddie Neufeld
mneufeld@wesleyan.edu

Testimony for Committee on Public Safety Hearing

Recently I witnessed an enraging and deeply saddening act of police brutality in my neighborhood of Fort Greene, Brooklyn. A group of 10-15 cops encircled, crushed, kneeled on, restrained and injured a black man in the middle of the street. They stayed on top of him and handcuffed his feet and hands for ten minutes while he was screaming. Once they got off of him he was able to say that all he had done was make a u-turn and a cop pulled him over and dragged him out of the car. This, tragically, is just one example of many. The way state violence has been and continues to be enacted against Black people is enraging, maddening and horrific, but so very tragically not surprising or new. I implore you to make systemic change, so that this kind of racist violence ends.

Hello,

I was walking in a Black Lives Matter march this past Thursday through Brooklyn. The march was exclusively nonviolent; volunteers told us to stay civil and not destroy property, threaten or assault police officers, or otherwise break any laws. I started marching with my bicycle in Greenpoint at about 7:45 and walked with the crowd west.

Starting around 9:15, we saw several dozen police officers encroaching from behind us with batons and protective masks. They picked up speed until we had to run to stay with the group. When they caught up with my area, I took my bicycle to the sidewalk along with a handful of other marchers. One volunteer, female, was still in the street carrying a plastic case of water bottles and was surrounded by several officers. One officer grabbed the case from her hands and wrestled it away from her while another officer swung at her repeatedly with his baton. Two officers followed me with their batons pointed at me and ordered me to go home.

The police officers' actions that night were absolutely unacceptable for public servants of the law, and these officers should be held accountable for their actions immediately. Their actions threaten our ability to lawfully express ourselves against their biases towards African Americans and other minorities. What kind of America are we trying to stand for? The NYPD needs to experience enough public oversight and accountability that these actions can no longer be tolerated by a negligent system.

Thank you for allowing me to comment in this hearing,
-Josh Goldberg

8th of June 2020

Official Statement for New York City Council
Committee of Public Safety
Committee on Fire and Emergency Management

On the 29th of May 2020 at around 17:10, I alongside my friend and colleague, Ann Bryant, attended a Black Lives Matter demonstration located at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. We were there fighting against the police brutality that has existed, has been encouraged and is running rampant throughout our country like a disease. I am a woman of color who has experienced police brutality at a young age and I know what police conduct should be. What I witnessed on this day, was not police conduct.

A police officer in a white shirt, so I assume he was a captain, had something in his eye and was almost crying as he left the barricade to get some medical reprieve. Multiple people, including myself made comments to him because he was in ear shot of us as he passed us along the barricade. We laughed at him and said, "now maybe you understand even for a moment what it is like for the people of color you claim to protect and serve." The injured officer did not respond. He did not care what we said. He knew that words are far less painful than knees on someone's neck or a choke hold, or whatever happened to be in his eye. Or maybe he simply didn't hear us amongst all of the ambient noise, nevertheless he walked on, going about his business. On the other hand, his shorter, stockier, angrier, more aggressive fellow captain took offense to either what I said or what one of the other protesters said regarding his comrade, and in retaliation he threw a full water bottle at a young lady standing next to me, hitting her in her neck and face and injuring her out of anger and spite. He neither served her nor protected her right to free speech. After we called him out and told him to come back so we could speak to him directly, he distanced himself and walked away immediately and made hand gestures suggesting we should "come toward him" over the barricade if we dare. This is not proper police conduct. This is what gangs, thugs, agitators do to incite disorder and disrupt peace. He is an agitator and he should be remanded and reprimanded as one, just as any citizen on the street would be because he is a citizen too. As one might expect we were livid and appalled by his actions and attempted to talk to other officers who also witnessed the incident but no one would help us by giving us his name. I talked to several. Everyone told me the same thing: that he was a captain, captains don't have badge numbers and they didn't know what they could do. They couldn't do anything. They wouldn't do anything. These so-called "good" cops acted as if they were as helpless to the system as we feel we are. How is that helpful for anyone navigating the justice system? The short answer is, it's not.

What kind of world are we living in when men and women with guns, the law on their side, and fear and anger in their hearts are meant to mediate, patrol, protect, and serve us, but they deeply hate us, believe they are better than us, and have no tolerance for us/our wellbeing and lives and the so-called "decent" cops feel helpless to the system all at the same time? Logically this doesn't make any sense. We don't need reform. We need mediators, educators, mental health specialists, negotiators... We don't need police. Defund and abolish the police. We do not want nor do we need these racist, angry, fearful, incompetent, uneducated, intolerant public servants with deadly machinery patrolling the communities operating as gangs interfacing with the public all the while with the law in their pocket.

My name is Jennifer Harrington and this is my statement. I have photos and video of the captain who assaulted the protester, but I do not have video of the incident as it took place.

For years New Yorkers and other citizens around the nation have watched individuals succumb to police brutality, often times of those who are unarmed. In the recent weeks the nation has been shook by those in support of legislation to ban such brutality and the ability for citizens to access records of those officers who disobey such laws. I write to you today in support of this legislation. New Yorkers are tired of seeing officers who behave inhumanely, giving the entire force a reputation of brutality. The counter argument says that there are only “a few bad apples”, well if that is the case then hold those few bad apples accountable by firings or jail time. I ask for established guidelines on punishments in relation to this type of behavior. We know all too well in the case of Eric Garner, where chokeholds were “banned” by the NYPD (and you know very well why I used quotes), and yet the officer received no punishment. Definitive measures of accountability need to be in place, which include definitive sentences along with the crime, as is established for the legislation on strangulation. I urge you to take action, but not just to take action, take the right action. This legislation in particular needs to protect those who are most vulnerable, which is our black and brown community. The police are meant to protect and serve, this legislation also safeguards those officers who have sworn to do just that.

New Yorkers are now saying enough is enough and when you walk through the streets, be it in Manhattan or Brooklyn or Queens, loud and clear you’ll hear the echoes of “No Justice, No Peace” ring through our city. Give us our justice, and let the city find its peace.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Hira Mirza

I would like to voice my support for bills 536-A, 721-A, 760-A, and T2020-6267. Recent events in this city have shown me that the NYPD needs help reigning in officers that want to abuse their power. Although the vast majority of NYPD officers are good people and would never choke someone, cover their badge, or harm someone trying to film them, it only takes a few “bad apples” to erode trust in the police force as a whole.

In my neighborhood, there is a pavillion where homeless people often sleep. One night, while out for a walk, I saw there was a disturbed and violent man threatening the homeless people there with a large piece of rebar. It was obviously a dangerous situation.

I did not call the police. One of the homeless people ended up with an injured arm.

I was afraid that if I called the police, the homeless people would be arrested and potentially mistreated. The violent man only had a piece of rebar, but police officers come with guns.

I’m certain I’m not the only one. How many women don’t call the police when their boyfriend comes home drunk and violent, because they’re afraid the police will beat him or shoot him? How many kids don’t call the police when they feel unsafe because they feel less safe around police officers? How many people refuse to provide the police evidence because they’re afraid it will lead to someone dying?

The city needs to work on rebuilding trust between the NYPD and the citizens. These four bills are a good start, and a gesture of good faith. I strongly encourage you to pass them.

- I specifically support bill 536-A because chokeholds are unnecessarily dangerous. Just about every person being subdued by the police is presumed to be an innocent civilian until they have had a trial. Putting innocent civilians in danger is antithetical to the mission of the NYPD. I also support additional training for police officers to provide them with safer alternatives to chokeholds when subduing someone.
- I specifically support bill 721-A because police officers are meant to protect and serve their communities. Our tax dollars pay their salaries, so they should be held accountable to the citizenry. Filming police officers is just one of many ways we can maintain accountability. However, I only support the filming of police officers when they are on-duty or acting the the authority of the police department. Police officers deserve their privacy when off-duty, same as any other citizen.
- I specifically support bill 760-A because it is easy for any manager to shuffle a “difficult” employee to another team, department, or location instead of dealing with the problem. A centralized database will help the NYPD identify the “bad apples” quickly, and provide them with the training or reassignment that best meets their needs and the needs of the community. It also will help identify trends within the department and help find managers or trainers who are not supporting their officers.
- I specifically support bill T2020-6267 because no one gets to do their job anonymously. When I work at my job, everyone knows who I am, and I have to own up to any mistakes

I make. And I have a low-stakes job - when I make mistakes, no one gets hurt. Police officers should be held to the same standards as retail workers, nurses, soldiers, and everyone else who has to wear a nametag to work.

Hello. My name is Katheryn. I have been marching with the children and future of New York City for the past eleven (11) days. Out of the 11 days, I personally have walked and assembled with other protestors for 10 /11 days. Unfortunately, each of the 10 days I have assembled with other protesters, I have experienced at LEAST one form of police brutality from those who are apparently uniformed (not undercover or an agitator).

The one incident I would like to draw attention to is marching on 14th street in Manhattan on June 2nd at approximately 10pm:

I was marching in the middle of the street to provide a barricade between oncoming traffic and our children. Two (2) easily identifiable police cars were carelessly driving between 55-60 mph towards the protestors going east on 14th street directly one after another. It was obvious that the cop car in front wanted to intimidate me and other protestors and swerved approximately 10 feet away from where I was standing. The cop SUV behind him did not see me, and came within 2 feet of where I was standing going approximately 50 mph.

The legal speed for any large vehicle in the new york metropolitan area is 25 mph.

The cops who performed this stunt should be held accountable and should lose their jobs.

The police I have talked to during the protests justify their intimidation and cruel intentions by withholding the curfew policy. The curfew policy is not only unconstitutional, but inherently racist. Even more so than voting and relying on representational government (founded on slavery), **it is a civic duty, responsibility, and right to protest without being intimidated or threatened.**

I want to end my testimony by humbly saying a few last words to the New York City Council:

There are other city agencies that protect and withhold safety for our community that are not armed with military weaponry.

A big Shout out to:

- The Bravest (FDNY)
- The Strongest (DSNY)
- The Best (FDNY EMS)
- And the Proudest (TLC)
- Also shout out to the exterminators, the postal service, the teachers and educators, the MTA, those in construction and the Buildings Department, the librarians, those in the Parks Department, those on the street at night, the Guardian Angels, essential workers, security guards, etc.

Thank you Bill Deblasio for hearing our voice when we say

We need to DEFUND the police. We need to abolish for-profit jails and prisons.
We need to DEFUND war profiteering. We need to DEFUND criminalizing poverty.

We are the eyes and ears of New York = This is what Democracy looks like

To: New York City Council
From: Alexandra de Mucha Pino
Re: Experiences of NYPD brutality on May 30, 2020
Date: June 9, 2020

I was brutalized and arrested by NYPD for peacefully protesting on the night of Saturday, May 30, 2020. I was arrested at 8:18 pm, and my ordeal lasted until about 4:30 the next morning. When I was arrested, I had been peacefully marching across the Brooklyn Bridge with a crowd of protesters—we had been marching for about four hours, and not once in those four hours did I see a protestor destroy anything or act violently, other than one man who knocked a trash can and was admonished by another protester. After crossing the bridge, we were met by a wall of riot officers. One officer would later claim that someone threw a plastic water bottle at them, but I did not see anything thrown at all. Suddenly, without warning, the riot officers charged forward at us with their batons out and swinging.

The front line was not even given the opportunity to comply with any orders to disperse—they were immediately charged at, tackled, and arrested. Having witnessed dozens of people tear gassed, beaten, and arrested at Barclays Center the night before, I initially started running away. When I saw that the police were beating people on the ground, I returned to the scene to film the arrests and bear witness. I was on the sidewalk, not on the street. I was doing nothing illegal. I saw the police beat multiple people who were not resisting arrest. An officer rushed at me and pushed me into a bush with his baton—I couldn't disperse, because he had me pinned against the line of bushes behind me. He screamed at me and ordered me to the ground, as two more officers charged at me. I am a 120 pound woman and I had my hands in the air, had dropped to my knees, and was not resisting arrest. They slammed into me and cuffed me—in the process of cuffing me, they ripped off a cherished bracelet and threw it on the ground, leaving a gash from the metal edge of the bracelet across my wrist. Then they hoisted me up, walked me a few feet, then suddenly screamed at me and ordered me back down on the ground. This whole time, the officer who cuffed me was squeezing my arms so hard that I still have bruises on my arms a week and half later. While I was sitting on the ground, I continued to witness people being violently arrested all around me and saw multiple officers reach for their guns. When I was taken away, I truly believed some people might not survive the night.

The other detainees and I were taken to a line of NYPD vans, where my cuffs were replaced with zip ties so tight I lost circulation in my hands. They zip tied my hands facing two different directions, so that they were each pressing into the plastic in with opposing forces, and I ended up with bruises and cuts on my wrists. No one read me my Miranda rights, and up until that point no one had even told me what I was being arrested for. An officer came and told the arresting officers what they were charging us with, because even they didn't know what charges they had arrested us on. I saw multiple officers laughing and making fun of the detainees. They referred to us as "this" and "that." They loaded twelve of us into a van, drove us to 1PP, and then left us in the van outside of 1PP for over three hours. There was no working AC in the van, so those of us farthest in (including myself) were extremely hot and dehydrated. They would not give us water or tell us how long we would be detained in the van. The woman next to me had a gash on her head, which she told me was from a police officer kicking her in the head while she was laying on the pavement, and bleeding wounds all over her arms. She kept asking the officers to

get her alcohol wipes from her bag. It took them two more hours before an officer cleaned the blood off her face.

After 3+ hours in the van, they had us wait in a line outside the precinct for an hour. They switched me to a nicer arresting officer, who cut my zip ties and replaced them with looser ones. Other people were not as lucky. The same woman who had been kicked also needed to use a restroom—they wouldn't let her use one until she nearly lost control of her bladder and I yelled at the same officer who had cleaned up her wounds, and he finally found her a bathroom to use. When we entered the precinct, multiple detainees had lost their PPE or had them ripped off by their arresting officers (those people confirmed they had been confiscated later when I saw them in jail support). I saw dozens of people with serious injuries, including a detainee with what looked like a broken eye socket bone. I passed a woman in a holding cell who was seizing—we pleaded with the officers in line behind us to get medical attention, and they ignored us. The other two women in her cell told us she had lost consciousness before we arrived, and that the officers gave her a glass of milk when she came to. When she told them she was lactose intolerant, they gave her a half-drunk water bottle off of someone's desk. When she told them she needed her seizure and anxiety meds, they ignored her.

I was held in a small cell with three other women for the rest of the night. For the 9+ hours I was detained, no one would give any of us any water. They said they were "out of cups." I was lucky my new arresting officer was kind enough to eventually get my water bottle from my bag. Since we were in the middle of a pandemic, my cell mates declined to share. They got no water for the entire night, despite asking multiple times, nor did anyone else as far as I saw. I was lucky again that my new arresting officer was kinder than the others when he let me use his cell phone at 2am to let my partner know I was safe—no one in the other cells near us got a phone call. When one of my cell mates read a sign on the wall saying meals were provided at 5am, she asked an officer if we would get meals at that time. The officer laughed at her. When we told another officer we were never read our rights or and that many of us were not told what we were being arrested for, the officer laughed and said they don't actually have to do those things. No one would tell us how long we were being detained.

When I was released at about 4:30 am, it looked like most of the detainees were still there. They processed women before men, so all of the men were kept there who knows how much longer. Throughout this whole time, there was no water or medical attention given to anyone. The only reason I found my way home safely was because a group of volunteers were outside running jail support. They charged my phone, offered me a blanket and water, and waited with me while my phone charged so I could get a ride home. Without them, I would've been alone at 4:30 am with no working phone or transportation home.

I was lucky—I came out of this experience with a few bruises and cuts, and some trauma from having a wall of riot officers in helmets and shields charge at me, and then watching the people who had been marching with me all day brutally beaten and then denied their basic human rights in jail. All around me I saw people who were treated 10x worse than I was—maybe because I'm white or because I'm a small woman or because I was switched to a nicer arresting officer, or some combination of these things. The people around me were beaten senselessly with batons, many of whom were not even resisting arrest or were trying to comply with orders and disperse. None of them were doing anything illegal other than

walking in a street. One of the men in my NYPD van wasn't even *part* of the protests—he was just black and riding his bicycle home and in the wrong place at the wrong time. The police didn't care. These weren't a few "bad apples"—all of the riot officers participated in or directly supported this brutality. The regular officers we were switched to at the precinct afforded us a little more dignity, but we were still denied basic rights of water, medical attention, or legal rights such as a phone call or an idea of what we were being detained for/how long we would be detained. All of this because we were blocking some traffic in order to share a message with the world that was inconvenient to NYPD. No one should be treated this way under any circumstances, but for peaceful protesters to be treated this way in a city that considers itself progressive is abominable. I urge you all to do everything in your power to defund and demilitarize this violent gang that's running our city.

6/9/20

My name is Zoe Hamilton and I am a Brooklyn resident. On Tuesday, June 2, I attended a peaceful protest against police brutality. Our group was walking the streets of Manhattan and chanting; there was no threat to the safety of the accompanying police officers. On 86th St and 5th Ave, shortly after the 8:00 curfew, the officers moved into the crowd and started to beat several protesters with nightsticks. They stopped only when our group knelt down on the street, chanting "STOP HURTING US." We were allowed to continue for several more blocks in peace, until several officers began yelling (screaming, really) in several protesters' faces (mainly people of color). I remember one officer in particular was red-faced and yelling at three young men of color, demanding to know whether they thought that they were being "funny" by attending the protest and repeatedly telling them to go home. Another officer yelled "back the the fuck up" to another protester who was attempting to ask him questions. Neither of these cops, along with most of the ones I've seen at protests in the past week, were wearing face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

I am horrified that the NYPD claims to be keeping us safe, when in fact they are terrorizing peaceful protesters and other non-violent civilians. These officers, unmasked and armed, are neither protecting nor serving us.

Dear New York City Council,

My name is Dr. Micaela Elvira Martinez. I am a resident of Harlem, a professional recording artist and business owner, and an Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Sciences in the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. This letter is written testimony of police brutality and mistreatment of NYC residents that occurred on Thursday June 4th 2020, beginning at 7:55 p.m. I will outline the events of the night to give full context and I will list NYPD abuses numerically throughout.

Why I Attended this Particular Protest. This protest was organized in the Bronx at 6:30 p.m. Thursday June 4th to begin at The Hub. I attended this protest because the group that organized it is known in the community for doing food service monthly in Harlem and the Bronx. Before the COVID-19 shutdown of the city, I helped with one of their food service nights on 116th Street in Harlem, where we fed dinner to hundreds of residents. I wanted to attend a protest that was predominately composed of members of my community (black and Latinx residents of the Bronx and Northern Manhattan), where I could feel safe from outside individuals who may not share my same values or respect my safety. This protest fit that need.

The Demographics of the Protest. The protest began at The Hub and we marched while chanting, raising banners, and some individuals played music on drums and other small percussion instruments. It was a beautiful sense of community. The majority of the protesters were black and Latinx. Many of those I spoke with were from the Bronx, Harlem, and other neighborhoods in Northern Manhattan, with a few people from Brooklyn and Queens. I felt very happy, comfortable, and safe because there was a strong sense of community. Since March 2020, I have been working extremely hard in my capacity as a public health professional on COVID-19 health disparities in NYC. In analysis I have made available to City Council, colleagues and I have shown that black and Latinx communities in the Bronx, Queens, and Northern Manhattan have been hit particularly hard. When I was out protesting, before the police came, I felt a sense of community being shared by people who had been hit so hard by the pandemic. The protest was providing a sense of power and healing, and this was taken away by the NYPD.

NYPD Abuse 1. By preemptively planning and targeting a protest that was organized under the banner of “black, brown, and indigenous solidarity”, the NYPD inflicted psychological trauma on the community. Based on the demographics of the protestors and the fact that this happened in one of the most economically marginalized neighborhoods in NYC, this action appears to be racially motivated and it reinforces normalization of abuse and systematic oppression of black, brown, and indigenous people.

Kettling by the NYPD. I was near the front of the protest line. Sometime between 7:45 and 7:55 p.m. we were marching downhill on E. 136th Street toward Brook Ave. I was saying hello to a friend and suddenly the people in front of us were frightened and turned and started running back uphill. I started running also, as it was obvious that they were running away from danger. After running approximately ½ block, I stopped and looked around to see what had frightened everyone. I did not see anything at that moment. At the instruction of the organizers, I started marching again downhill calmly. However, once we started moving, we realized that the NYPD had entered from the left and right side of the T-shaped intersection of Brook and 136th Street. They closed off our passage forward. At this point we started to turn around to try to go back uphill on 136th; however, now there was a second set of police blocking us from that end as well.

I was kettled with approximately 200 other protesters before curfew at 7:55 p.m. on E. 136th Street between Brook Ave and Brown Pl. Collectively we pleaded and chanted “*let us go*”, but NYPD did not let us go home (I have video evidence of this). The police officers held big round wooden clubs in their hands and formed lines to block us from leaving. Shortly after, I was near (face-to-face) with the officers forming the line on the uphill side of the street. I watched as a handful of protesters pleaded with officers one-on-one to “*let us go*” home because it was not yet curfew. Multiple officers were told by protesters that if they let us pass, then we would quietly leave to go home. Most of the officers would not respond, they simply faced forward and would stay silent. One officer said they would let us leave from the “*other end*” of the kettle, which made protesters start to move in that direction. However, this was not true, nobody was able to leave, and this resulted in everyone getting smashed together to the point that some individuals were not able to breath. Officers on each end were closing in the lines and pushing us closer together.

Protesters Couldn’t Breath. After successfully kettling us, the NYPD proceeded to unnecessarily close in their kettling lines forcing the protesters to be smashed in atop one another. This was so extreme that, at one point, my arm was smashed so tightly between two people next to me that I had to use all the strength in my body to pull it

out. There were two young women near me that were crying and screaming that they could not breathe. These women were both in an extreme state of distress and clearly feared for their lives. Throughout this time, I heard someone say: "*I am going to die*" and that was not the only time I heard that on this night. To give you some perspective on the extreme kettling, as a teenage girl, I attended a concert for the German death metal band Rammstein where I was thrown into a mosh pit and had my nose broken. However, the pressure that the NYPD put on us during this kettling, smashing us together, was far beyond anything I have experienced, even in a violent mosh pit.

Those of us being kettled were rendered completely powerless, even from the basic human need of securing enough space to expand our lungs to breath at full capacity.

NYPD Abuse 2. The NYPD abused their power by unnecessarily using extreme kettling. The NYPD pushed the two police lines inward on the crowd resulting in the smashing of protesters together to such an extent that nobody could physically move their body or extremities, most (if not all) had trouble breathing freely, and because of this, several individuals in my immediate eye-view were brought to a state of such extreme panic that their faces were covered in tears, mucus, and saliva.

Clubbing Protesters & Beatings. The NYPD kettled all of us protesters leading up to the 8 p.m. curfew, and almost immediately as 8 p.m. struck, NYPD officers started beating protesters with wooden clubs and also pepper spraying individuals in the face. One of the men near me who was pepper sprayed was not posing any threat to officers. He cried when he was pepper sprayed and I attempted to help him. I had seen a video from another women scientist about carrying baking soda to protest in case you see someone pepper sprayed, I took some with me (and I felt silly when buying it because I didn't think I would need it). The kettling was too tight for me to get into my backpack to retrieve the baking soda, but I asked someone behind me to reach in and get it. I was able to put baking soda and water in the man's eyes to attempt to alleviate his pain, but it didn't seem to help much.

A young Latino man standing right next to me was pushed to the ground by an officer and the officer proceeded to hit him over-and-over in the torso with a club/night-stick. The young man's girlfriend started to panic and scream "*they are going to kill him!*" she tried to push past me as said "*let me go - they are going to kill him - they are going to kill me*". The kettling was so tight that I had no way to physically move my body to let her run away (it was impossible for her to run). I told her she would be okay, and she screamed "*no I am not okay, they are going to kill me too!*". She was experiencing an extreme fight-or-flight response. At this time I grabbed her and held her face to my chest and hugged her as her boyfriend continued to be beaten. I asked her to breath in-and-out and calmed her to the best of my ability.

NYPD Abuse 3. I witnessed at least five NYPD officers strike multiple people, who were posing no threat physically or verbally, in the head and body with clubs. There was one officer on top of a civilian's parked car who was striking downward on protester's heads and was clubbing anyone within his reach, even people with their backs turned to him. This was witnessed by many of us protesters, because it was extremely visible as the officer was elevated above the crowd while he was atop the car.

I strongly believe that the NYPD trapped us in order to be able to beat protesters, inflicting severe bodily harm, as soon as curfew set in. That was clearly communicated to us by their actions and body language.

Cutting Off Circulation to Our Hands. By 8:30 p.m. NYPD officers started to systematically grab individuals from the sardine-packed kettle areas and pulled us one-by-one through a line of officers, placing zip ties around our wrists. Personally, the officer who placed zip ties on me, put them on very tight and then she intentionally decided seconds later to tighten them even further, cutting off circulation to my right hand. I immediately told her that she had cut off my circulation and she agreed. She said she was sorry but she had "*no way to loosen it*" and no tools to cut it off. She showed my wrist to two other male officers who said that they too did not have a tool to cut it, but they would look for one, and they never did.

I was one of many individuals who had their zip ties so tight that it cut off our circulation. After zip tying us, the officers made everyone sit down in the street for approx. 30 minutes. As we were sitting, many people were telling the officers that their circulation was being cut off, but the officers just continued to say they didn't have the cutters to cut off the zip ties to replace them. One young woman sitting near me had both of her hands turn completely purple-blue due to the lack of blood flow. She was crying and sitting up on her knees sobbing loudly as those around her begged officers to cut off her zip ties. As the officers proceeded to say they had nothing to cut them with, I told four or more officers directly that I had a sewing kit in my back-pack and I asked them to please use the small

scissors from the kit to try and cut off her zip ties. Most officers ignored me, and one officer said: *"I can't do that"*. We also asked the officers to allow one of the EMTs to help with the women whose hands were completely blue. The EMT said that she didn't have scissors and that first she needed to *"tend to those with head wounds"* and body trauma. The EMT said if we *"weren't bleeding she couldn't help us"* right now.

NYPD Abuse 4. The NYPD did not follow protocol by placing two of their own fingers in the zip ties to ensure they weren't tied too tight around people's wrists. This negligence caused protestor's hands to turn purple and bruised. This caused unnecessary physical harm to those arrested. Individuals harmfully ziptied were not able to have this remedied for one or more hours, until they were placed on police vans/busses/cars where officers had cutting tools to switch-out zipties.

Personally, my right ziptie was so tight that my arresting officer (who gave his name as Ducky) said he didn't know if he would be able to get it off because it was *"so tight"* he was unable to get scissors, or any cutting tool, underneath. It was very painful to have it cut off and I witnessed the same thing happen to at least three other women in line near me (i.e., the line for boarding the police vans).

Coughing in our faces with threat of COVID-19. I was arrested around 8:30 p.m. and sometime between 9:30 and 10:30 p.m., I was placed on a police bus in a caged area with two seats that held myself and a young 18 year-old woman. At this time, we had zipties on our wrists. I had zipties on for 4.5 hours until approx. 1 a.m. After being in the police bus for a couple hours, we were transported from the Bronx to Queens Central Booking at 125-01 Queens Blvd. 11415. Each officer had what they called *"five bodies"*, which was five people they were required to arrest and process. My arresting officer took me off the bus along with the other four he had arrested. I would like to also note for the record that my arresting officer took a photo of me with his cell phone before I got on the bus, which he claimed was to be used to *"keep track of me"*.

Once we were in Queens Central Booking, I waited in a line with my arresting officer and the other people he had arrested. The NYPD was calling out for officers with *"females"* to come inside. I was led into a small hallway/foyer that had a wheelchair ramp to enter the precinct. I stood in this very small confined foyer for approximately 20 minutes side-by-side with about seven other women, all black or Latina. There was a very tall (approx. 6 ft. 5 in.) officer in white (very large, well over 250 lbs.). He was a white man with floppy dark brown hair. He stood in the inside doorway that connected the foyer to the precinct. The officer had a blue surgical mask on his face that he had pulled down resting on his chin, so that the mask did not cover his mouth or nose. He began to cough very loud and hard. He didn't cover his mouth as he coughed directly outward at us. I was approximately 2 feet from him at this time; and in that two foot radius between he and I, there were three other women protesters squeezed in, as they had us standing shoulder-to-shoulder. One woman, who I could not see because she was around the corner from me, asked him to pull his mask up since he was coughing.

He responded:

"if you shut the fuck up for two minutes, I will pull my mask up",

then he said, *"you aren't shutting up"*.

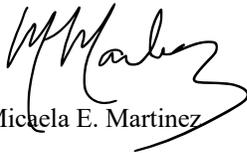
At this moment, with his mask still down, he proceeded to cough at us and say: *"I have COVID"*.

As this was happening, I told another officer standing in front of me *"if your colleague coughs like that he is also endangering you and your other colleagues, not just us"*. He acknowledged what I said, but he did not ask his commander to stop coughing at us.

NYPD Abuse 5. During the COVID-19 pandemic, which to date has resulted in the death of 24,299 NY State residents, a relatively high-ranking police officer purposely coughed in the faces of arrested protesters, including myself, while we stood handcuffed with zipties with our backs to the wall in Queens Central Booking. As he coughed at us, he said he *"had COVID"*. This is not only psychologically harmful but physically harmful, because even though this officer was likely lying about *"having COVID"* he very well may have been asymptotically infected or pre-symptomatic with SARS-CoV-2. If he was infected he very likely may have transmitted the infection with malicious intent.

The five abuses I have outlined above are the most egregious of those I witnessed on June 4th, 2020. The police brutality and mistreatment of NYC residents that I witnessed is not limited to that stated here. For brevity and clarity, I outlined what I felt to be the important examples of what I witnessed and experienced. I am happy to go on record with further interviews and statements.

Sincerely,



Michela E. Martinez

I witness police acting like thugs in my streets. Jumping out of cruisers and start beating people for just being on the street. Below is an account of June 3rd on 49th and 3rd ave. This same evening I witnessed another brutal unprovoked attack by the NYPD. I have never seen thugs (that's what they were) be so angry and aggressive. I was literally scared for my life and felt like a coward I could not help my fellow citizen while the poice brutalized her. I wanted to call 911 but was frozen and felt my escape was priority.

Coucilman Powers,

I am one of your constituent and was on the front line yesterday when this peaceful protest was met with police brutality. I am absolutely outraged that this happen down the street my from my house, my safe place. What I witnessed was a peaceful protest march that was ended abruptly, chaotically, unannounced, unprovoked and violently by NYPD. There was absoutly never any warning for dispersment.

The march was heading south on 3rd avenue (we had just passed the 17th pct...with no problem and all in good moods, including the NYPD officers protecting pct 17 block), then a police car speeds west in front of the bicyclist leading the protest. A white shirt man get out of the car and starts yelling at cruisers waiting on 49th Street to 'COME ON....COME ON WHAT ARE YOU DOING ROLL OUT HERE' as he was doing that I witness NYPD in riot gear appear from 48th street and run north beating and trying to apprehend anyone in sight.

Most of the bicyclist fled and left marchers vulnerable to police attacks. Since I was a bit out front I was able to evade the police who were running up 3rd ave, however a girl on a bike who was trying to warn protesters to flee (while the white shirt was yelling to come on) was not so lucky.

She was VIOLENTLY met with a policeman hitting her with the baton. She did not resist, if anything she tried to block her face. After she was on the ground, the officer went to find another protester. He then turned around and witnessed her crawling...He yelled get on the ground and another officer (who came with him up 3rd from 48th) began to beat her again. At that point I turned around and headed as far south as I could.

I was scared for my life but am wondering how that girl is now. I want to help her but feared for my life and now am not able to sleep about it. Is there a way to possible find out if she is okay and/or give her my contact in case she needs it. I was able to take two very blurry pictures, but hope my testimony will be sufficient enough.

If possible I would like to come in to speak to someone on your team to take my account of what I witnessed.

This type of police brutality and tactics against our safety should not be warranted in our community.

With deep regards,
JuanPablo Juarez

300 East 38th
New York, NY 10016
(212)786-222

FIRST COMPLAINT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

Wednesday 6/3 — Protest in Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn

I was one of the peaceful protesters at Cadman Plaza on Wednesday 6/3, near the front of the group that was facing the police line around 8:30/8:45PM and was later charged away from Cadman Plaza, with some police officers clubbing, around 9:00PM. I'm writing with as best an account as I can, reconstructed from memory and time stamps of photos and videos I took. Photos and videos are linked in the sub-bullets below.

- **~8:30PM-8:45PM** — Protesters approached a police line, walking north on Cadman Plaza W and stopping at the police line at Tillary Street. They chanted "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" and "Peaceful Protest."
 - Footage
 - [Cadman 01](#) — Video of protesters marching to Tillary Street and chanting "Hands Up, Don't Shoot"
 - [Cadman 02](#) — Video of protesters stopped at Tillary Street and continuing to chant "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" as police line up in numbers
 - [Cadman 03](#) — Video of protesters chanting "Peaceful Protest" while stopped at Tillary Street
- **~8:45-8:53PM** — Some of the group turned around to walk south on Cadman Plaza W, prompted by the police line. The rest of the group soon followed. Protesters were forced to walk by a parked police car, which some gestured signs and chants toward
 - Footage
 - [Cadman 04](#) / [Cadman 05](#) — Photos of protesters walking around police car
- **~8:53-8:57PM** — Police started rounding the corner from Tillary Street, seemingly in the hundreds, and approaching the rear of the protester group walking peacefully south. They then started clubbing some of the protesters at the rear of the group, and panic among protesters ensued. A large number of protesters started approaching the police officers with their hands up, in an effort to de-escalate. Others ran and jumped fences into the park between east of Cadman Plaza W. The rest of the group started scattering southward, peeling off or staying in another large sub-group of protesters walking down Cadman Plaza W.
 - Footage
 - [Cadman 06](#) — Video of protesters attempting to de-escalate group of approaching police officers
 - [Cadman 07](#) / [Cadman 08](#) — Photos of protesters attempting to de-escalate group of approaching police officers
- **~8:57-9:00** — Hundreds of police officers that had been rounding the corner on Tillary drowned out the protesters attempting to de-escalate, forcing the group to retreat

backwards, many hopping the fence into Columbus Park as police seemed to overtake Cadman Plaza W.

- Footage
 - [Cadman 09](#) / [Cadman 10](#) / [Cadman 11](#) / [Cadman 12](#) — Photos of hundreds of police officers moving south to disperse protesters
- **9:00+** — Protesters move together in a group down the middle path of Columbus Park, chanting peacefully and sticking together as cop cars drive at high speeds, west on Joralemon Street and up Cadman Plaza W
 - Footage
 - [Cadman 13](#) — Video of protesters moving through path peacefully as cop cars race by in distance

SECOND COMPLAINT OF POLICE MISCONDUCT

Thursday 6/4 — Protest in Williamsburg, Brooklyn

I was part of a group protesting in Williamsburg on Thursday, 6/4. The group was walking northeast on Rutledge Street and turned right (southeast) on to Lee Avenue at about 9:20PM. I helped create a line in front of the police with other protesters so the group could peacefully pass and round the corner to march southeast on Lee Avenue. (See video [Williamsburg 01](#))

Within minutes as we walked southeast on Lee Ave, we were starting to feel pressure from the police at the rear as they charged the group and inched closer. Many protesters started to panic, run, and disperse. I then started leading a “Stay together, stay tight” chant for about five minutes to keep the group close and safe from direct police attacks. The group hung together and we were forced to turn left (east) from Lee Avenue on to Flushing Avenue due to a police presence blocking us from walking farther south on Lee Avenue. The police were starting to fill the street, and had kettled us at the other end of the block at Union / Marcy Avenue. As such, the group of protesters was pressed on to the north sidewalk, unsure of what to do as police started approaching closer.

I remember panic ensuing, and looking about 10 feet to my left and hearing screaming. I inched forward with my bike off the sidewalk, and saw something white roll on to the ground — what I thought was some sort of chemical weapon being used by NYPD, but what was actually a half gallon milk brought by a protester, out of fear of being tear gassed. That protester, the possessor of the milk, was being clubbed in front of me on the ground. Some other protesters had gone in to support. At that point, the group moved quickly to disperse. We had no choice — kettled on either end of the block — but to hop a mid-block fence and run through a NYCHA development on the southern side of Flushing Avenue between Lee Avenue and Marcy / Union Avenue.

Testimony Regd. Police behaviour at peaceful protest on 5.31.2020

Rahul Sharma

I joined the march in protest of police brutality and police immunity at Atlantic avenue in Brooklyn at about 7:15pm, 5.31.2020.

Over the next few hours I walked with fellow protesters peacefully chanting and walking on the roads through Flatbush Ave, the Manhattan Bridge upper roadway, Canal St and 6th Avenue. On 6th Avenue and 41st St, we encountered a police blockade. We were told that we were an unlawful gathering and all protesters took a knee to indicate they were peaceful. NYPD officers who were part of the SRG began charging forward and shoving protesters who were not actively harming or threatening police in any way. As we backed up, we were blocked by a row of NYPD on bicycles. When I tried to move to the sidewalk- attempting to leave- I was surrounded by police. A scuffle between police and protesters knocked me backwards onto a police officer's bicycle. I apologized, got up and attempted to leave.

They told me to "go" but I did not want to shove already violent officers to clear a path for myself. I hesitated, and an NYPD sergeant yelled "Cuff him! F*ckin Arrest him!" even though I was not resisting the police and was trying to leave. I saw NYPD officers swarm on several unarmed peaceful protesters, and hitting them with their batons, and throwing/pinning them on the ground for no reason apart from being present at the protest.

I started filming this encounter right as the police began moving towards us and have recorded the entire thing including my arrest. You can catch glimpses of police officers unnecessarily using force on peaceful protesters- none of whom actively threatened.

A link to the video below:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VfBB1KCNJ9krQ1TEz3VKPInLvRwy_nwk/view?usp=sharing

Public Safety Testimony

Natalie Shell

Manhattan, NY 10026

June 10th 2020

To The New York City Council,

Today, I am writing to testify for an incident I witnessed on Sunday, June 7th, 2020 at the intersection of 70th Street and 5th Avenue in Manhattan at around 2:50pm EST. A peaceful march supporting Black Lives and George Floyd has just finished marching past and I waited on the sidewalk. At the end of the march, I witnessed an NYPD officer use unwarranted and unnecessary physical intimidation against an unarmed civilian.

At the end of the march, there were two organizers following the march and keeping the NYPD motorcade at a slight distance. The organizers paused at 70th and 5th to allow for more space between the excess amount of officers and the peaceful marchers. Of the two organizers there was one who was male, black/non-black POC and one who was female and white. Both were unarmed and had their hands up and out in front of them while in the "stop" or "pause" gesture - again, to give space between the marchers and motorcade.

While they were pausing the police cars, two officers in the front left car of the motorcade (blue Ford), left their vehicle and suddenly and aggressively made movement and yelled **only** at the male organizer. One officer, bald/wearing a white shirt/late 30s/medium-to-stocky build, moved his hand to his hip, implying that he was prepared to pull out a weapon on an *unarmed* civilian. The officers made no intention to move toward the white/female organizer nor intimidate her. The officer in the white shirt yelled back to the others and on his walkie, "we have to get them." They then got back in the car and continued on their path down 5th Ave.

As a resident of NY and witness, I am concerned for the following reasons:

1. The officer should not have left his vehicle and intimate an unarmed, peaceful organizer. We have the right to assemble as clearly stated in the First Amendment.
2. Why, for a peaceful march, do upwards of 6 vehicles from the NYPD need to be present (2 undercover Fords, 4+ vans, 1-2 squad cars)? Seems like a clear demonstration of excessive force and intimidation even before the incident.
3. Why was verbal and potentially physical aggression/threat/intimidation the first response? This was unnecessary to even potentially witness, and a clear indicator how quickly violent this could have turned at the *direct hands of the officer who targeted and singled out an unarmed black man*.
4. Again, the officer clearly signaled out the black organizer. While unacceptable had he also lunged at or verbally intimidated the white woman, it is disgusting to me to so clearly witness the perverse and deeply rooted racial biases of the NYPD.

While I was unable to capture footage of the exchange, I wanted to bring this to your attention from a public safety concern. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Natalie Shell

June 9, 2020

I am a witness to police brutality. On Wednesday, June 3rd around 9 pm at 3rd Avenue and 53rd Street. police began shoving peaceful protesters to the ground with their bikes and then beating them with batons while they were on the ground. As we tried to leave the scene, we were met by more police charging towards us on 53rd Street. They were yelling and shoving us against walls. My female friend had a male officer forcefully push her against the wall with his hands against her chest. We were then handcuffed and arrested without our Miranda rights read to us and without being told why we were being arrested.

While we sat on the sidewalk, a woman next to me began to complain that her handcuffs were on too tight. Her hand was turning blue, and it was cutting into her wrist. She was bleeding. None of the officers had the correct tool to remove the handcuff, so one of them began trying to cut it off with a pocketknife. This was very dangerous since it could cut the veins in her wrist, and my friend who is a doctor began asking him to stop. He didn't initially but then allowed my friend to assist. They got it off. The woman had to go to the hospital for stitches.

We were then loaded into the back of a police van where we stayed for 3 hours. Eventually, we were finally led inside a Brooklyn precinct where we spent another 4 hours while they processed our arrests. We remained handcuffed for a total of 6.5 hours.

The women were separated from the men and were escorted to a separate room where they were frisked by female police. Only one man arrested was frisked. *He was black.* A few of us asked to go to the restroom, and a policeman escorted each one who asked. When the black man asked to go to the restroom, the policeman who escorted him asked his colleague to borrow his gun.

We were finally released at 5 am.

Sincerely,

K.C. Bugg, Psy.D.

Hi, my name is Pedro Lopez. I'm a Brooklyn resident, and a constituent of Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. Today I'm submitting testimony in support of defunding the police and a creation of community run efforts to protect the people of NYC. More needs to be done than making certain maneuvers illegal or a misdemeanor. Eric Garner was killed from a police chokehold, were these not banned from the police?!?! We need true legislation that is attacking the problem that is the diseased NYPD. Money needs to come out of their pensions for court trials against their misconduct as well as to give real consequence to these rogue wannabes. I also wanted to share with the Council some of what I've seen and experienced since New Yorkers started taking to the streets to stand against police brutality.

On Friday 5/30 I was at Barclays Center with 100's of others when police began to push people into the streets and repeatedly asking "why are you in the streets?" I saw a disturbing video where not one but two black civic leaders (Senator Zellnor Myrie and Assemblywomen Diana Richardson) were attacked and pepper sprayed by NYPD. I've seen footage of officers attacking the public unprovoked at protests. Meanwhile their badges are covered and their body cams are off! HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS TYPE OF WHITE SUPREMACY THAT IS EVIDENT IN NYPD? People are expressing their right to protest and are met by a gang of thugs who wear uniforms under the guise of "law enforcement". These officers have not been wearing masks during these protests and we are in the midst of a pandemic! Also why are people being maced and pepper sprayed, which is cause for respiratory failure!

The NYPD has proven time and again that they are not good at their jobs and honestly should be abolished. Our taxes are funding the policing and killing of black and brown bodies! Why is it that this is still an issue in a "progressive city" The interests that city leaders are taking in showing their lack of support for the constituents they represent is baffling.

By defunding the police we can allocate the proper funds to housing, education, healthcare, and our communities, which have been defunded for YEARS.

In unrest,
Pedro

Unacceptable Police Brutality Against Peaceful Protesters in NY

Below you will find three testimonies from friends who were brutalized on the streets of New York despite being patient with and accepting of officers' demands.

Eliana Perozo

*"My name is Eliana Perozo and I was arrested Tuesday night around 9:15pm. I was on the sidewalk in Manhattan close to Union Square. I was yanked out of the crowd violently by a police officer who spotted me recording the beating of another protester. The police officer pulled me into the street, hitting my phone out of my hand while **using slurs such as "bitch" and "come here."** Once he zip-tied me, which left welts for days, he pushed me onto the ground forcing me to fall flat down. Once I was arrested, the police officers shoved and forced more arrested protesters next to me in a circle. Protesters were beaten and bloody. **One Black child threw up blood.** Protesters begged officers to call a medic for him. Eventually we were transported to 120 Schermerhorn in Brooklyn. We were **held for about eight hours.** We were **never given food or a phone.** Close to 200 of us were there.*

It was clear that some people being held at the center were in need of medical attention and, again, police denied until we pleaded so deeply that they finally granted a medic to a young man who had been severely peppered sprayed."

Mike

"SUNDAY:

*I was with a rather large group of protestors that started at the Barclays Center, crossed the Brooklyn Bridge and made their way down 6th Avenue. The entire protest was peaceful and I saw no property destruction or looting. As we arrived at Bryant Park we noticed an entire line of officers in riot gear blocking our path. We stopped and locked arms as the officers approached our line. They then wheeled out a speaker with a speech that said something to the effect of "You are violently and unlawfully protesting - disperse now or you will be arrested." Me and the other **protestors went down on both knees and put our hands in the air** to show them that we were non-violent. Almost immediately the officers **charged us with their batons and tried to run over as many of us as they could.** I was grabbed and cuffed and, as I stood on line, saw a **young black boy with a busted and bloodied lip.** He was asking his arresting officer why he punched him in the face to which the **officer told him to "shut the fuck up".** I was then taken on the bus and driven to One Police Plaza to be processed.*

TUESDAY:

*I was arrested at Union Square with several other protestors. As the group approached Union Square we were corralled by the police onto a sidewalk where a white shirt **police officer was wildly swinging his club** at anyone he could find. He **almost struck my wife in the face** at which point I instructed my wife to calmly leave and go home. As I finished that sentence I was grabbed by my arresting officer. As he led me to the street I saw **five officers on top of a young Black woman.** She was not resisting (and telling them such) but the officers were still on top of her, kicking and*

punching her. A protestor that was videotaping the incident was targeted by another officer who swung his nightstick at his phone, badly injuring and more than likely breaking his thumb. This protestor was then also arrested.

As we waited to be put in a van a girl in front of me started to beg the officers to **loosen her zipties because she could no longer feel her fingers**. I was directly behind her and could see that **her hand had turned completely white**. Other protestors behind her took notice as well and we started to plead with the officers to do something - anything. Instead they sat silently. Eventually my arresting officer informed me that no one there had "cutters" aka scissors. Every officer there had at least 5-6 zip ties with them but not a single one had scissors to cut them off. A few minutes later as the girl started to cry another officer came over with a foldable hunting knife. He opened the blade and tried to wedge it in between the girl's skin and the zip tie - which was impossible. I begged him not to try that at which point he took the knife and started sawing at the middle connecting piece of the zip tie. Once again I begged him to stop because he could slit her wrist. His response to that was "well I thought you wanted her zip ties cut" before he stood up and left, leaving the girl worse off than when he found her.

Next to us was a **young Black boy, no more than 15, who was not even a part of the protest**. He was just in the area and grabbed by the NYPD. Immediately, every single protestor noticed something was wrong. He had a **swollen eye, was limping and could barely stand**. They put him on his knees with his hands zip tied and a few seconds later **he fell over and coughed up blood**. We all screamed for a medic for about 5 minutes while his **arresting officer stood over him, chuckled, and claimed that he was "faking it"**. It was only until they saw his blood (along with the news cameras pointed at him) that they moved him to a sidewalk and out of view. Approximately 10 minutes later two medics showed up and walked him away. They would not tell us where they were taking him and **I do not know what happened to him**.

On top of those absolutely horrific and traumatizing events not a single officer, including my arresting officer, wore a mask or PPE of any kind. I know this because I'll never forget the condescending smirks and smiles on their faces as we begged them to give our fellow protestors medical help."

Alan

"On Friday I was indiscriminately pepper sprayed in the front of the Barclays center. I stood a few feet behind the barrier separating the protestors from the police when an **officer began spraying pepper in a panoramic fashion at the crowd**. The pepper spray hit my left eye and my left torso. After I was pepper sprayed with both hands in the air, the crowd began to shift from the Barclays plaza over to the streets. Once I recovered from the burns I moved into the streets with the crowd. I was towards the front of the crowd when police came towards us with batons and began pushing protestors back. One officer shoved me back with her baton but then another officer just advised her to arrest me. They put me the plastic cuffs and put me in the back of a city bus (the one that the driver got off in protest). I was in custody from 8pm until 1:30pm.

On Sunday evening, I was biking to Brooklyn from Fort Lee. I was about to cross the Manhattan Bridge when I saw approximately 100 police officers at the base of the bridge on the Manhattan side. I waited for a few minutes. Then I saw the protestors come across the bridge on the Manhattan side. I joined the group and we walked up 6th avenue until we reached Bryant Park. When we got there we were faced by a line of officers who held their batons and shouted "MOVE" repeatedly while approaching us. They reached us at the front of the line and then pushed me over my bike and then stepped over it, bending my bike.

*They stopped approaching and then **we kneeled in front of the officers**. They announced we were having an unlawful assembly and that we needed to disperse. We remained kneeling and then **the officers approached and arrested us**. My arrest was relatively peaceful but others in my arrest group were tackled by police. This time I was only detained for roughly 2 hours. This detainment was likely quicker as my information was already in the system from the first arrest."*

These are just three accounts of violent police behavior. Imagine what more has happened that will go unheard.

June 5, 2020

Dear New York City Council Members,

I live at 461 Classon Avenue in Brooklyn, District 35. I am horrified by the recent and longer term actions of the NYPD and believe that for the safety of all New Yorkers, this rogue agency needs massive cuts and we need to repeal 50a.

I am a historian and in the early nineteenth century, NYC did not have a formal police force because citizens feared that officers would become a standing army that would suppress freedom of speech and assembly. Last Friday night, I saw the fears of nineteenth-century New Yorkers come true. Protesters marched down my street and I joined them. Most of us were chanting and blocking traffic and one person smashed the windows of a parked police van. As a resident of this street for the past 7 years, I insist that this minimal property damage pales in comparison with the loss of Black people's lives at the hand of the NYPD and other police departments around this nation. People have the right to express anger and grief and demand change.

The police perpetrated the only violence I saw that night. We gathered at the intersection of Classon and Lafayette, spread out across the streets and sidewalks in order to keep social distance, saying the names of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Dozens of officers rolled in wearing riot gear. They beat people with batons and sprayed their eyes with mace. I was terrified and started walking on the sidewalk towards home. But two large officers pushed me brutally into the street (I am a small, slight person.) I stumbled, almost falling to the ground, and wrenched my back. The assault is recorded here, at the end of the video: <https://twitter.com/ZachReports/status/1266557305107202049> I am in enormous pain in my neck, back, and hip a week later. What happened to me was terrible, but I have seen so much worse over the past week on social media. Officers are treating protests as a battle and our municipal leaders embolden them to violate the constitution with impunity by failing to put an end to this aggression and by enacting a curfew. Helicopters make the city sound like a war zone every night. Protesters have waged very little violence (property damage is not violence!) but the NYPD has met them with extreme brutality and our leaders are letting this happen and even encouraging it. We are in the midst of a public health crisis and a global pandemic, but mass arrests put protesters in exactly the conditions where COVID-19 spreads most quickly. When COVID-19 rates spike again, these deaths will be on the hands of the NYPD and every municipal leader who allows mass arrests to take place. You are showing us, through your actions and lack of action, that property is more important than New Yorkers' lives.

The NYPD does not deserve money that could go to schools, hospitals, parks, and affordable housing. This agency does not make us safe. Inequality is the root of our city's problems, but the NYPD perpetuates and worsens this inequality with brutality against New Yorkers of color and impoverished people. We need to direct resources towards making this a fairer city, moving towards the root causes of inequality. Offering more services and making sure that public systems like education are equal across districts would be a starting point. We can't do this if the NYPD takes 6 billion dollars every year. Some have proposed a \$1 billion dollar cut to the NYPD's budget and I think that is a place to start. We need officers out of schools, mental health emergencies, and public health work. We need to repeal 50-a so that the NYPD cannot terrorize New Yorkers with impunity. Brutal cops need to be fired and tried.

This could be a turning point that makes our city fairer and safer. What side are you on?

Sincerely,
Marika Plater
461 Classon Ave, Brooklyn NY 11238
marika.plater@gmail.com

NYPD Police Brutality Towards Peaceful Protesters

To Whom It May Concern,

I have attended numerous peaceful protests over the past two weeks in memory of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and the many black lives lost to bad policing. I have been protesting the use of excessive force and police brutality. I am in support of defunding the police.

I have seen numerous occurrences of police aimlessly swinging batons at peaceful protests, shoving young men and women into walls, posts and glass in order to tightly wrap handcuffs around them. And use pepper spray so freely and unnecessarily that I have even inhaled some by virtue of being near a target of these cops.

One incident in particular I am able to show evidence for was on 11:29PM on 06/01/2020 in the Midtown West neighborhood of Manhattan.

I was with a large group of peaceful protesters heading to Columbus circle and many of the protesters had disbanded and panicked because officers started charging our peaceful march from behind. They were swinging batons aimlessly, tackling young men and women, tripping them all because they were past curfew. These were ALL peaceful protesters.

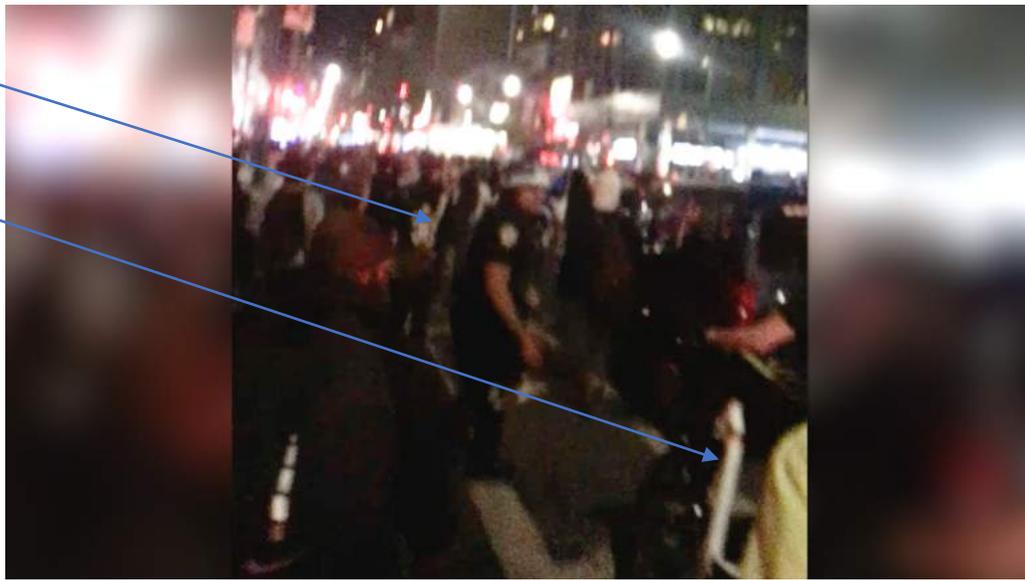
As I walked slowly with my hands up, in hopes I wouldn't be thoughtlessly targeted by these police men and women, I left my iPhone to record what was going on around me. Just by watching the video you can get the sense that there is a fear in the air that should not be present at a peaceful march. Lots of yelling, flashing lights and running. At about 0:10 seconds a tall officer equipped in riot gear stops chasing a young man he can't catch. He then turns around, makes eye contact with another young black man in a neon yellow hoodie, says "What Happened?" then raises his hand, which us holding pepper spray, and deploys it directly into this young man's eyes. The officer then shouts "Get Out of Here!". He then finds fellow officers, falls in line with them and begins pursuit behind us as if nothing happened. No arrest made. Just excessive, aggressive unprovoked force with a toxic and potentially blinding chemical. How is this not a public safety issue?

I was marching with this young man in the neon yellow hoodie for almost an hour, I am more inclined to say kid as he looked closer to 18 than to 21. He was in the middle of the crowd, chanting peacefully and not a part of the fringe looting that became an issue ear the end of the night. This officer was completely calm, lucid and intentional in punishing this young black man for simply being a part of the protest. For being out past curfew like I was. A curfew that was only placed on us a few hours before.

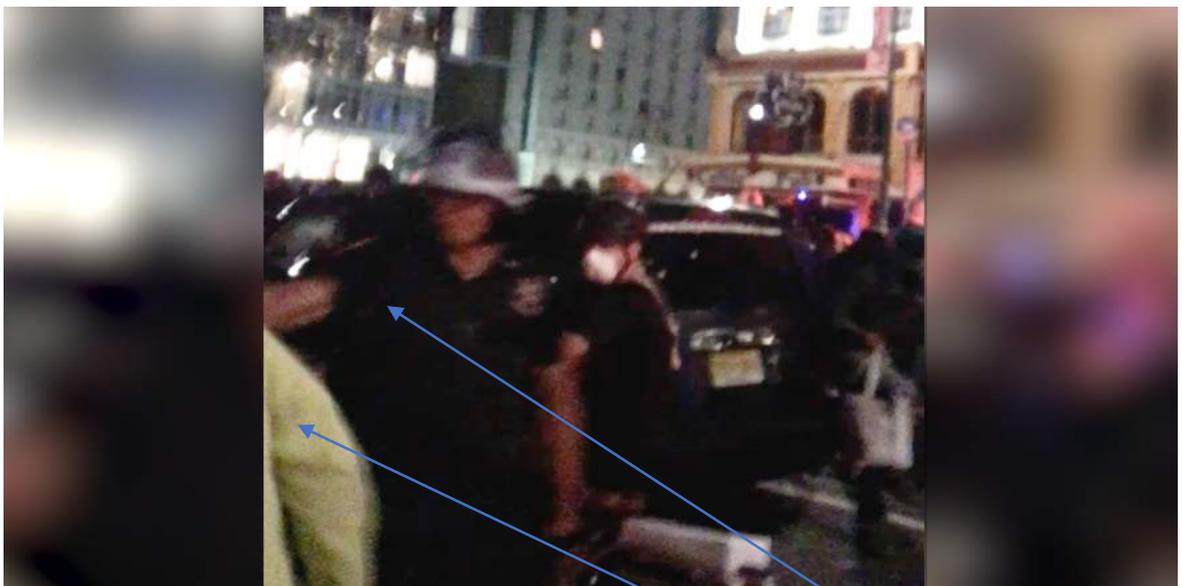
This hearing on public health could not have come at a better time. The NYPD officers are a danger to the health and safety of NYC citizens. A complete bastardization of their supposed function. Action needs to be taken to carefully reprimand officers and then defund the police.

Since I am unable to upload my video as evidence. Below are a series of screenshots.

Officer turns and makes eye contact with peaceful protester- young man in hoodie (victim).



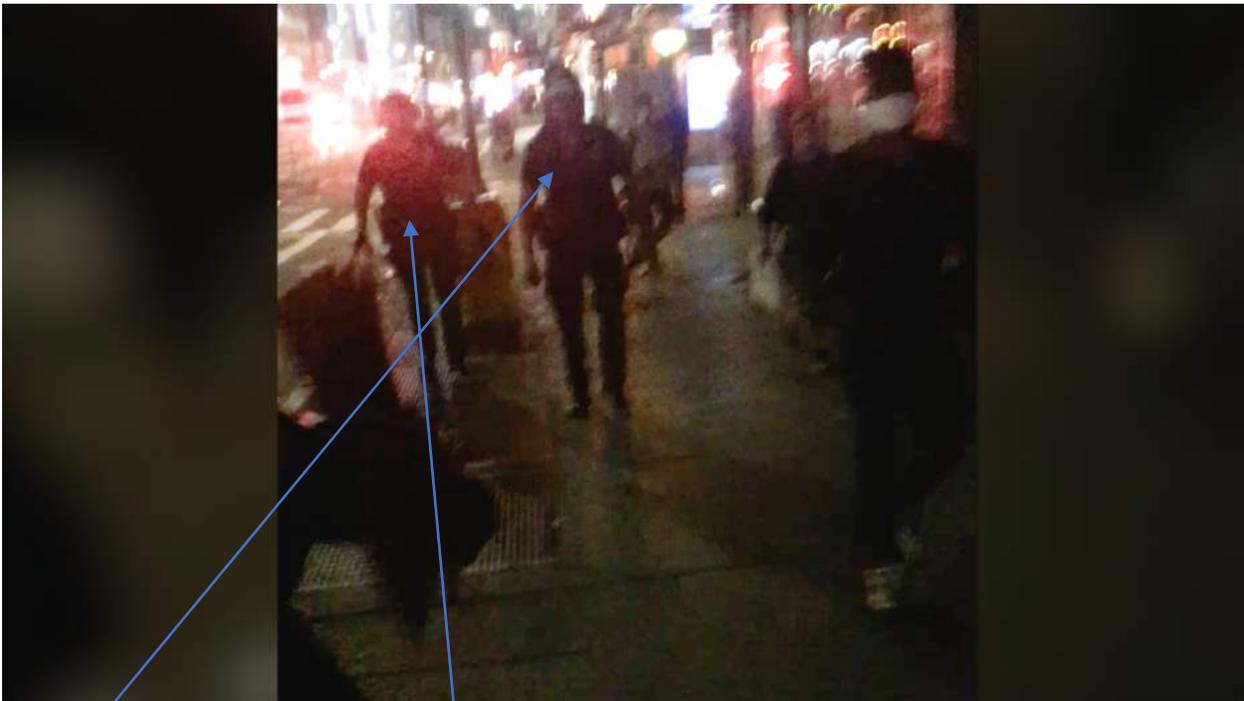
Officer begins to raise hand holding pepper spray towards peaceful protester - young man in hoodie (victim).



Officer deploys pepper spray on peaceful protester - young man



Officer continues to pepper spray peaceful protester - young man in hoodie (victim).



Officer falls in line with other officers to pursue our peaceful protest again. No arrest made. What was the reason for pepper spray?

My husband and I were walking down 6th ave, when the cops had set up barricades on 54th Streetn and 6th Ave. Then cars came speeding towards the protesters, one cop car came rushing down the street, followed by an ambulance, and another cop car. People moved into the sidewalk, some running some walking, to get out of the way of the speeding cop cars and ambulance. The cop car drove through the orange barricade directly to my left as i was walking down the sidewalk. The last car, the one following the ambulance, stopped just before the orange barricade. I saw one female caucasian cop jump out of the car and soon after she was swinging her nightstick at no one in particular. More cops began filling 6th ave, we were on the SE corner of 55th St and 6th Ave. Most of the protestors had made their way past 55th st and had stopped there. I was walking towards intersection of 55th and 6th ave when i had noticed a black female protestor on the ground. I saw the same caucasian female cop charge towards the protestor on the ground. I instinctively put myself between the cop and the protestor. The female caucasian stood there. We only made eye contact for a second before a shorter latina cop stepped around her to my right. She did not give me any instruction to back up, she did not give any warning. All I saw was her face for a split second a black bar coming towards my face. My eyes were closed during impact, I felt a blow directly on my face, I closed my eyes and turned away. I immediately felt my front tooth chipped and tasted blood. I walked back East away from the intersection. I started inspecting my mouth to make sure there was no other damage. The tooth right next to my front tooth that got chipped was dislodged inside my mouth and i pushed back into place with my tongue. I turned back towards 6th Ave to find my husband. I heard him ask me if the cops hit me in the face and I said yes. He started trying to communicate with one of the cops asking for the badge number of one of the assailant and telling him that I was just hit in the face. He kept telling us to stay back so we did, we were about 6 feet away. We did not step forward but he refused to engage in a conversation. I don't know how long this lasted, maybe 60 - 90 seconds before the Male cop pulled out handheld mace and nonchalantly sprayed towards us. I saw the mace in his hand so I covered my eyes as soon as I saw liquid coming out from the mace container. My husband did not cover his eyes and said he felt a burning sensation. I asked the cop if he felt threatened and that's why he sprayed us, he did not respond.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my anger and frustration over the use of force and the brutality by NYPD against peaceful protestors and essential workers. Though I have seen countless instances, both in person and on video/social media, I would like to focus on two instances caught on video against essential workers. Two different men who had credentials were chased and arrested while both being essential workers. The police did not care about credentials and chased, pushed and assaulted these men. These men remained peaceful, the NYPD was physical, aggressive and uncaring about these men's credential. Both instance appear to have resulted in arrests.

Please do let me know if you would like evidence of both instances. They were recorded and are widely available. There are videos of both.

I also experienced police misconduct on Saturday, May 30th in the neighborhoods of Prospect-Lefferts/East New York, when NYPD used military tactics with a helicopter to instill fear into a peaceful crowd of organized protestors. The NYPD flew their helicopter so low, that wind and debris were hitting all protestors, painfully. They were far lower than 1000ft height standard for urban areas, which is required by Federal Aviation Regulation. Protestors were made to fear for risk of injury as well as a high risk of them crashing. This was a legitimately terrifying tactic to witness and have used against all of us. They also employed this tactic next to a COVID testing facility/drive-up lot at Beverly Rd and Bedford Avenue (in the Sears parking lot). Flying far below minimum height regulations and whipping up air from a massive COVID testing site seems like an act of aggression and brutality as well. This is violence to public health.

Most officers are not wearing masks at peach protests. This is violent and aggressive and dangerous.

Please do the work to actual protect and serve the PEOPLE and not this broken, racist and out-of-control policing system.

The REVOLUTION is being TELEVISED.

Hannah Norwick
433 Quincy Street, BK, NY 11221
Hannah.norwick@gmail.com
3362632969

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my anger and frustration over the use of force and the brutality by NYPD against peaceful protestors and essential workers. Though I have seen countless instances, both in person and on video/social media, I would like to focus on two instances caught on video against essential workers. Two different men who had credentials were chased and arrested while both being essential workers. The police did not care about their credentials. Police chased, pushed and assaulted these men. These men remained peaceful, the NYPD was physical, aggressive and uncaring about these men's credentials. Both instance appear to have resulted in arrests.

They were recorded and are widely available. There are videos of both.

I personally experienced police misconduct on Saturday, May 30th in the neighborhoods of Prospect-Lefferts/East New York, when NYPD used military tactics with a helicopter to instill fear into a peaceful crowd of organized protestors. The NYPD flew their helicopter so low, that wind and debris were hitting all protestors, painfully. They were far lower than 1000ft height standard for urban areas, which is required by Federal Aviation Regulation. Protestors were made to fear for risk of injury as well as a high risk of them crashing. This was a legitimately terrifying tactic to witness and have used against all of us. They also employed this tactic next to a COVID testing facility/drive-up lot at Beverly Rd and Bedford Avenue (in the Sears parking lot). Flying far below minimum height regulations and whipping up air from a massive COVID testing site seems like an act of aggression and brutality as well. This is violence to public health.

Additionally, my roommate who was peacefully protesting the Murder of George Floyd at the hands of the police and the police brutality experienced here in NYC, on that same Saturday was pushed over when a police vehicle plummeted through the crowd injuring several people. This was after the protestors cleared the crowd to ensure that an ambulance could get through.

These are just some of the many acts of violence, lack of protection and duty to protect these officers have been sworn to.

Moreover, most officers are not wearing masks at protests. This is violent and aggressive and dangerous.

Please do the work to actually protect and serve the PEOPLE and not this broken, racist and out-of-control policing system and be on the humane side of history.

Best,
Your community member

Jillian Norwick
838 Jefferson Ave
Apt 2r
Brooklyn, NY 11221

On Sunday May 24th I was exercising my right to peacefully protest and I was pushed in the chest, shoved in the back, and pepper sprayed in the face by three different police officers. ALL of whom were covering their badge numbers. When I was pushed and shoved the police asked us to move to the sidewalks which we were all trying to do and we were all cooperating with their requests but there were a lot of us so it was taking some time and they just began to shove and push everyone. Again everyone was cooperating and doing what they asked. Later in the night I witnessed two officers grab a peaceful black pedestrian by his back pack and started kicking him and beating him with their batons. When I witnessed this I approached them and begged them to stop hurting him. Their response was to pepper spray me directly in the face. I was unable to see I was in pain and I was most importantly no longer able to exercise my RIGHT to peacefully protest. The brutality I have seen at these protest has all been started with the cops. You can see it in their faces that they cant wait to beat the shit out of someone. These cops need to be held responsible for their misconduct. How do you expect us as a people to feel safe when cops are allowed to beat and abuse peaceful protestors? Please do something about this.

On Friday, May 30, 2020, I attended a peaceful protest in Manhattan, NY at 4PM. As we walked uptown on sixth avenue, I was at the very back of the group. We experienced the escalation of the police response out of nowhere in spite of our peaceful nature. A police officer pursued me and a group of people around us and swung his baton violently at us. His baton came dangerously close to my face-within three inches of my eyes and nose. He also targeted other people in our group, swinging his baton at them as well. We were all following orders and his response was incredibly inappropriate and dangerous.

Sarah Lacoff

New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety
Date: Tuesday, June 8, 2020

Name: Nina Jang
Residence: Brooklyn, 11211

To the Committee on Public Safety:

I am Nina Jang, a resident of Brooklyn. I am writing to inform the Committee on only one of the numerous accounts of police brutality inflicted upon protesters, including myself, in the past week especially amplified by the mayor's hastily imposed curfew.

The particular incident happened on the night of June 3. Following the nightly silent vigil at McCarren Park in Williamsburg/Greenpoint, we as a large group exercised our right of freedom of assembly to march south through Bedford-Stuyvesant, to Grand Army Plaza, to Barclays Center and back up northeast to Bed-Stuy. This is precisely in the intersection near Dean St and New York Ave that a large police force stood ground in the center of the 4-way road. There were police bordered along both right and left sides of the group. A helicopter shone a spotlight from above. One officer in the center began shouting at all of us to leave the premise and return home. The only way was to walk toward and around this group of officers in the middle of the intersection. As we began following their direction and walking steadily forward, an individual attempted to calmly and clearly explain that our only purpose was to peacefully protest with no ulterior motive to damage the neighborhood. However, the officer acted with such force and immediate escalation by grabbing this protester by the arm and shoving her to the ground as two other officers stepped in to pin her to the ground. Three officers to one citizen. Some protesters raised voice to this situation who were then threatened by the swinging of batons by nearby officers. This brazen act of unmitigated force then instigated surrounding officers to immediately race with their batons raised toward the group who then ran across the road to protect ourselves from these aggressive officers. There was an individual who was struck and hit by multiple officers and again tackled to the ground.

Many protesters were grabbed indiscriminately and pinned to the ground when no one was resisting and only incited chaos when we were both listening to the order of the police while practicing the right of assembly. The show of police was much larger than the group of protesters, so the level of aggression was that much more disorienting. There was no act of violence by the protesters. None. There was no attempt to communicate from the initial point of contact from the police with the protesters. The head officer was the one to incite the aggression which then prompted other officers to charge without restraint toward the protesters who were unarmed, nonviolent and following their orders to leave the premise. The failure to deescalate the situation which was commenced by the police themselves was made quite clear in the emboldened attack on the protesters.

We demand that the Committee on Public Safety review this incident and do its job to serve and protect the communities. The police must be held accountable as we have for far too long and far too often seen much more painful events. We must feel safe in our city. We hold the right to express ourselves and the police attempted to silence us through violence. The Committee must seek accountability and change.

Sincerely,

Nina Jang

June 7, 2020

Statement on my witness of police violence in New York City

My name is Shara Ticku. I am the founder and CEO of C16 Biosciences, a company focused on stopping climate change. I have lived in New York City for the last 10 years.

Last year, I was visiting my tailor on Stanton Street in the Lower East Side when I witnessed only three feet in front of me the unjustified use of police violence against an innocent young man named Ronald.

I was in the tailor, waiting for a measurement. Looking outside, we saw a woman who had been stabbed. The woman, it turns out, was a neighbor to the tailor: she and her husband had lived upstairs for 42 years. The woman had been stabbed in an act of domestic violence upstairs, just moments before. Because she was a friend and neighbor to the tailor shop, they quickly brought her inside to rest while we called for an ambulance.

The ambulance arrived, in addition to 5-6 police, crammed into the tiny shop. They took their time attending to the woman. While they were delaying, the woman's son Ronald ran into the store to support his mother. The police immediately antagonized him, threw him against the wall and tased him. This happened 3 feet in front of me, and I caught it all on camera. The evidence is attached here. Then they cuffed him and took him into the Seventh Precinct, where he spent the night in jail. Over one hundred people watched this happen through the window of the tailor's shop and they screamed for it to stop. I was still inside the tiny shop and I caught it on camera. You can see the taser in the white cop's hand. I looked everywhere to find a way to report this gross abuse of power, but every way I looked was a dead end, because nobody polices the police. I went by the precinct that night to check on Ronald, but the cops said he was "hysterical" and refused visitors.

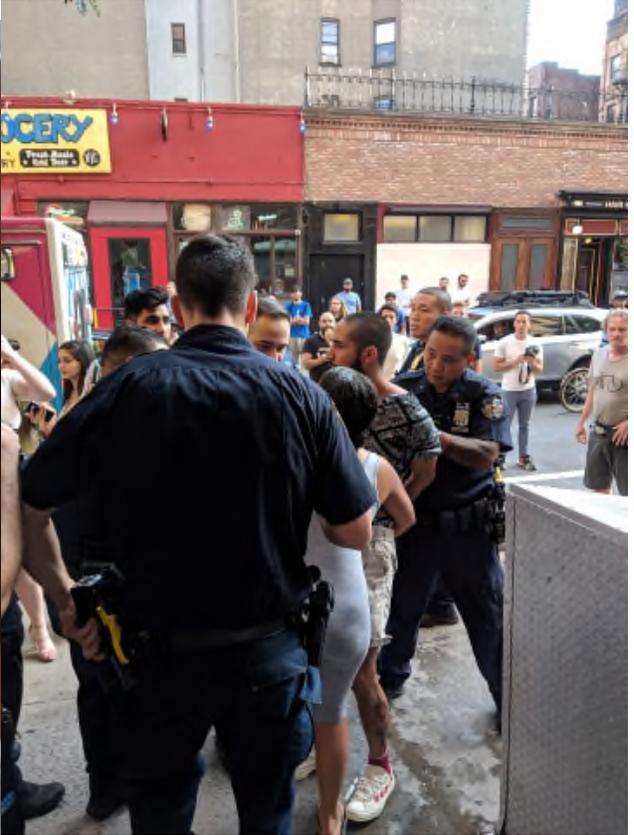
I have no stake in this case, I am simply a concerned citizen. Why do we allow police to antagonize young men of color without reason? Why do we allow them to use violence and force? Why do we allow them to arrest people without probable cause? Why do we waste money as these poor souls sit in jail? Why aren't police held accountable? Why doesn't anyone police the police? Why are the police militarized?

Thank you,

Shara Ticku

ATTACHED: Photographic evidence of the unnecessary violence and the officers who engaged





PROOF: SOME US FEDERAL JUDGES HAVE DENIED THE BLACK CITIZEN...THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL (note: william hughey)

Subject: PROOF: SOME US FEDERAL JUDGES HAVE DENIED THE BLACK CITIZEN...THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL (note: william hughey)

Sir Williams

<sirwilliams35@yahoo.com>

Hudson v. McMillian

JUSTICE O'CONNOR delivered the opinion of the Court. This case requires us to decide whether the use of excessive physical force against a prisoner may constitute cruel and unusual punishment when the inmate does not suffer serious injury. We answer that question in the affirmative.

At the time of the incident that is the subject of this suit, petitioner Keith Hudson was an inmate at the state penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana. Respondents Jack McMillian, Marvin Woods, and Arthur Mezo served as corrections security officers at the Angola facility. During the early morning hours of October 30, 1983, Hudson and McMillian argued. Assisted by Woods, McMillian then placed Hudson in handcuffs and shackles, took the prisoner out of his cell, and walked him toward the penitentiary's "administrative lockdown" area. Hudson testified that, on the way there, McMillian punched Hudson in the mouth, eyes, chest, and stomach while Woods held the inmate in place and kicked and punched him from behind. He further testified that Mezo, the supervisor on duty, watched the beating but merely told the officers "not to have too much fun." App. 23. As a result of this episode, Hudson suffered minor bruises and swelling of his face, mouth, and lip. The blows also loosened Hudson's teeth and cracked his partial dental plate, rendering it unusable for several months.

Hudson sued the three corrections officers in Federal District Court under Rev. Stat. § 1979, 42 U. S. C. § 1983, alleging a violation of the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishments and seeking compensatory damages. The parties consented to disposition of the case before a Magistrate, who found that McMillian and Woods used force when there was no need to do so and that Mezo expressly condoned their actions. App. 26. The Magistrate awarded Hudson damages of \$800. *Id.*, at 29.

Williams v. Bramer

With respect to the second choking, however, we do find that the alleged injury is sufficient to assert a constitutional violation. Based on the facts that we must accept as true on appeal, Bramer's second choking of Williams was motivated entirely by malice. Bramer was therefore not legitimately exercising force in the performance of his duties as an officer. In this context, we hold that, although suffering from dizziness, loss of breath, and coughing are not significant injuries, combined, they qualify as a cognizable injury when the victim is maliciously assaulted by a police officer (as alleged by Williams). We therefore must hold that Williams has established a genuine issue of material fact regarding whether he sustained an injury based on the factual allegations contained in his affidavit.

Having concluded that, for purposes of his § 1983 claim, Johnson suffered a cognizable injury from the second choking, we must turn to the second and third Johnson elements—whether the injury resulted from the use of force that was clearly excessive and whether that force was objectively unreasonable. In this case, with respect to the second choking, both elements are clearly met. There can be no justification for Bramer's allegedly malicious choking of Williams. On the basis of the summary judgment evidence before us, we must therefore conclude that Bramer choked Williams in a manner that was excessive and objectively unreasonable.

Because Williams has succeeded in presenting evidence that establishes a § 1983 claim for excessive force, the district court erred in granting summary judgment in favor of the defendants. We therefore reverse the district court's ruling with respect to this claim.

The district court concluded that Williams had failed to make out the first element necessary under Johnson. In Johnson, we stated that in order to make out a due process violation, the plaintiff must show that he suffered a "significant injury." The Supreme Court subsequently overruled the significant injury prong in the context of a claim of excessive force under the Eighth Amendment, *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 8, 112 S.Ct. 995, 117 L.Ed.2d 156 (1992) and, applying Hudson, we have concluded that the plaintiff is no longer required to show a significant injury in the Fourth Amendment context either. *Harper v. Harris County, Tex.*, 21 F.3d 597, 600 (5th Cir.1994).

Williams v. Bramer

The District court correctly entered final judgment in favor of the Defendant based on a Jury's verdict that the Plaintiff did not prove by a preponderance of evidence that, on the occasion in question, Plaintiff suffered an injury as alleged in Plaintiff's excessive force claim against Defendant. Therefore, the district court's judgment should be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

City Attorney of the City of Dallas

Mark E. Goldstucker

Detra G. Hill

Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals: The judgment of the district court is AFFIRMED.

In the case of Williams v. Bramer:

US District Court Judge Barbara MG Lynn instructed the jurors to answer this question by checking Yes ___ or No ___...

Did the Plaintiff prove by a preponderance of the evidence that he suffered an injury?

Yes ___ No X ___

This question was inappropriate for this case; because, the US Federal Laws clearly state that, the Plaintiff is not required to show a significant injury in court.

The case was supposed to be about Excessive Force. Judge Barbara MG Lynn based the case on...A Black Person is required to prove a significant injury in court.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and the US District Court did not apply or acknowledge the US Federal Laws. Thus, Sir Williams lost the case.

The Oath for Federal Judges was Invalid...when the Plaintiff was Black and Poor.

"I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will administer justice without respect to persons, and do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me as ___ under the Constitution and laws of the United States.

Ethics complaint

A group of civil rights organizations and legal ethicists filed a complaint of misconduct against Jones on June 4, 2013, after she allegedly said that "racial groups like African-Americans and Hispanics are predisposed to crime," and are "prone to commit acts of violence" which are more "heinous" than members of other ethnic groups. According to the complaint, Jones also stated that a death sentence is a service to defendants because it allows them to make peace with God and she "referred to her personal religious views as justification for the death penalty". Jones allegedly made the remarks during a speech to the University of Pennsylvania Federalist Society. However, the speech was not recorded, and the ethics complaint was based solely on affidavits from audience members.^[17]

In part because Jones was recently the Chief Judge of the Fifth Circuit, Chief Justice of the United States John Roberts (in his administrative capacity) transferred the complaints to the judicial ethics panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.^[18]

December 18, 2001

Before JONES, SMITH, and EMILIO M. GARZA, Circuit Judges.
PER CURIAM:*

Sir Williams appeals the dismissal of his 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action against a Dallas police officer who allegedly choked him during an investigative stop. See *Williams v. Bramer*, 180 F.3d 699 (5th Cir. 1999), clarified on rehearing, 186 F.3d 633 (5th Cir. 1999). He argues that there was insufficient evidence to support the jury's finding that he suffered no injury. Trial testimony that Williams was not choked and showed no signs of any

Pursuant to 5TH CIR. R. 47.5, the court has determined that this opinion should not be published and is not precedent except under the limited circumstances set forth in 5TH CIR. R. 47.5.4.

injury more than satisfies the deferential "any evidence" standard used to review the jury's verdict in the absence of a motion by Williams for judgment as a matter of law in the trial court. See *Coughlin v. Capitol Cement Co.*, 571 F.2d 290, 297 (5th Cir. 1978); see also *Little v. Bankers Life & Cas. Co.*, 426 F.2d 509, 511 (5th Cir. 1970) (defendant but not plaintiff moved for directed verdict).

The judgment of the district court is AFFIRMED.

“We often say that Public Officials are not above the Law; but, that is not enough...they Serve the Law...and if they do not Respect the Law... who will?”

6/9/2020

To: Committee on Public Safety

From: Michelle Ling

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm sharing two instances of unprovoked violence against my body by armed NYPD officers. I'm implicating all officers in their violence, as they stood by and simply watched. Worse, they participated in violence against other protestors. I also want to affirm that there were thousands of police officers out this past week who were not wearing PPE. At least half of the officers out were not wearing masks, despite many having folded masks visible in their pockets. When we asked them why they weren't wearing masks they told us to shut up. Some laughed and thanked us for the over-time. Others spit at our feet.

On 5/29/2020 Friday around 8:00 pm, a group of friends and I went to attend the protests in front of the Barclays Center in Brooklyn and demand accountability for police brutality and systematic racism that the NYPD and all police uphold. We wanted Justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, Akai Gurley, Sandra Bland, the list goes on.

By the time we arrived, the crowd had moved from Barclays to Fort Greene park and the NYPD officers on the ground were already restless. Many wear in riot gear. We were pushed off the street on Dekalb and were forced to walk through the project housing complex to Lafayette. Once on Lafayette, we walked toward Classon and two cop cars drove up behind us. They were driving to corral protestors who were already being detained by officers in riot gear with their batons out at the intersection of Lafayette and Classon. We stood in front of the police vehicle with our arms linked in protection. Me and a white woman in front of one car, my friend P (who is brown) and L (who is white) on the other. The cars continued to drive into our legs, pushing us and honking. After a few minutes of the vehicle continuing to drive at us, two or three cops came out of each vehicle. Two white cis-men officers and a black femme officer ran at us with their batons out. They punched and shoved us. To my right, three officers did the same to P and L. After a few seconds, the police officers punched and pushed me (East Asian) and L (white) to the side and started to beat P (brown) and our friend E (black), who had run up to help us after seeing us getting beaten. P and E started to run and the police officers ran after, beating P and E even as they ran. E twisted their ankle and fell to the ground, and the officers continued to beat them. A few other friends pulled E up, and P, who had also fallen to the ground and was being beaten. We got to the intersection and the police were escalating violence. One officer grabbed a person's bike, who was using it as a shield to protect others and stop police from encroaching. The officer threw it over the crowd.

5/30/2020 Saturday I attended protests in Flatbush. At night, as we are leaving to find our cars and go home, we come across the intersection of Rogers Ave and Erasmus St. At the intersection at least a hundred cops, half in full riot gear, had formed a ring against protestors. They were pushing people with their batons and running after protestors to beat and arrest

them. Many in the crowd were teargassed, pepper sprayed and beaten. As I was watching the ring push against protestors, I saw an officer push a protestor (who only had a sign on them, no weapons, nothing). From at least 6 feet away, I screamed at him to stop. From his left, an officer that I did not see reached his hand across the barricade and pepper sprayed me in the face. My eyes and face were seared and I was temporarily blinded. I had to be carried away by friends. For the next day my skin was on fire, and showering spread the pepper spray across my body, making it difficult to move or lay down. I will never be able to hold that officer accountable for his violent actions. Under this corrupt system which prioritizes the safety and well-being of people's property, over the material bodies and lives of black people and other people of color, I will never receive justice. As long as the NYPD is intact, I will never know justice.

I'm calling on you to abolish the police. They do not keep us safe. 36,000 officers on the force and not a single person that day cared for the safety and well-being of the people of New York City that they are paid to defend. They armed themselves against us, they refused to wear their masks.

At the bare minimum we must:

- Reject any proposed expansion to police budgets.
- Prohibit private-public innovation schemes that profit from temporary technological fixes to systemic problems of police abuse and violence. These contracts and data-sharing arrangements, however profitable for technologists and reformists, are lethal.
- Reduce the power of police unions
- Until the police are fully defunded, make police union contract negotiations public.
- Pressure the AFL-CIO to denounce police unions.
- Prohibit city candidates taking money from police unions and stop accepting union funds.
- Withhold pensions and don't rehire cops involved in use of excessive force.
- Demand the highest budget cuts per year, until they slash police budget to zero.
- Slash police salaries across the board until they are zeroed out.
- Immediately fire police officers who have any excessive force complaints.
- No hiring of new officers or replacement of fired or resigned officers.
- Fully cut funding for public relations.
- Suspend the use of paid administrative leave for cops under investigation.
- Require police, not cities, to be liable for misconduct and violence settlements.
- Deplatform white supremacist public officials.
- Abolish asset forfeiture programs and laws.

These demands are listed on the 8toabolition.com website.

The NYPD is a plague. The NYPD does not protect us. Abolish the police.

Power to the people,

Michelle

June 11, 2020

Dear Committee on Public Safety of the New York City Council,

I normally begin correspondence with the statement: I hope all is well. Instead, today, I say: I hope you are listening. Because the people in our city, your constituents, are speaking.

I write to bear witness to that which I've seen over the past two weeks alongside protestors and organizers in the streets of our city. I recognize that as a White person, my voice has not been historically silenced by police violence and government officials willful ignorance. I want to use that voice to amplify the endless accounts of police violence the Black community has fought to make seen and heard for far too long.

On Thursday, June 4th, my roommates and I made our way to a protest. This was my first protest in the Bronx. There were maybe 200 people there, and it was, by far, the smallest protest I have attended in the last few weeks. Yet it had a much heavier and more intense police presence than protests that I was a part of in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens. As the small group of protestors gathered in the Roberto Clemente Plaza at 6:30 pm, police en masse immediately surveyed the group. Officers, the large majority of whom wore riot gear and helmets, were positioned on all sides of the plaza and on nearby rooftops. I later realized Strategic Response Group officers were also nearby.

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We were dragged towards the intersection of Brown Place and 136th Street away from the group, and from there, I watched as the rest unfolded, and the street devolved into chaos. I looked for my roommates as I watched NYPD officers slam peaceful protestors onto the ground and beat them with fists and batons, kicking them in many cases. People were bleeding and crying, clothes were torn, shoes were abandoned in the streets. Officers yelled, "Don't resist" at the crowd, which had dwindled on the march to less than 150 people. They continued, throwing protestors to the ground and beating them with batons, until the whole group was in zip ties. A half hour later, still waiting in the street, the officers were still asking one another where we would be taken and what should be done next. I saw two protestors in their early-twenties crying and realized they were in pain later when an officer arrived with a pair of shears. The pair turned around and I saw that their hands were blue, their circulation completely cut off from the skin-tight

zip ties officers had placed around their wrists. While waiting for the vehicles to arrive to transport us, I saw five officers tear an elderly Black man from his bicycle, throw him on the ground, and beat his writhing, screaming body. He was not involved in the protest. I imagine he was just on his way home. Protestors yelled for them to leave him alone, but the police only beat him some more. Later, while being transported, someone asked if we saw the officers strike one particularly small legal observer. *Did we see her body fly as they hit her?*

While these assaults by the NYPD have been horrific, I have found the aftermath of these assaults to be equally disturbing. After watching multiple officers rip the elderly man off his bicycle to beat him, I looked around and saw one officer smiling as he exchanged words with another officer. As he grinned, we locked eyes. I stared at him, unable to hear anything going on over the sound of the NYPD chopper hovering above us in the air. How can a person smile amidst such sorrow, suffering, injury, and chaos? The people the NYPD claims to protect were thrown to the ground and battered repeatedly. After more than 100 people were in zip ties, about to be loaded into buses to various precincts, blood on the ground and on many faces, I saw this officer look around and smile, as if *this* was a job well done. As if this is not a terrible, mournful, and divisive time in our city and country. We mustn't kid ourselves—this is not a scene of any sort of protection. I, along with millions of other New Yorkers, have witnessed a war zone. These smiles are present at each protest. Officers unaffected by the scenes of mass distress around them. No officers at the 15-plus protests I've been to have made an attempt to understand the pain, frustration, and anger of constituents. They've shown no compassion for the public's cries for help and for change.

We seem to care more about our property than we do our people. On Sunday, May 31st, my roommates and I joined a large group of protestors at the Manhattan bridge around 9pm. With this group, we crossed the bridge and proceeded to march through the streets of downtown Manhattan. Groups of NYPD officers stalked along the right side of the street as protestors chanted. When there were concerns of vandalism or looting, officers ran to grab anyone they assumed was in connection to the act, and the crowd watched as large groups of officers repeatedly beat folks to the ground. It's impossible to forget the image of eight officers throwing a young man to the ground and surrounding him. Each officer struck the man with their batons repeatedly as he yelled out in pain. As a community, we must question what has led us to this point. What is it that allows such violence to be enacted by the state in response to a broken window on 5th Avenue? A broken window that is both covered by insurance and protected by one of the most powerful banks in the world. This is who we are. A city that protects the broken window of a multi-billion dollar bank while disregarding the safety and livelihood of a grieving, marginalized, and silenced young man. As someone who has long had pride in being a part of this city, this makes me feel deeply ashamed. We should all feel deeply ashamed. Later that night, my roommates and I were pepper sprayed by officers during a similar altercation that occurred close to us. Being near the interaction was reason enough to be assaulted. I stumbled backwards, fell over a bicycle, bruised my left shoulder, and hit my head on the gravel. An hour after this incident, at the intersection of 4th Avenue and 12th Street, an officer, surrounded by dozens of other officers, pulled out his gun and frantically waved it around, pointing it at protestors. Hands shot up in the air, and gatherers stepped back immediately. My roommates and I were able to walk away from our experience that night, but the reality for so many Black people who interact with the police is ending up in jail, shot at, or dead.

Over the past several weeks, I have been humbled by the people of New York City—their organizing, their care for one another, their demands for change and for better systems for their children. At the same time, I have been ashamed and deeply disturbed by the actions of our militarized police force and government. Moreover, I have never been more certain that a punitive justice system guarded by violent and undertrained officers is not the way to protect and restore power in the hands of communities.

I hope these accounts assist in introducing legislation in our city that moves towards abolishing the violent police force that plagues our communities. Reform is not enough. One billion dollars is not enough. The only way to protect our communities is to abolish the police force and reinvest funding into community programs, resources, education, and social services. Please don't hesitate to reach out with

any additional questions. In solidarity with millions of New Yorkers, I urge you to listen to these accounts and allow them to remind you that you must do better for our community.

My best,
Joey Massa

June 11, 2020

Tevin C. S. Grant
Brooklyn, NY 11228
District 43

New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY
correspondence@council.nyc.gov

RE: Public Safety Hearing on June 9 Testimony

Dear NYC Council Members:

You CAN NOT change the bill to include the INTENT requirement requested by the NYPD. They already have qualified immunity which makes it very hard to convict a police officer of anything. Plus, this is at least the third bite at this apple and we still can't stop officers from using the choke hold or punish them for killing a suspect when using it.

There argument that an officer just touching a suspect could expose them to liability it plainly ridiculous and they take it even further by saying officers won't give CPR to a suspect they just shot in fear that they will be charged with a misdemeanor. Have you ever seen a cop shot a suspect and give them CPR? Seriously, is this what it has come to? Either cops have no restraint on their actions or they are handcuffed and can't do anything?

But this should give you further insight as to the policing mentality. They want no restrictions and want to dominate the people, not serve them. The motto may be to protect and serve but especially for POC it is more to punish and enslave. All we have to do is look at their training to understand why this happens. You graduate from the police academy and you get a badge and a gun. First day on the job and every police officer has dominion over life and death. Most of their training focuses on how to subdue and brutalize the body public. They don't give more than lip service to deescalating a situation. You must move funding from fire arm training and providing them with military grade equipment and require them to train more on how to interact with the public without violence.

You need to look at what happened in Camden, New Jersey. [They disbanded the police department](#) and rebuilt it from the ground up and have lower crime and much better relationships now¹.

You should also look at the [#8cantwait campaign](#)². They have suggestions and real-world examples about how these policies can help to reduce the friction between police and citizens. They have 8 policing practices that can significantly reduce killings by police including effectively banning the use of choke or strangle holds. 8 can't

¹ <https://www.mcall.com/news/pennsylvania/mc-nws-pa-camden-police-defund-rebuild-20200611-5vhnyoo64vezviu2eiup5aswoi-story.html>

² <https://8cantwait.org/>

wait is part of a larger [Campaign Zero](#)³ which aims to use data to show that we can end police violence in America. It has been done in other countries and even cities in the US.

You should all read and try to implement some of the suggestions that are found in [the Final Report of The President's task force on 21st Century Policing](#) from 2015⁴. One suggestion that must be done if we ever plan to get any reform is that the police can't be the final word on investigating police misconduct. The internal affairs department has proven not to be effective. The DA's office is complicit because they work with the same officers we expect them to prosecute. The CCRB is not effective because all they do is submit recommendations that the police can choose to ignore, which they surely do. Only 1 officer has been fired of over 800 confirmed cases from the CCRB in 2 years is just disgusting.

But that goes across the board. The data on your own website shows that even a minor offense like [placard abuse](#) is out of control⁵. Since 2017, 11,146 complaints have been filed and there was absolutely no action taken of almost 6,000 of them. Only 1,000 were issued summons and a claimed 2,300 were fixed. But what does that mean? Did they lose the placard or they were just told to move? Only 2 instances ended in an arrest.

I can't say that I am surprised at the utter contempt for the hearing that was shown by the NYPD and the Mayor's office. I don't think there was one member of the Mayor's office at the hearing and the NYPD left as soon as they were done with their false and underwhelming testimony.

Police Chief Benjamin Tucker denied under oath that the police were not wearing masks after several Councilmembers said they personally saw officers not wearing masks. He also claimed that people who were taken into their custody were given masks. All accounts by the public and some councilmembers refuted that testimony also. Not to mention the hundreds of pictures and videos that have been circulated by the public and media of police officers not wearing masks. But is it any wonder that officers were not wearing mask when Chief Tucker testified that he would not discipline officers for not wearing masks?

What if anything will or can the City Council do about being lied to under OATH? What real power does the Council have?

If the City Council can't compel an agency to stay and listen to the public then they should not be given priority at the hearing and be allowed to speak first. It is not like the public can question them directly anyway so they do not need to be able to set out their position before the public speaks. It would also allow the Council the ability to focus the hearing on the concerns expressed by the public.

People can't take time out of their lives, trying to survive the hardships this city imposes on their lives to speak to an empty room. We must be heard. You have to prove that our actions matter. You were elected to represent us. Ask us and we show up. Chair Richards did not tweet that the hearing was taking place until the day of. How are we to know that these events are taking place. The Council has to do better outreach. Just posting a schedule of hearings on the website is not enough.

Sincerely,

s/ Tevin C. S. Grant

³ <https://www.joincampaignzero.org/>

⁴ https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf

⁵ <https://council.nyc.gov/data/placard-abuse/>

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any additional questions. In solidarity with millions of New Yorkers, I urge you to listen to these accounts and allow them to remind you that you must do better for our community.

My best,
Joey Massa

The job of police is, and has always been, violence against Black and Indigenous and working class people. Police protect private property and a status quo of inequality, not our lives. The violence which we now witness on social media and have witnessed during these protests is neither rare nor new. The police in fact are a concern to public safety only because they are a threat to it. I join many others in calling for defunding of the NYPD, **immediately reallocating a substantial portion of the City budget from policing into non-punitive and community controlled programming and resources for youth, education, housing, and healthcare.** We know that communities that have their needs met are safer, and we know that the City has been complicit in divesting from working class communities of color for generations. No more.

I furthermore call on you to reject any attempts by the Mayor's Administration to legitimize or pretend the NYPD can be overseen. You said yourselves that they have failed at this. We do not need more community liaisons. **We need a hiring freeze. We need to demilitarize the NYPD. We need to diminish their presence in our communities.**

I follow the leadership and vision of Black feminist abolitionists, and I understand my liberation is bound up with theirs, bound up with every one of my incarcerated sisters.

Tied to the violence of policing is the violence of incarceration. I have been to many of your hearings and I have testified myself and I have brought testimony of incarcerated organizers calling for you to **close Rikers now without building new jails.** The practice of pretrial detention must be and can be ended now. It is always inhumane, and it is a death sentence during a pandemic.

Signed,
Jordan Leon-Atkins, MPH

I witnessed the NYPD beat up and mace peaceful protesters on Tillary street in Brooklyn on the night of 5/30. Protesters were standing peacefully listening to organizers recite names of Black people murdered by police, and suddenly the police came in from behind us, beating people and pepper spraying them. I saw them pepper spray a girl for no reason. Through all of these interactions with police (they kept coming for us), I saw ONE half-filled plastic water bottle get thrown, underhand, in the direction of police in self-defense. One-half filled plastic water bottle (open, because water was coming out in the air) cannot hurt officers in full riot gear. And in this case, the officers were the aggressors, coming toward us with weapons out for no reason.

I protested on 6/2, and the police kettled us on the Manhattan Bridge for hours, restricting us from eating or using the bathroom, and keeping us confined, close together, which is dangerous in the time of Covid.

I witnessed and experienced the police pushing and beating peaceful protesters in Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn on the night of 6/3. Protesters took a knee to show that we were peaceful. Organizers LOUDLY instructed protestors not to harm police. Police kettled and descended on protestors, beating us with clubs. At one point, police officers were pushing us into the backs of other police officers who were behind us. Then, the police officers who we "bumped" from behind turned around and hit us, pushing us into the officers in front of us. This cycle continued. We told them that they were pushing us into other police officers and we had nowhere to go. We were trapped between rows of police officers. They did not care. A police officer smashed my brother in the mouth with a club for asking, "What are you doing?" Police stepped on my leg and foot, and I lost my shoe behind police lines. What happened to my brother and me was mild compared to the violence other people--specifically Black people, other people of color, and other members of marginalized communities--face every day at the hands of the NYPD. I also saw police hit a young disabled woman in the head and ignore protesters who were trying to get her medical attention. She couldn't stand on her own after being hit. Later that night, officers followed 1-2 feet behind us as we marched. One of them took out his pepper spray and laughed about how he was going to use it on us.

I protested on 5/30, 6/2, 6/3, and 6/6. All of those times, almost all of the protestors were wearing masks to protect from Covid. Most of the police officers were not wearing masks. This put protestors in significant danger of catching Covid from police. It was most glaring in Cadman Plaza, where police confronted protestors, face to face.

The NYPD is violent and racist and a grave threat to New Yorkers' public safety.

Greetings Council Persons,

Last resort is harmful to everyone. Let's rewrite the script together.

I'm glad that Mental Health is being brought up here in nyc and at one company in which I work. We are broken because of its stigma. Some more than others. The cops who want to protect and serve need a space to safely talk and address the current chasm between civic duty and taking orders. The repeatedly violent officers and sergeants need help in anger management and self regulation. Not only do they damage their intended targets but their squad. The prospect of forfeiture of pension (folded into group fund) after three strikes (warning/writeup about violence) hopefully will quell misdirected anger on innocents until we get this right. If they are unwilling to try and succeed at personal reform, they could be sent to gen pop prison or halfway house for group therapy, where hopefully their new found family will raise each other up and pattern in a more holistic and tempered way. Young recruits already in the force could be trained to do contact tracing for c-19 and learn their beats one person at a time. All militarized weapons should be sold back to federal agencies or decommissioned and no further purchases made. Employing tear gas and pepper spray during a global pandemic of a respiratory disease is short sighted at best. Peace officers could do youth outreach in partnership with community groups (bike repair, gardens, outdoor exercise/ymca) in troubled areas.

Others could assist with food distribution.

The tactic of kettling was widely used in many neighborhoods of our city on Thursday June 4th, which presumably increased the population in jail in the time of Covid-19 as New York State Judge James Burke ruled that NYPD could keep any peaceful protestors arrested for curfew and criminal looters detained for over 24 hours. One person was removed on a stretcher in Mott Haven. Boxed in citizens that wanted to leave could not after asking the surrounding force. Thankfully, since DA Cy Vance refused to press charges of peaceful protesters and the curfew was lifted one night early.

I hope that you are committed to boldly step up against resistance and push forward much needed reform. Your advocacy to address such egregious behavior within the NYPD, and PBA and SBA policy that protects bad actors that goes inherently against "Courtesy Professionalism Respect" is in alignment with your constituency who have suffered—physically, mentally (PTSD) and financially (ie \$18M 2004 Kettling RNC fiasco, 2019 \$69M, 2018 \$39M).

How long will NYC taxpayers pay out settlements and how many families will be torn apart due to rogues' bad behavior? Those millions could have been spent on all the community programs that have been recently cut, ie compost collection (methane reduction) and summer

youth employment.

Your action will inspire and spur reform across our nation. I want to see the Big Apple shine again and be a beacon, I hope you do too.

It is only with long term vision and effort, far beyond news cycles and politicians' stints, that true justice, stability and mutual prosperity can be achieved.

Thank you for reading and your continued service and for your time and consideration towards our plea for justice with your help.

With gratitude and in solidarity,
Ann

"And so in a real sense our nation's summers of riots are caused by our nation's winters of delay. And as long as America postpones justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention." —MLK

Saturday June 6th 6:30 pm, Whitestone, Queens

This Saturday June 6th I went out in support of BLM in Whitestone, Queens. Myself and approximately 50 other people were standing on the corner of Clintonville St. and Cross Island Pkwy, peacefully holding signs, when Officer Evangelos Gallatas drove up and flashed a well known white power hand sign. We questioned Officer Gallatas on why he did this, but he refused to speak on it further, just smirked. He would not deny he was a white supremacist, but would not say anything more. As he left, he flashed the symbol once more and drove away. His badge number is 28484, he is in the 109th Precinct. I have heard this officer may currently be under investigation. I have a video of this incident I wish to submit.

Thank you for your time,

Steven Raftis

Dear New York City Council,

The protests transpiring in New York City and across this nation are a result of the systemic racism that has permeated our government and society for as long as we can remember. Racism is at fault for George Floyd's murder.

It is the reason that Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner — and countless other Black people — are no longer with us. Communities of color and allies have every right to let their outrage be known and protest peacefully to demand change.

As we grapple with the loss of George Floyd and unrest across our City, we are also facing police brutality against protestors.

A young woman who was peacefully protesting was shoved to the ground by a police officer, resulting in seizures and hospitalization. State Senator Zellnor Myrie and Assembly Member Diana Richardson were tear-gassed while protesting in Brooklyn. An officer weaponized his vehicle by driving into a group of protestors, while another waved his gun at a crowd. An unarmed cyclist was beaten with batons on his way home. All of this in a matter of days.

We know that many officers arrive to work every day to complete their mission of providing safety and security for all. We also know law enforcement is an incredibly challenging profession.

However, with great power, comes great responsibility, and we cannot ignore the cost we all bear when there is a culture of impunity, militarization, and lack of accountability penetrating police departments across the country, *including our own*.

This is why the City Council must support:

1. The creation of an independent commission to investigate, prosecute, and discipline officers (including termination) for police misconduct and brutality occurring at protests;
2. Legislation establishing an Elected Civilian Review Board (ECRB) that includes members elected by the public, who investigate and make binding decisions on police misconduct and excessive use of force, by working with an independent special prosecutor;
3. Legislation that will require greater disclosure by district attorneys detailing cases brought, cases dismissed and the race and gender of cases resolved by plea agreement and brought to trial;
4. Expanding access to Charitable Bail Funds; and
5. Legislation compelling the City's Consumer Affairs Commission to require greater transparency and accountability from the Bail Bond industry.

On top of this, we are facing an unprecedented fiscal crisis, which has amplified our City's longstanding budget inequities. We spend more money on policing than on mental health services, affordable housing, and youth programming *combined*. This translates to billions of dollars funneled to the NYPD at the expense of our youth and families. We must be surgical with our spending.

These disinvestments have resulted in generational health, housing, and educational disparities in our City. This is why the City Council must fight for budget justice and work to reduce the Police Department's operating budget by at least one billion dollars over the next four fiscal years to fund programs and services for communities hit hardest by COVID-19.

There is room for all us to be involved in this moment to achieve racial justice and remind the world that Black lives matter.

Collectively, I remain hopeful that we can build a better way.

Regards,

Shaun Abreu

On Sunday night, May 31 around midnight I was on Greene street between Prince and Spring. I live nearby and biked to SoHo to see what was going on. There were 10 or so cops (one white shirt, 9 black shirts) standing in a line. I was probably about 50 feet away. In front of me there were a few people milling around and a man sitting on the curb trying to wash pepper spray out of his eyes. I wasn't paying much attention because frankly, nothing was going on.

I hear "this is an unlawful assembly" yelled (there was no curfew) and next thing I know the cops are charging. There were at most 10 non-cops on the block. I had my bike but it was pointing towards the police, and as I tried to turn it around to go, next thing I know I'm getting hit with a baton. I tried to get on the bike and she yelled "DROP THE FUCKING BIKE" as she hit me again with a baton. I got off and walked it as she continued to prod me with it. I didn't see what else happened, but when I got off the block the man who had been pepper sprayed was now laying on the ground saying he couldn't breathe.

As far as I know, no one was arrested, there was no video - and I didn't mention it to people because it seemed like nothing compared to what else the cops were doing.

I followed the cops left down Spring then left down Wooster with my phone recording them yell GET OFF THE FUCKING BLOCK at the few people they see (including a guy who identified himself as a journalist).

I'm sending this in because it feels like the type of incident that probably happened a million times in the last week. Abusive enough that I'm terrified of cops, but not enough for anyone to notice or care.

Michael Benson
129 Mulberry Street, Apt 4C.
New York, NY 10013

**Protest Against Police Brutality and Support for Law to
Criminalize Violent Behavior and Hold Police Accountable**

To the Committee on Public Safety of the New York City Council
Hearing on Tuesday, June 9, 2020

To Donovan J. Richards, Chair, and Committee members Adrienne E. Adams, Justin L. Brannan, Fernando Cabrera, Andrew Cohen, Chaim M. Deutsch, Vanessa L. Gibson, Rory I. Lancman, Carlos Menchaca, I. Daneek Miller, Keith Powers, Ydanis A. Rodriguez and Paul A. Vallone

Regarding proposed Amendments and Resolutions listed at the end of this statement

Dear Council Members,

We are the United Methodist Clergy and those serving in United Methodist Churches in the Bronx and Manhattan. We represent thirty-one United Methodist churches. We have participated and many members of our congregations have participated in the protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by four Minneapolis police. We fully support the aims of these protests: to get justice for George Floyd and so many others killed by police violence and to seek fundamental changes that will dismantle the ways that a culture of police brutality and murder have been allowed to thrive in cities across the U.S., including in the NYPD. We have seen ample evidence of this culture in the police response to peaceful protesters.

While we support the minimal actions being considered by the committee today, we want to make clear that we do not view these as anywhere close to what will be needed. We note first that police brutality and violence are not the fundamental problem, but a symptom of systemic white supremacy in our society. We also believe that even on the level of policing, implementing real and sustained accountability, including prosecutions and convictions, will require undermining the stranglehold of the police associations and their ability to threaten politicians who criticize the police.

We are committed to this struggle for the long haul. We hope the protests continue. As President Barack Obama said recently, “This is a marathon, not a sprint.” And, as Frederick Douglass so powerfully stated:

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning.... This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

– Frederick Douglass

We stand strong in our faith that God who is Love *and* Justice, will guide our steps and help us to not grow weary, but remain strong and resilient. We pray the same for you.

Thank you for the beginning you are making today.

Sincerely,

Rev. Denise Smartt Sears, Metropolitan District Superintendent

Rev. Janet Hodge, Crawford Memorial UMC

Rev. Cathy Gilliard, Park Avenue UMC

Rev. Marvin Moss, Salem UMC

Rev T. Anne Daniel, Wakefield Grace UMC

Rev. Allen N. Pinckney, Butler Memorial UMC

Rev. Arnaldo Sanchez-Orta, Iglesia Evangelica de Co-op City

Rev. Gordon A. R. Edwards, Westchester United Methodist Church

Rev. David Jolly, Trinity United Methodist Church

Rev. Hermon L. Darden, St. Stephen's English United Methodist Church

Rev. Nelson Garcia, St. Stephen's Spanish UMC / Iglesia Metodista Unida San Esteban
Espana Hispana

Rev. Saekwan Jin, Bethel UMC

Rev. Esau Abadio Greene, Fordham UMC

Rev. Wesley Daniel, Calvary UMC

Rev. Edward J. Norman, Tremont UMC

Rev. Annette Rodriguez, Woodycrest UMC

Rev. Michael D. Jenkins, Epworth UMC

Rev. Samuel A. Arhin, Ghana UMC

Rev. Lydia Lebron, Grace UMC

Rev. Richard Hayes, Metropolitan Community UMC

Rev. Lori Hartman, Mount Calvary/St. Mark's UMC

Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé, First Spanish UMC

Rev. Mickey Correa, Christ Church UM Washington Heights

Rev. Shari Fleming Ponder, Salem UMC

Rev. Daniel Seunghyun Cho, HA:N UMC/Grace UMC

Rev. YongBo Lee, Korean Methodist Church and Institute

Rev. Luke Jaeyong Park, Morningside UMC and Chinese UMC

Rev. Jinwoo Joshua Kim, Metropolitan Koryo UMC

Japanese American United Church

Rev. Stefanie Bennett, John Street UMC

Rev. James K. Karpen, St. Paul & St. Andrew UMC

Rev. Lea Matthews, St. Paul & St. Andrew UMC

Rev. Stephen Bauman, Christ Church UM

Rev. Violet Lee, Christ Church UM

Rev. Jeff Wells, UM Church of the Village

Rev. Alexis James Waggoner

Isaiah Fish, Park Avenue UMC

The statement above is regarding the following amendments and resolutions:

Int 0536-2018

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the City of New York, in relation to chokeholds and other such restraints.

Int 0536-2018

Proposed Int. No. 536-A

Int 0721-2018

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to respecting the right to record police activities.

Proposed Int. No. 721-A

Int 0760-2018

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to an early intervention system.

Proposed Int. No. 760-A

T2020-6267

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring visible shield numbers and rank designations.

Preconsidered

Res 0027-2018

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.6144 and S.6670A, legislation that would establish the crime of strangulation in the first degree; disregard of banned employment procedures.

Proposed Res. No. 27-A

T2020-6256

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass, and the President to sign, the Eric Garner Excessive Use of Force Prevention Act of 2019 (H.R. 4408), which would prohibit police chokeholds and other tactics that result in asphyxiation.

Preconsidered

NYC City Council Hearing
Committee on Public Safety
Council Member Donovan Richards, Chair
June 9, 2020
Testimony by Steve Coe

USER-DRIVEN STRATEGIES TO REDUCE POLICE-INVOLVED SHOOTINGS OF
PEOPLE EXPERIENCING MENTAL HEALTH CRISES

Dear Council Member Richards,

I'm pleased to submit testimony today on sensible strategies to reduce the violence committed by police officers in the performance of their duties, especially when they encounter Black and Brown people.

In 2012, along with Carla Rabinowitz, I was the co-founder of Communities for Crisis Intervention Teams (CCIT-NYC), a broad coalition of mental health and social justice organizations and individuals aimed at bringing an intensive crisis de-escalation training model to the NYPD. It is an approach that has been adopted by hundreds of U.S. communities, beginning in Memphis in 1986.

Thanks to our efforts, in 2014, Mayor de Blasio formed a Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice to improve outcomes and divert people with mental illness from the criminal justice system. One of the recommended reforms was 40 hours of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for every officer, an effort that was launched in 2015.

Unfortunately, the program has not worked nearly as well as hoped.

Even though 15,000 officers have received CIT training, it has not changed the militaristic culture of the NYPD. The number of injuries and fatalities has continued unabated, with a total of 16 people killed since 2016 in encounters with officers while experiencing a mental health emergency. (I presented this statistic at a conference in the Netherlands last year and there was an audible gasp in the room. It is truly shocking. Even more so when you consider at least one of these fatalities occurred during a "wellness check.")

As the deaths and injuries mounted, the CCIT coalition pushed for new reforms. In response to our efforts, and the horrific killing of [Saheed Vassell](#) on the streets of Crown Heights in April 2018, the city formed the Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force in June 2018.

I was a member of this task force, along with Carla, Council Member Richards and over 90 city officials, providers, and others. The Crisis Task Force proposed over a dozen initiatives, many of which were included in the 2019-2020 executive budget and are now being implemented.

While I greatly admire the dedicated work of this task force, many of us felt it was missing an important voice – that of people who have directly experienced encounters with the police during a psychiatric episode, including family members and friends who called 911 because there were no other options available for a timely response.

Therefore, in January 2019, a month after the task force officially disbanded, we organized a “people’s planning forum” that included over 70 people who had used 911 for a mental health emergency, or had been subject to a police response during their own crisis. The primary focus of this planning and brainstorming session was to imagine a crisis response system in which the police are not the first responders.

Not surprisingly, several ideas emerged that had never been considered by the Crisis Task Force, including:

- First responders to a 911 mental health call should be trained, crisis experts--both peers and professionals--not police officers, who are not adequately trained, or even hired, for this type of assignment.
- There should be a separate number to call for health-related emergencies, such as 211.
- There should be a range of community-based services, such as peer-staffed, mental health urgent care and respite centers, that provide the supports that people really want (and not limited to Medicaid-billable diagnostic choices).
- The planning process for designing new supports and services and monitoring their ongoing implementation needs to include the people who will most directly

benefit, including peers and the family members who often call 911 when all other options have been exhausted.

In August 2019, the national CIT trade organization embraced the concept of trained counselors as first responders, acknowledging the stress and trauma that is triggered when an armed officer in uniform appears, especially for people of color. In short, an organization in which a third of the board leadership are either police officers or work for police departments, recommends that the police not be first responders for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

There are many advantages of a non-police first response, beyond the fact that someone will not get shot. Primarily, there is an opportunity to talk to the person in need; to sort out their situation and begin formulating a support plan to prevent another crisis. A dialogue leads to understanding, which can lead to genuine help.

By removing police officers from the role of first responders, the city will save money by deploying less costly workers who are specifically trained for this work. The city will also avoid costly lawsuits that inevitably follow when the subject of the emergency call is killed or injured. New York City has doled out tens of millions of dollars to settle these claims.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO REDUCE POLICE-INVOLVED VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE
EXPERIENCING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS.

There are actions the City Council can take right now to improve outcomes for people who experience psychiatric problems and rely on the public health system—individuals who live in marginalized communities and are overwhelmingly people of color. The recommended strategies fall into three broad categories: prevention, which focuses on community supports so first responders are not needed; alternative first responders, and community-led and user-informed planning and oversight to ensure system reforms are evaluated and improved over time.

Prevention: Neighborhood Support Networks

Under this initiative, which was one of the recommendations of the 2018 Crisis Task Force, a community-led planning process has been launched in two communities that have experienced a high number of mental health-related 911 calls: East Harlem and the northeast Bronx.

The goal of the project is to enhance local supports so that people needing mental health care can access culturally appropriate services when and where they live. If successful, the initiative will dramatically reduce the use of 911.

Despite recent budget cutbacks, this project has secured private funding to retain an experienced planning firm, Hester Street, to coordinate the planning process, which will include a “virtual charrette” website to promote brainstorming sessions, share resources, disseminate questionnaires and surveys, and link dozens of key stakeholders in a “design and build” process that has been rarely, if ever, been attempted in New York City.

Overseen by the Center for Health Equity within the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Council should ensure that the budget for this program—projected to be \$11.7 million in FY22—is protected and enhanced so the models and tactics developed over the next year can be expanded city-wide.

(Full disclosure, I am a consultant to Hester Street on this project, but I do not receive any funds from the city.)

Alternative First Responders: Mental Health Crisis Response Team

Last month, the CCIT-NYC coalition forwarded a proposal to city council leadership and the Public Advocate to pilot a crisis response program in two precincts (Midtown South's 14th Precinct and Brooklyn's 75th Precinct) that, combined, had over 10,000 mental health crisis calls in 2018—the highest number of mental health calls per capita. The pilot would be designed around a successful program in Eugene, Oregon, that diverts 911 mental health calls to a health clinic, which deploys a van staffed by an EMT and crisis counselor.

The annual cost for the pilot would be approximately \$3.4 million and we are requesting a commitment of at least five years to hire, train, and refine the model.

User-informed planning and oversight: An Independent Crisis System Governance Board

Also one of the Crisis Task Force recommendations, but unfunded by the Mayor's Office, this high-level governance board would coordinate the city's crisis system and promote ongoing policy and practice improvements. Much like the highly effective "Lippman Commission" that coordinated the work of experts, city officials, and community leaders to devise a plan to close the jail on Rikers Island, an independent board is needed to ensure that reform efforts progress over an extended period of time. The most successful behavioral health initiatives in the county, such as the one in Miami-Dade, have taken almost two decades to achieve their results.

The board's work would integrate existing data across systems, such as the number of 911 calls, ambulance runs, ER admissions, and criminal justice contacts to pinpoint system improvements and develop accurate program evaluations.

Tasks:

- Convene the key city agencies (NYPD, DOHMH, FDNY, H+H, and DHS) to identify and implement additional data-driven reform strategies.
- Convene a 911 crisis data workgroup, including NYS's Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence, and relevant external stakeholders such as hospital representatives, advocates, and academics. The group will develop the legal and technical data sharing structures that will evaluate task force recommendations and identify data-driven opportunities for reform.
- Convene an external advisory commission of advocates, academics, service providers, and policy makers to review crisis system data to suggest strategies for ongoing improvement, elevate community concerns to the responsible government entities, and disseminate information about new developments in the crisis system to communities.

Source: Crisis Prevention and Response Task Force, Deputy Mayor Recommendations Handout, January 28, 2019

Conclusion

Most recently, our CCIT coalition adopted a new name, Correct Crisis Interventions Today, to reflect our belief that CIT training alone is not going to end police-involved violence against people in distress. While we believe the training is helpful and over time can positively influence the culture of a police department, as has been demonstrated elsewhere, we need to make substantive changes in the way law enforcement interacts with our communities.

The police are here to serve and protect life and property. It was never imagined that they would be front line mental health trauma professionals.

Submitted by,

Steve Coe, co-founder

CCIT-NYC

steve.coe@gmail.com

Subject: **Support of 536-A, 721-A, 760-A, 27-A, DEFUND NYPD, Repeal 50a**

I am a resident of Bed Stuy in Council District 33.

I have joined protests on four different accounts over the past week. Never did I witness violent behavior by people protesting, only the police. The police are in many ways above the law, and these protests show that they know it. The number of police monitoring peaceful protests actively and passively have in several cases outnumbered the people protesting.

Over policing is not only unnecessary for peaceful protests it compromises public safety. It tells everyone protesting showing police strength is more important than black lives. This culture of policing through fear reinforces racism and has a negative impact on all New York communities. We need to change the culture of how we police and **we need to defund the police and invest in social services proven to reduce crime and strengthen communities**. I support the Comptroller's recommendation to defund the police \$1.1 billion and challenge the City Council to defund the NYPD even more given the projected loss of city revenue.

I support all of the bills brought forth today (536-A, 721-A, 760-A, 27-A), but it is not enough. We need a full *external* audit of police activity, and additional reforms and disciplinary action of officers need to be pursued immediately.

In addition to today's bills the City Council should immediately:

- **Repeal 50a**
- Require a duty to report excessive force and a duty to intervene (similar to Minneapolis)
- Eliminate compstat meetings and use crime data to problem solve not punish commanders
- Disciplinary action to all officers where excessive force was reported
- Disciplinary action to all officers shielding badge numbers
- Arrests made during the protests, without direct evidence of theft or violence should be released without bail
- Officers should also refrain from giving summons to those not wearing masks instead distribute masks to those who do not have access

In addition, Commissioner Shea should resign for his clear indication on social media that property is valued above black lives and humanity.

In the long-term, consider the forms of enforcement where police training is not necessary such as the enforcement of traffic, parks, and schools.

Thank you,

Katherine Elliott, AICP

Testimony of Rebecca Mark
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Rebecca Mark. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

I am a survivor of a police encounter while experiencing a mental health crisis. While each experience is unique, please take a moment to hear part of my story, about the memories that haunt me to this day. I was born and raised in the Bronx, but moved to Baltimore for college. My story may have taken place in Maryland, but I hope it can serve as one more example of how the police escalated and exacerbated my situation. In 2012, my sophomore year, I experienced a mental health crisis. The people with me at the time had no knowledge on how to protect me, so they called the police. At the time I had begun studying police-community relations and was well versed on the appropriate behavior with which to conduct yourself with when the police knock on your door. I even had a big poster on my dorm room wall, with an infographic detailing how to remain “respectful” so nothing goes wrong. None of that preparation matters when you can’t communicate effectively due to your current mental and physical state. I couldn’t speak properly, I was not in control of the sounds coming out of my mouth. My friends mistakenly called the police because they saw I needed medical attention and care. On the contrary, I was met with mockery and violence. As stated earlier, my personal experience took place in Maryland, but in its aftermath I became a mental health advocate and community organizer, supporting legislation nationwide that brings desperately needed intervention to this ongoing injustice. supporting crisis response I chose this path of civic engagement as a way to express gratitude for my life being spared that night. Once again, I needed mental health and physical health treatment. Instead, the police lunged at me and tried to restrain me. Every day I am thankful I wasn’t holding anything that evidence shows would be mistaken for a gun. Every day I am thankful that I was sent to a hospital and not a holding cell that night.

I am haunted by the fact that I was considered “one of the lucky ones” because I wasn’t incarcerated, injured or killed. To this day I think about the very strong

likelihood that I received such “good” treatment because of being a white woman. Since then I have taken in hundreds and hundreds of stories of people with disabilities who were killed by police right in their doorway, or smothered, or assaulted. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the slain are black and brown individuals. I know to call this encounter a near death experience because I have seen time and time again how many people with disabilities in their most vulnerable state were met with suffocation, injuries, tasers and bullets. I talk about this so gravely because I watch how the names of people killed when seeking help continues to grow. We have seen too many videos of black and brown people with disabilities gunned down in their doorways due to an inappropriate assessment of their threat level.

The fact that being left with PTSD and legal charges to fight off is considered lucky should speak volumes on the irresponsible mediation tactics employed by police across the nation, including in NYC. Yes, my experience occurred out of state and nearly a decade ago. However the very recent statistics of how many fellow New Yorkers were shot and killed while experiencing a mental health crisis make this cry for justice as relevant as ever.

Please understand this: Individuals experiencing a mental health crisis are in dire need of mental/physical health care. Someone in their most vulnerable state in need of aid should not be approached as a criminal or major threat. During my mental health crisis, I was in a state where I could not listen, communicate or move properly. Instead of taking into account these obvious symptoms of someone with an inability to normally comply and follow directions, the very symptoms my friends called the police to support me in resolving were the symptoms that the police used to justify their escalation and use of force.

I implore you to use common sense and compassion when you make your decision.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51– June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed

Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed

James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed

Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded

Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded

Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed

Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

Testimony for New York City Council Public Safety Committee
Tuesday, June 9, 2020
Andrew States

Thank you, Chair Richards and members of the Committee on Public Safety for giving us the opportunity to submit testimony today in support of the bills that will address police misconduct, criminalize the use of a chokehold by police officers and create much needed standardized police discipline guidelines.

This past week I participated in protests in response to the death of George Floyd caused by police officers in Minneapolis. Protests that also addressed the issues of racism and police brutality. While engaged in the act of peaceful and constitutionally protected protest, the mayor of our city instituted a craven curfew policy to give law enforcement an excuse to arrest and brutalize the public.

On Wednesday night at approximately 9:15 pm I was marching at the rear of a protest heading south on 3rd avenue. I was walking and pushing my bicycle. The police had been following at a distance for some time. Those demonstrators in my immediate area were intentionally walking slowly in an attempt to keep our group together. While we knew that we were violating the Mayor's order we had, heretofore no instruction from law enforcement present that we needed to disperse. A cohort of officers on bicycles in full body armor began forming at the head of the group immediately behind our position. At some indeterminate point they yelled "MOVE BACK," as a group and rushed forward. An officer grabbed me by the wrist and told me I was being arrested. He instructed me to drop my bike and put my hands behind my back. I complied and asked what would happen to my bike whereby the officer informed me that the bike would be tagged and I would get it back. At that point I was handcuffed with a zip tie and turned south to see what, if anything was happening with my friends. I saw that our group had been dispersed and several demonstrators had been cornered on a side street and not allowed to move. Directly in front of me, I saw two of my roommates who were also on bikes on the ground. One was held on his stomach on the street and bleeding from his arm and leg while two, possibly three officers detained him. The other was being held on his stomach lying on top of his bicycle. Both were eventually lifted to their feet and our bicycles were piled in the street while we were escorted to the curb. The officers sat us there with four other arrested/detained demonstrators to wait. While waiting, a member of the press was on the sidewalk behind us. They were instructed by police to leave the area. When the member of the press was slow to comply, an officer in a white shirt shouted, "You understand that's my press pass, right?" He emphasized the word "my" implying that the press pass had no meaning except that which the officer allowed.

While waiting on the curb, it began to rain at which point the detained group was lifted and moved to the side of a building to stay dry. While standing there one of the detainees noted that his mask had been knocked free and that few of the law enforcement officers immediately surrounding us wore masks at all. The officers did help us replace our masks on our faces.

I support these actions by the city council as a first step in curtailing rampant police abuses and impunity. Moreover, I would wholeheartedly support efforts toward police transparency, reallocation of funds, demilitarization, and reduction, if not total elimination of the NYPD. It would be nice to see

our elected officials show even a fraction of the moral courage these demonstrators have. And, if I were permitted to address the officers and the administration of the New York City Police Department, if you want the respect of the public, it must be earned.

Sincerely,
Andrew J. States

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. It is an important step in holding police officers accountable to the communities that they are supposed to protect.

Testimony of Alexander Bondoc
Resource Consultant for Self Direction
Community Access
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Alexander Bondoc. I am a Resource Consultant at Community Access and a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

Community Access is a 46-year-old nonprofit that helps people living with mental health concerns by providing quality supportive housing and award-winning peer led employment training. Community Access serves 1,500 tenants in 22 buildings and another 1,000 participants in recovery-oriented training, education, and outreach programs.

CCITNYC and Community Access thank Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

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CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

(Add other reasons why you want a peer-driven mental health care response for those in crisis by sharing personal experiences)

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

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We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

**Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.
Now.**

Testimony:

Be careful staying out past curfew, police officers struck first with their batons, and arrested later.

Last night after curfew, around 11pm, a peaceful march of 1000+ strong was broken up, beaten up, and dispersed.

Before that, a march leader had spoken to a police lieutenant. She told us we had 10 minutes to disperse "or the cops would send full force on us." I remained with the march, as it seemed many were staying in defiance. You would think those who walked away would be allowed to go home safe. But no. A facebook friend who walked away posted the following last night: "As we turned the corner on our way home, six-or-so police cars swerved in and the officers all got out and told us to get on the ground. There were five other people in the vicinity and they also were stopped. The officers handcuffed us with plastic zip-ties and wrote us a summons, then let us go."

Those of us who stayed in the march, at Broadway and Waverly, were met with a squadron of police officers in bicycles, batons attached. A couple blocks up, a group of protestors by a broken storefront were met with a yellow cab rushing in at full speed. Cops came out of the yellow cab with batons and started hitting people. They did not detain anyone beforehand, they came in and started hitting people. It was too late for me to try and shield folks, everyone was running.

Facing the bike cops, we tried to make a left turn but we were met by two police vans who drove into the middle of the march. Police officers stormed out of the car and started tackling protestors to the ground, including people in bikes who took hard falls and looked very hurt. The march dispersed.

What was almost 1000 people at Broadway was now almost 30 of us on Saint Marks. There were not a lot of white people around except for a handful, and the black protestors who were there said that they were grateful that a few white folks remained because it would hopefully shield them on their way to a subway station. As we were trying to walk to Canal street, the remaining marchers told the cops to let us go home. The cops responded by sending police cars down the avenue at full speed, making us rush into the sidewalk. We went down a couple more blocks, down Allen St. Us bikers were at the front, and we saw a squadron of police cars rush in and surround the remaining walkers. Those of us on bikes rushed away, as helping would have meant rushing into a squadron of cops and getting detained or hurt before reaching our comrades.

My roommate, who's white, was among those surrounded. She was wearing a gas mask, and even then, she was let go, even though others, who aren't white, were being arrested. This is why we must use white privilege, in the case of us latinx, our proximity to whiteness, to shield black protestors. Because we will always face better treatment. We've known this, but I hope this is some context as to what curfew-defiance is like, and that this context is useful for those of you who will keep going out these coming nights.

Hello,

<https://twitter.com/altochulo/status/1268008988211400704?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/jhermann/status/1268043720399691776?s=20>

I am the "third man" in this video.

It was as peaceful as a peaceful protest could be. After 8pm is when the cops started rushing and beating people. You can see in the first video how it escalated. You can see in the second video how i was attacked.

My body was lifted in the air and slammed to the ground head first with massive force by a cop 2 times my size.

I was doing absolutely nothing but trying to tell cops to stop beating up this one man you can see in the video.

You can see once i was bodied that at least 5 cops look as though they are about to rush me and do what they do but a woman officer in blue seemed to be able to stop them.

I stumbled off not sure if i had a concussion. Blacked out for a second. Head gushing blood.

A minute later i am on the sidewalk while other protestors are trying to help give me aid.

Right there 4-5 cops come around the corner and start yelling at us to get off the street. We were on the sidewalk. I yelled back saying just that.

There is video of this which i can share with you at some point as well.

They then rush me and throw me to the ground and cuff me. Bloody head and all.

Brought to the precinct. Before i was even processed I was asking for an EMT to check me for a concussion.

I was put in the cell with 5 other men. The cops would not stop making fun of us and kept telling us to shut up when we asked for water and aid. They offered no one masks.

They joked that they hope we all got coronavirus.

They made fun of the blood running down my face.

White, black, latino, indian men and woman insulted us here and there for hours.

2.5 hours later an EMT comes to check me out. She said im "fine".

I could have been in much worse condition if my shoulder did not break my fall when my head hit the pavement.

I am a white/jewish man. I know the privileges i have been given and feel the need to stand with our brothers and sisters and use that privilege to my advantage to fight this racism.

I am building a case with a legal representative as we speak. I did not get the badge of the cop that attacked me but ill find what i can.

I have the badge number of one cop who booked me. 11222 - Warfield

I went to the ER yesterday and have documentation to prove it. I got a CAT scan which came back negative but the nurse i had said i clinically have a concussion.

I HAVE AMPLE PHOTOS AND DOCUMENTATION TO BACK THIS UP.

Jack

Vanesa Valencia

6/7/20

A daylong peaceful protest on June 2nd was interrupted by senseless violence from the NYPD. The location was along Park Avenue marching towards Grand Central. It started when two officers began beating a male POC protester before more joined in. They slammed him against a car, threw him on the ground, and suddenly five officers were using their batons on this clearly detained protester. The officers grabbed another male protester and threw him out of the crowd, again using their batons while he was already on the ground. Another officer hit a male POC protester recording the situation, continuing to swing at him until he backed up (please note that everyone who stayed back was recording). The NYPD told white allies to stand up and leave without using any violence on them. They proceeded to chase us up the street using their batons, some laughing while we ran. This situation was recorded by many there, as well as myself. If allowed, I can submit the video evidence.

I am writing this testimony for officials in office to hold NYPD accountable for their disturbing conduct towards civilians, especially protestors. I am mad, hurt and outright disgusted by the behavior of officers that use their stance as policemen to abuse power and exacerbate violence. Our Black community is hurting, can you not see? I have completely lost trust in NYPD. All the violence, arbitrary arrests, militarization and detention of protestors needs to stop. The duty of police officers is to protect, and as first responders, it is to aid. NYPD officers have failed at the fundamental level to do their jobs. That is not acceptable. The police cannot afford to have a 'few' bad apples. They also cannot afford to be neutral. If you are not calling out the 'bad' ones and fighting for justice, you are just as bad as they are. DO YOUR JOB. How ridiculous is it for a 'TRAINED' person to be allowed to suck at their job so badly the community has to do their job for them. Black parents have to teach their children how to act around the police out of fear the police will be afraid and mistake the color of their skin as a weapon. I ask for the police to stop KILLING OUR BLACK MEN AND WOMEN. Your job is to PROTECT. You are first responders, if someone is hurt, you are obligated to respond, not do the hurting.

I write this with the hope that we can provide change. First, I call for: "civilian oversight boards, mandated body worn camera use, de-escalation training, and independent review of all extrajudicial police killings to enhance both transparency and accountability" (UN, 5 June 2020).

I urge the defunding of NYPD in the 2021 city budget. The NYPD's \$6 billion budget is more than expenses on health, homeless services, youth development, and workforce development combined. The mayor is planning to take away resources from our most vulnerable, hardest hit communities to fund the brutality we have been seeing in the streets. [Youth programs, including ones made to divert from incarceration, are being cut by 32% while the NYPD is only being cut 0.38%](#). Especially in this pandemic, can we count on you to vote for significant cuts to the NYPD in order to fund our cities many other critical priorities in this crisis?

I also support NYC Council's additional three bills to 1. Require visible badge numbers 2. Require an EIS (Early Intervention System) 3. Reaffirm people's right to record police. I would go a step further and demand the criminalization of policemen covering their badge numbers and removing their body cameras, as well as the criminalization of policemen interfering with people's right to record them. Only extreme reform will bring forward justice in the police department.

I will not stop fighting until really change is done, and so should you.

Sincerely,

Manuela Arroyave

Maanu1238@gmail.com

Testimony of _____(name)
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is _____(name). I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

(EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS FOR WANTING A PEER LED RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS HERE)

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

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We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

My name is Charlie Monlouis-Anderle - my pronouns are they/them - and my arm was broken by the police on Wednesday night, June 3rd, during a peaceful protest. Around 8 PM, the time of curfew, me and my fellow protestors were in Cadman Plaza in front of Borough Hall when the police began circling around us, leaving one exit towards the southeast corner of the plaza. We peacefully chanted and waited with thunder and lightning. The instant that it began to rain the barricade of police began sprinting at the crowd of protestors. I, closest to their ranks, witnessed several officers raise their batons to beat two smaller protestors to my right who were trapped against the fountain. I reacted instinctively, using my bike to shield myself from their raised batons. They were kicking my bike and I tried to pull it free of their kicks. I felt myself falling as they tackled me, battering me with their batons. As they pinned my arms, legs and head to the ground, I felt my whole body go limp and my bladder release. I felt grateful that my backpack held my bike helmet and shielded my spine from their blows. When I opened my eyes, there was an officer's helmet right in front of me. I said to him "I hope you hate yourself. I hope you lay awake at night thinking about what a monster you are." They pulled my arms back into metal cuffs and I could feel that the ground was wet with rain. Everything was painful. The officers argued about the metal cuffs and whether to zip tie my wrists instead. They zip-tied my wrists, tightly bound in the straps of my backpack so that it swung upside down behind me as they lifted me from the ground. I yelled, feeling a sharp pain in my right arm. They then wrestled the metal cuffs off my wrist, and I had the acute sensation that my right arm was detached from my body. I yelled out in shock. From this moment, for the next hour and a half, I repeatedly expressed pain in my right arm and begged for medical attention to no avail.

Two officers began marching me to the bus. The officer to my right (badge number: 5130), was a white female officer. I remember she was wearing mascara. She yanked my right arm and yelled at me to walk. My left shoe had come off, and I asked a third officer to put it back on so that I could walk. I was glad that the rain soaked my body so that no one could see the urine running down my legs. From the moment they had lifted me from the ground, it felt like my right arm was no longer there. I couldn't feel it, I was numb from the right side of my neck to my right fingertips, and at the same time pain radiated through my whole body. The officer on my right, badge number 5130, kept yelling at me to walk. I kept begging her to not pull on my arm. The more that I begged her, the more that she yelled at me roughly to move towards the bus. I could not see any protestors as I looked around, only the police. Everyone had disappeared. I felt so weak from the pain that I could barely see to move one foot in front of the other. I was feeling nauseated and spat to clear my mouth. The officer on my right snarled in disgust and said something to the officer on my left to warn her to avoid the spit hanging from my mouth. Tears and spit streamed from my face while I begged her not to pull on my right arm. Then, she pulled back on my right arm and brought it up above my head behind me so that I doubled over forwards. I heard a snapping sound coming from my arm as she did this, and I screamed out.

I began screaming and insulting her. Calling her a racist pig. I told her that she should be ashamed and she said "No you should be ashamed, you're an embarrassment." I asked her why? "Is it because I'm trans? Is it because I'm a freak to you? Is it because I'm a faggot?" to which she snarled in disgust again. I asked her what is your badge number. To which she

moved to cover her badge. I read her number off her helmet: 5130. And I told her "I'll remember you." By this time we had reached the bus and she threw me onto the bus. There were two male officers on the bus watching us. At least 9 other protestors were already on the bus. When seated I tried to look at my arm and saw it was at such a weird angle and that there was a weird deformity: there was a large and growing lump on my right upper arm and below the lump my arm hung at an angle. I had no control over my arm, wrist, hand and fingers. . It hurt. At first the cops ignored my request for medical help. There was an older white man next to me who identified himself as a doctor from Seattle. He asked the police officers on the bus if he could sit next to me and take a look at my arm. The police officers shrugged nonchalantly and let him sit next to me. He examined it and confirmed that it was most likely broken. He began asking them to take off the zip-ties on my wrists. At this point my hands had started turning blue. There were other protestors on the bus who were asking for their zip-ties to also be cut, as they were experiencing loss of circulation as well. All along, the cops were telling us they did not have the tool to cut our zip-ties. We asked how long it would take for the paramedics to get to all of us. They retorted "a lot of people are hurt right now." I said " you hurt a lot of people!" There was so much yelling. The protestors at the police. The police at the protestors. No one was listening to me as I was just begging for them to make the pain stop. This whole time I was focusing on my breath to extend my exhales and inhales to prevent me from going into a panic attack. There was so much pain. The doctor who had previously examined me, was talking to the cops and they were only responsive to him and not the other protestors on the bus. They were answering or shrugging off his questions. I remember at some point one of the officer's telling me they had called an ambulance and it was on its way. I asked how long? They said a few minutes. Time just kept moving on by. Eventually, I saw what looked like the fire department arrive. I raised the volume of my screaming to try to get their attention. They stood by the bus and blankly stared at me, doing nothing. I asked the officer how soon for the paramedics to help me? He said they're still coming. Eventually, two paramedics got to me on the bus: a white woman named Liz, and a white man with glasses. It was only then that the cops supposedly had the shears to cut our zip-ties. The paramedics asked me my name. They asked me if I could feel my fingers on my right arm while they touched them. I barely could. They asked me to move my fingers. I could not. The paramedics cut the zips, but they were so tight they had to take some time to figure out how to cut them off. They cut my backpack to finally be able to do so. Once the zip-ties came off, they repositioned my arm. They ordered pain medication and we waited for some faceless authority figure to "okay" the medicine. The two paramedics debated the dosage and opted for the smaller one. "Just enough they said," to get me onto a stretcher without causing too much pain. Just enough to stabilize me. They gave me fentanyl. I was in so much pain that I barely felt a difference, just a tingling sensation in my face. But still, all I could feel was pain. They got me in the ambulance. I asked Liz if she could give me more pain medication, she replied that they would have to get authorization again. There were police cars following the ambulance to the hospital. When I arrived at the hospital, the police followed me into the trauma room. I disclosed my trans identity to the hospital staff, and asked them to respect my pronouns. Many of the hospital staff asked me questions "What's my name? Do I have any allergies? Where was I feeling pain? Could I feel this?" I began unfolding the story of what had happened to me, and insisted that I did not feel safe with the police who were in the room. The police rolled their eyes

at my request to the staff. I continued asking for more medication, and again was told that we were waiting for some 'faceless' authority figure to approve my right to pain relief. While we waited for the X-ray machine there was a moment where the hospital staff left me with the police. When my doctor returned, I could not breathe from an anxiety attack, and begged him not to leave me alone in the room with them. Throughout this entire experience, I struggled to maintain even breath, moaned and cried from pain. At that point they turned to face away from me, but none of the doctors would speak directly to the cops and ask them to leave. A resident asked me once more to repeat the story of how I had come to be injured. It was only me, the resident, and the two cops in the room. I saw the resident glancing at the police as he was filling out the chart. In the discharge paper's I observed that the resident charted my cause of injury as "Bicycle accident." I never left police custody until the moment the trauma team had confirmed a fracture on my bone on the X-ray. The officers wrote me a summons for disorderly misconduct and finally left me.

Last Thursday night, June 4th I sustained injuries at the hands of officers in the New York Police Department who punched and hit me with batons, cut my face, smashed my phone, smashed my glasses, and left my bike in the street never to be found again. I was left with bruises and scrapes and trauma. Others had their fingers broken, their heads covered in blood.

I know of no gentler words to describe what happened to me than an unprovoked beating. It only compares to the time I was actually jumped by criminals trying to take my wallet in Philadelphia a few years ago. And there were others who got beat far worse than I did. I strongly support the passage of the bills mentioned regarding the right to record, early intervention systems, and the visibility of badge numbers.

I also demand that we defund NYPD to whatever extent necessary to ensure that all of our DOE public schools are 100% fully funded and each staffed with full-wraparound social services personnel and professionals such as guidance counselors, therapists, academic interventionists, and social workers. I know of some people in police uniforms right now that would make great candidates for those positions that we desperately need. The only reason they are not in those positions is because we do not value those jobs nearly as much as someone who walks into a school everyday with a gun on their hip. I still do not understand that. I never will.

On Thursday, June 4th I joined a peaceful march of protestors in South Williamsburg, starting at McCarren park around 7:30pm. We marched peaceably around the community. NYPD were present on the edges of our march but never verbalized an order to stop marching or protesting, even after the 8:00 pm curfew passed. At no time did I observe any protestors even interact directly with an NYPD officer beyond looks. We were using only the most powerful weapon we had, our voices in solidarity.

We eventually came to the corner of Penn St and Wythe Ave facing southwest from Bedford Ave. It was around 9pm. A line of somewhere between 100 – 200 officers had formed that kept the group of probably 2000 - 3000 protestors from proceeding. There were about 10 feet between protestors and the officers. I walked myself and my bike back about 100 ft from that front line so I was not in front of the line. I had kids to teach the next morning, and I wanted to be there for them. I did not want to risk arrest. I had watched the cops all night. I had watched them in my neighborhood as people marched in Bushwick until 11:30pm the night before. What I saw and what the Mayor had told us was that the NYPD would not arrest people who were marching peacefully even if it was

after curfew. The Governor had said no police officer would willingly bludgeon someone who was standing there peacefully.

These assumptions and the Governor's comments are wrong. Very wrong.

At Penn and Wythe we chanted awhile. Press set up some cameras in the no man's land between NYPD and protestors. At no point did I ever hear the police say "Disperse" or "You are out past curfew, go home." There were absolutely no orders from police that I could hear.

After about 5 minutes, the crowd independently decided to turn away from the line of officers blocking our path and walk back toward Bedford Ave. As far as I could tell this was not in response to a direct order from the NYPD.

I was in the process of turning my bike 180 degrees as the crowd about-faced and, at that moment, walked toward Bedford Ave. Within what felt like only a second, I felt people coming up behind me, I shouted to others to watch their back for people rushing, which I'd seen in other marches, that's when 3 - 4 white shirted, white officers, violently shoved me to the ground and started punching and beating me with batons and fists. Violence and stampeding erupted all around me.

The officers beating me never said the words "you're under arrest" or "get out of here" or even "stop resisting." As I was being pummeled with fists and batons they were saying, "GET DOWN! GET THE [EXPLETIVE] DOWN," "YOU WANTED SMOKE HUH? YOU GOT IT!" I have no clue what that means either. I had my phone in my hands recording events, and as they were hitting me they were also saying "GET HIS PHONE. GET HIS [EXPLETIVE] PHONE." Which they did. They snatched it from my hands. I have since recovered it. A member of the community we were in discovered it crushed and under a car only about 20 min after I was taken away. I wonder how that happened.

The officers who were beating me were all behind or on the sides of me, I admit now that I could not reasonably identify them. When you are unexpectedly attacked by fists and batons and shouts your brain actually cannot faithfully remember fine details like names or distinct features in a face. Your body's reaction is to curl into a fetal position, with hands above your head, and never want to leave it so you protect your vital organs. That is what I was doing while they beat me and also tried to pull my hands behind me to zip tie.

One officer picked up my tortoise shell glasses that had fallen in the melee and asked if they were mine. I said yes. He crushed them under his boot. I was zip tied and dragged from my bike, a newly purchased Aventon Mataro. I haven't seen it since and no NYPD police precinct has been able to tell me where it could be. I will have to consider it stolen. But who stole it, exactly?

Again, I was never told I was being arrested. I was never told not once through my entire experience with the NYPD what I was being charged with or why I was being beaten or brought to Brooklyn Central Booking at 120 Schermerhorn and processed. Why I was left in a series of cells for 5+ hours. It all just happened. I had been turning away to start walking home. And then I got attacked by police officers in the NYPD.

I was hauled onto a bus full of injured people screaming in pain and confusion. Myself and many others were going into panic and crying for help from the officers on board the bus with us (different officers than those who had zip tied us) because the zip ties were so tight we could not feel our hands for at least 20 - 30 min. I still have numbness throughout my hands indicating nerve damage. A man was dragged to the door of this bus bleeding profusely from a 5- 10 inch bleeding wound on his head and clearly not conscious. The NYPD fought over whether he should go on the arrest bus or an ambulance. Luckily, after an argument between cops about it, he got medical attention.

I shared a cell overnight with a group of people who were primarily white. I don't need bail. All I was issued was a court appearance for breaking curfew. All that, for curfew.

I teach middle schoolers in Bushwick, Brooklyn. The day before members of the NYPD beat me, myself and five other colleagues recorded a conversation intended to let students know "You Matter." All of my beautiful, brave, and ingenious students are students of color. I joined these protests because I worry so much about them being victims of potentially even worse violence than was visited upon me by the hands of the NYPD. In that recorded conversation with my colleagues, we implored our children to always remember to judge each person as an individual, by their individual actions. That assuming that every single person who wears the NYPD uniform was bad, was the same as assuming that every person of a certain skin tone was bad.

What am I going to tell my students about the individuals who work for the NYPD that beat me?

What am I going to tell my students about the individuals who work for the NYPD that zip tied my hands so tightly that I still can't feel my left thumb or index finger.

What will I tell my students about the individuals who work for the NYPD who left me with a gash in my forehead, a bruised left temple, shoulders, stomach, legs, and scrapes all over my body?

What will I tell my students about the individuals who work for the NYPD that thought it was OK to put a man whose head was busted open, bleeding out and unconscious, on a bus to jail rather than ambulance?

What do I tell my students about the individual commanding officer or officers who made the decision that what happened to me and many hundreds of other people was absolutely OK?

What do I tell my students when they ask me : But Mr. Chaney, why would they do that? They're supposed to protect people.

And what do I tell my students when they ask me : But Mr. they can't do that to you can they?

What will I tell my students when they ask me : those officers who did that to you will get in trouble won't they?

What do I tell my students when they ask me : why do they always get away with this ?

None of those questions have easy answers. But they absolutely should.

In the "You Matter" Conversation we recorded for our students, I told them a hard truth. That truth was that the world we often want to be in simply doesn't exist. But it only doesn't exist, yet. The world we want, the better world, is never ever given. The long, long struggle for everyday people to have basic human rights, to LIVE, shows this time and time again. Ask any social studies teacher. It would be nice to believe that those changes always came as the result of polite conversation and changes that everybody agreed on. But it is called a struggle because, unfortunately, blood is almost always spilled. I gave a drop. Others who have far less gave far more. But the people always win. And we will again.

I told my students to start demanding that better world now. As a friend's 4 yr old said it, "Right now, right now, right now!" I told them that their opinions were the most important in the world because they are building the next one, the better one.

I told them that they need to keep asking questions and demanding answers. I told them that when the answers they hear insult their sense of humanity or just are not good enough, or when nobody

will even give them an answer, they will have to create the right answer. I told them that I loved them and that each one of them absolutely could create, formulate, and develop those answers. I told them they needed to decide what this new, better world will be, to name it, build it, and it when it is not given, as it so rarely is, to demand it ceaselessly. I told them that they *already* had the power to demand a better world that they can live and breathe and grow, and learn, and thrive and dance and sing and play fortnite and roblox and watch YouTube in without ever having to worry about being under the baton or fist or boot of someone we give the honor of calling a civil servant.

Pass these bills now.

Testimony to the Committee on Public Safety

Tuesday June 9, 2020

Jenna Schmitz

My name is Jenna Schmitz, and I live in the Bronx. I am a public health professional. On Thursday 6/4/2020 I attended a peaceful protest that started at 149th and 3rd ave in the BX and ended on (E 136th street between Willis and Brown--where approx. 100 individuals were kettled in a small area and prevented from leaving by two lines of police with riot gear that spanned the (north and south) ends of E 136th. At approximately 7:50pm, police blocked our exit from the street and broadcasted an audio recording which repeatedly warned that if we were out past 8pm, we would be in violation of the mandated curfew. In response to this audio recording, several detained protesters asked to be let go, to no avail as police continued to block our exit from the area. At around 8pm, police began beating, pushing and arresting peaceful protesters, which caused panic and further crowding as protesters ran to one side or the other in fear of being pepper sprayed, aggressively tackled and held to the ground, or beat repeatedly with batons by police—sometimes on the head, face and neck. I personally witnessed police committing each of these violent and dehumanizing acts to control a peaceful crowd of individuals who, as I mentioned before, were purposefully blocked from leaving the area before the start of the 8pm curfew.

At around 8:10pm, as police continued to violently arrest protesters, I heard several protesters cry out that someone needed first aid. Myself, and several others who were carrying first aid supplies moved through the crowd to find a man collapsed on the ground who had been pepper sprayed by police. The man was unresponsive. What felt like 10minutes passed without any action on behalf of the police to move the man or provide him with urgently needed medical attention. He was almost accidentally trampled in the meantime by panicked protesters quickly moving away from the violent hands of police, who were working their way up to our area, with batons and pepper spray in hand.

When the man on the ground was nearly trampled, police finally agreed to move him to a less crowded area, outside the kettle on the corner of E 136th and Brown. They also agreed to allow those of us providing first aid to go with him. Once we arrived at this new location, police began bringing over other people who had been injured by their excessive and brutal force. The corner of E 136th and Brown became a triage area in a matter of minutes. Police dumped bodies on the sidewalk for those of us with first aid supplies and training to tend to. One individual had just had a seizure. Another had a badly injured knee and could not walk. Another with a history of open-heart surgery was experiencing chest pain and difficulty breathing. And one of the last people brought over (almost 15 minutes after the triage area was established) was a person who was actively bleeding from a head injury caused by a police officer beating them with a baton. This person also had a severely injured knee and could not walk, yet police did not take his handcuffs off despite our repeated requests.

We also repeatedly asked police officers to allow those of us with first aid training and supplies to assess people detained on the bus (parked in front of Mill Brook housing on Brook and E 136th), as well as those detained on the street. There were as several people in both areas who were visibly bleeding. The police did not heed these requests from those of us trained in first

aid—some doctors, some nurses. Instead, they unmistakably denied medical attention and care to people who desperately needed it.

Make no mistake, the police's attack on Bronxites the night of June 4th was nothing short of asymmetrical warfare. A war in which police used their power, weapons, and violent control tactics to terrorize, severely injure, and unlawfully arrest a crowd of peaceful, mostly Black, and Brown individuals who were coming together in community and solidarity to enact their rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of speech. Bronxites were detained in a small, overcrowded area where maintaining 6 feet of physical distance was entirely impossible. They were beaten repeatedly. They were denied medical care. They were arrested for curfew violations even though they were detained well before the 8pm curfew. They were the victims of racist police officers, and racist policing tactics that pose the greatest risk of physical injury and death to Black individuals in this country. Whether chokeholds, or the use of other debilitating and lethal tactics, the fatal impact of excessive force by police has always been the greatest among people whose skin tone is seen as a weapon. The only way to eliminate the use of excessive and fatal force is to completely defund and abolish the police.

Dear Sir/Madame,

I joined a peaceful protest in Brooklyn Wednesday June 3, 2020. I joined this protest to bring awareness to the wrongful killing of George Floyd and so many others of the black community. I listened and I marched through the streets of Brooklyn with no ounce from the entire group of violence. At 8:45pm we entered Cadman Plaza where we were confronted with a line of officers in riot gear. For 10/15 minutes we peacefully chanted until the organizers decided we should leave to avoid any potential conflict. When the group turned around I realized, as did so many others, we had been kettled in by groups of riot police. I then witnessed something I have never before in my life thought I would see. Being a white women I have never had to be fearful of the Police but in those next 30 minutes or so I was terrified and heartbroken. I witnessed police charge at our group, swinging batons, and forcefully pushing people to the ground. I saw a young black man pinned to the street with 3 officers on him. I saw a senior officer (white shirt) push a young woman to the ground screaming in her face & using profanity. The black woman standing next to me was shoved numerous times in the back as I was still left untouched. During this time it started to heavily rain. People were slipping and falling as police continued forcefully pushing us. I was pushed up some stairs as people fell and were shoved around me. Trying to avoid the stairs I very quickly walked with my hands held up trying to find a safe space. It was hard to see because of the rain but police continued to come from all angles. I was shoved in the back 3 possibly 4 times not in any particular direction which led me just being shoved into more officers. I was hit once in the back with a baton. The man standing near me (hands held up walking quickly out of harms way) was violently shoved to the ground and slid across the street. I continued to be pushed in between cops until one officer spoke to me stating "Come on sweetheart, you're going to have to move faster" with a nice shove to the back. I witnessed people being pepper sprayed, hit, screamed at, and shoved. I do understand that it was past a curfew that was set in place the day before. What I do not understand is how a group of people who were willing to leave was met with over 100 riot Police and violence. I am also aware and from what I witnessed black people were treated very different with much more force. I as a white women was called sweetheart, while a black women was screamed at in the face. I am only witness to 1 account in 1 night. How many 30 minutes like this happened over the course of this week. This act of violence by police is going against public safety and I demand this to be a discussion where change needs to be made.

Sincerely,

Amy K. Breen

Brooklyn, NY

Testimony of Christina Sparrock
Mental Health Advocate

Supporter of CCITNYC
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Christina Sparrock. I am a Certified Public Accountant and Mental Health Advocate who supports Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

As a Mental Health Advocate, I share my personal story of living with bipolar disorder to both destigmatize mental illness and to give hope to others. Serving on the Mayor de Blasio's Crisis Prevention and Response Task force and also the Criminal Justice Committee of the NYC Community Service Board, I offer suggestions to improve mental health policies in the Public Health and Public Safety sectors.

CCITNYC and I thank Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The criminalization and dehumanization of people living with mental health conditions often leads to more trauma. As a person who was in crisis, I know first-hand the fear that consumed me when several uniformed cops entered my home. My cry for help and support was treated with a criminal response and I no longer fit the description of a person, but an emotionally disturbed person or EDP. Where is the dignity in this?

Having a peer-driven mental health care response, with culturally competent and trauma-informed peers is the best and only response to a mental health call.

Peers are trained in crisis intervention and use a person-centered approach when engaging with people in emotional crisis.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51— June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed

Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed

James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Saheed Vassell, Age 34 -- April 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Susan Muller, Age 54 -- September 2018 – Queens – shot and killed

Michael Cordero, 34 -- March 2019 – Manhattan -- shot and critically wounded

Jarrell Davis, Age 33 -- March 2019 – Queens -- shot and critically wounded

Kawaski Trawick, Age 32 – May 2019 – Bronx – shot and killed

Kwesi Ashun, Age 33 – October 2019- Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

6/9/2020

To: Committee on Public Safety

From: Michelle Ling

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm sharing two instances of unprovoked violence against my body by armed NYPD officers. I'm implicating all officers in their violence, as they stood by and simply watched. Worse, they participated in violence against other protestors. I also want to affirm that there were thousands of police officers out this past week who were not wearing PPE. At least half of the officers out were not wearing masks, despite many having folded masks visible in their pockets. When we asked them why they weren't wearing masks they told us to shut up. Some laughed and thanked us for the over-time. Others spit at our feet.

On 5/29/2020 Friday around 8:00 pm, a group of friends and I went to attend the protests in front of the Barclays Center in Brooklyn and demand accountability for police brutality and systematic racism that the NYPD and all police uphold. We wanted Justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, Akai Gurley, Sandra Bland, the list goes on.

By the time we arrived, the crowd had moved from Barclays to Fort Greene park and the NYPD officers on the ground were already restless. Many wear in riot gear. We were pushed off the street on Dekalb and were forced to walk through the project housing complex to Lafayette. Once on Lafayette, we walked toward Classon and two cop cars drove up behind us. They were driving to corral protestors who were already being detained by officers in riot gear with their batons out at the intersection of Lafayette and Classon. We stood in front of the police vehicle with our arms linked in protection. Me and a white woman in front of one car, my friend P (who is brown) and L (who is white) on the other. The cars continued to drive into our legs, pushing us and honking. After a few minutes of the vehicle continuing to drive at us, two or three cops came out of each vehicle. Two white cis-men officers and a black femme officer ran at us with their batons out. They punched and shoved us. To my right, three officers did the same to P and L. After a few seconds, the police officers punched and pushed me (East Asian) and L (white) to the side and started to beat P (brown) and our friend E (black), who had run up to help us after seeing us getting beaten. P and E started to run and the police officers ran after, beating P and E even as they ran. E twisted their ankle and fell to the ground, and the officers continued to beat them. A few other friends pulled E up, and P, who had also fallen to the ground and was being beaten. We got to the intersection and the police were escalating violence. One officer grabbed a person's bike, who was using it as a shield to protect others and stop police from encroaching. The officer threw it over the crowd.

5/30/2020 Saturday I attended protests in Flatbush. At night, as we are leaving to find our cars and go home, we come across the intersection of Rogers Ave and Erasmus St. At the intersection at least a hundred cops, half in full riot gear, had formed a ring against protestors. They were pushing people with their batons and running after protestors to beat and arrest

them. Many in the crowd were teargassed, pepper sprayed and beaten. As I was watching the ring push against protestors, I saw an officer push a protestor (who only had a sign on them, no weapons, nothing). From at least 6 feet away, I screamed at him to stop. From his left, an officer that I did not see reached his hand across the barricade and pepper sprayed me in the face. My eyes and face were seared and I was temporarily blinded. I had to be carried away by friends. For the next day my skin was on fire, and showering spread the pepper spray across my body, making it difficult to move or lay down. I will never be able to hold that officer accountable for his violent actions. Under this corrupt system which prioritizes the safety and well-being of people's property, over the material bodies and lives of black people and other people of color, I will never receive justice. As long as the NYPD is intact, I will never know justice.

I'm calling on you to abolish the police. They do not keep us safe. 36,000 officers on the force and not a single person that day cared for the safety and well-being of the people of New York City that they are paid to defend. They armed themselves against us, they refused to wear their masks.

At the bare minimum we must:

- Reject any proposed expansion to police budgets.
- Prohibit private-public innovation schemes that profit from temporary technological fixes to systemic problems of police abuse and violence. These contracts and data-sharing arrangements, however profitable for technologists and reformists, are lethal.
- Reduce the power of police unions
- Until the police are fully defunded, make police union contract negotiations public.
- Pressure the AFL-CIO to denounce police unions.
- Prohibit city candidates taking money from police unions and stop accepting union funds.
- Withhold pensions and don't rehire cops involved in use of excessive force.
- Demand the highest budget cuts per year, until they slash police budget to zero.
- Slash police salaries across the board until they are zeroed out.
- Immediately fire police officers who have any excessive force complaints.
- No hiring of new officers or replacement of fired or resigned officers.
- Fully cut funding for public relations.
- Suspend the use of paid administrative leave for cops under investigation.
- Require police, not cities, to be liable for misconduct and violence settlements.
- Deplatform white supremacist public officials.
- Abolish asset forfeiture programs and laws.

These demands are listed on the 8toabolition.com website.

The NYPD is a plague. The NYPD does not protect us. Abolish the police.

Power to the people,

Michelle

On Tuesday June 2nd at 8:15pm, my friend and I were walking from the West End Highway towards the edge of Battery Park to look for a bathroom. A few yards away we heard screaming from behind us, and we turned around to look back at West End Highway and saw a group of policemen tackle several protestors to the ground and beat them violently. I wanted to go back and help the protestors but I was scared of being beaten up, so my friend and I hurried off to Battery Park. Later on, I found out on Twitter that someone filmed part of the scene: https://twitter.com/protest_nyc/status/1268248720291893248?s=20

I can confirm that all of this happened, because I saw it with my very eyes. We must put an end to police brutality NOW.

June 9th, 2020

To the City Council Members Addressing Public Safety,

I urge you to make significant changes to reform policing in a way that ensures they are held accountable for intimidation and brutality, and to dismantle policy and practices meant to disguise offending officers' identities and records.

If you listen, you will also note that my community and I are also demanding that you defund the NYC Police department and redirect funds to communities in a way that supports efforts to dismantle systemic racism, promote greater economic and housing equality, and mental health and addictions resources.

We are watching, waiting, and relying on you to support and make this change.

Thank you,

Claire Kearney-Volpe

383 Atlantic Ave, Brooklyn NY
11217

Account of Events on 6/3/20

On the night of Wednesday, June 3rd, a friend and I were peacefully protesting with a group that had originated at the vigil at Gracie Mansion earlier in the evening. We had marched downtown, and were at or near 53rd Street and 3rd Avenue by 9PM. We were near the back of the group at that time, and when we turned around we saw a wall of police lights spanning the width of the avenue, and police officers began running at and tackling people to the ground behind us and making arrests. We were given no warning before the arrests began, and no meaningful opportunity to go home.

We were scared and turned the corner to escape west on 53rd -- my friend reminded me that we should walk quickly, not run, to avoid confrontation, which we did. When we got halfway up the block we saw ahead of us another wall of police, and could see officers chasing and tackling other protestors. People around us were yelling, "We're leaving, we're leaving." An officer, a white male wielding a baton and wearing a blue helmet with a face shield, began running at us and yelling, "Pick a direction and go home," forcing us to turn around toward the officers on 3rd Avenue and thus with no actual escape route. He beat a woman's legs with his baton as she was trying to run away. Before we got more than a few steps more officers surrounded us. We were told that we were under arrest, pushed up against a building with our hands above our heads, patted down, and our hands were zip tied behind our backs.

The officers zip-tying us over-tightened the ties of many of us. One woman's ties were so tight that, when one tie was clipped, her hand bled. The other tie was too tight to remove, her hand swelled and turned blue and purple, and an ambulance had to be called. I was outside for approximately thirty minutes before being put in the van, and no ambulance had arrived by the time I was inside. Many other protestors' hands were swollen, and my own were so painful that, though I tried not to say anything for a number of minutes, I eventually had to ask repeatedly (I asked approximately 3 times, and my friend also asked 3 times on my behalf) to have them cut and re-applied. We were either ignored or told there was nothing they could do, and that no officer (there were about 15 officers near us) was prepared with appropriate clippers. Though they were eventually clipped and reapplied right before I entered the van, I now have nerve damage in both thumbs, and have a strip of numbness from the wrist to the tip of each thumb that has not subsided.

Once zip-tied, we were ordered to sit in a line on the ground against the building. A young black woman next to me, the only black protestor in our vicinity, had been on the phone with her mother when she got arrested. She was talking to an officer in tears, asking him to let her get back on the phone to let her mother know she was OK. The officer told her roughly that she "shouldn't have called her mother and worried her like that." He finally let her get back on the phone, during which call she told her mother, "I'm not going to die, I'm not going to die." I heard this and became upset. The officer asked what was wrong, and I told him that I was upset by what she was saying. He said sharply, "she's an adult, she can handle it." I later learned that she was 10 years younger than I am.

We waited for about 30 minutes for a van, during which time it poured rain. Eventually, 9 of us were loaded into a vehicle. We remained in the van for the next 3.5 hours. When we asked why (speaking loudly and calmly) in the direction of the cabin, an officer told us that the precincts were overwhelmed by the number of arrests and they had nowhere to put us. A number of our zipties became excruciating over the course of the 3.5 hours, and two people's hands were badly swollen. We asked calmly and clearly on a number of occasions to please clip and reapply a couple of people's restraints, but they refused.

It is also worth noting that at least two or three people's masks had slipped off before entering the van and they were not able to pull them back up because their hands were bound, leaving us all exposed for the duration of the time in there. We were sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with 5 of us one side, and 4 on the other, with only about a foot of space between our knees. We were not 6 feet apart or socially distanced in any way.

Once a precinct had the capacity to take us, we were driven around the block and escorted inside. Out of about 20 officers only one or two was wearing a mask. The officers who questioned us were not wearing masks and came within a foot of our faces to speak. Additionally, there was no soap in the precinct bathroom.

We were held for 20-30 minutes, and at about 1:15 I was given a summons and released.

My name is Charlie Monlouis-Anderle - my pronouns are they/them - and my arm was broken by the police on Wednesday night, June 3rd, during a peaceful protest. Around 8 PM, the time of curfew, me and my fellow protestors were in Cadman Plaza in front of Borough Hall when the police began circling around us, leaving one exit towards the southeast corner of the plaza. We peacefully chanted and waited with thunder and lightning. The instant that it began to rain the barricade of police began sprinting at the crowd of protestors. I, closest to their ranks, witnessed several officers raise their batons to beat two smaller protestors to my right who were trapped against the fountain. I reacted instinctively, using my bike to shield myself from their raised batons. They were kicking my bike and I tried to pull it free of their kicks. I felt myself falling as they tackled me, battering me with their batons. As they pinned my arms, legs and head to the ground, I felt my whole body go limp and my bladder release. I felt grateful that my backpack held my bike helmet and shielded my spine from their blows. When I opened my eyes, there was an officer's helmet right in front of me. I said to him "I hope you hate yourself. I hope you lay awake at night thinking about what a monster you are." They pulled my arms back into metal cuffs and I could feel that the ground was wet with rain. Everything was painful. The officers argued about the metal cuffs and whether to zip tie my wrists instead. They zip-tied my wrists, tightly bound in the straps of my backpack so that it swung upside down behind me as they lifted me from the ground. I yelled, feeling a sharp pain in my right arm. They then wrestled the metal cuffs off my wrist, and I had the acute sensation that my right arm was detached from my body. I yelled out in shock. From this moment, for the next hour and a half, I repeatedly expressed pain in my right arm and begged for medical attention to no avail.

Two officers began marching me to the bus. The officer to my right (badge number: 5130), was a white female officer. I remember she was wearing mascara. She yanked my right arm and yelled at me to walk. My left shoe had come off, and I asked a third officer to put it back on so that I could walk. I was glad that the rain soaked my body so that no one could see the urine running down my legs. From the moment they had lifted me from the ground, it felt like my right arm was no longer there. I couldn't feel it, I was numb from the right side of my neck to my right fingertips, and at the same time pain radiated through my whole body. The officer on my right, badge number 5130, kept yelling at me to walk. I kept begging her to not pull on my arm. The more that I begged her, the more that she yelled at me roughly to move towards the bus. I could not see any protestors as I looked around, only the police. Everyone had disappeared. I felt so weak from the pain that I could barely see to move one foot in front of the other. I was feeling nauseated and spat to clear my mouth. The officer on my right snarled in disgust and said something to the officer on my left to warn her to avoid the spit hanging from my mouth. Tears and spit streamed from my face while I begged her not to pull on my right arm. Then, she pulled back on my right arm and brought it up above my head behind me so that I doubled over forwards. I heard a snapping sound coming from my arm as she did this, and I screamed out.

I began screaming and insulting her. Calling her a racist pig. I told her that she should be ashamed and she said "No you should be ashamed, you're an embarrassment." I asked her why? "Is it because I'm trans? Is it because I'm a freak to you? Is it because I'm a faggot?" to which she snarled in disgust again. I asked her what is your badge number. To which she

moved to cover her badge. I read her number off her helmet: 5130. And I told her "I'll remember you." By this time we had reached the bus and she threw me onto the bus. There were two male officers on the bus watching us. At least 9 other protestors were already on the bus. When seated I tried to look at my arm and saw it was at such a weird angle and that there was a weird deformity: there was a large and growing lump on my right upper arm and below the lump my arm hung at an angle. I had no control over my arm, wrist, hand and fingers. . It hurt. At first the cops ignored my request for medical help. There was an older white man next to me who identified himself as a doctor from Seattle. He asked the police officers on the bus if he could sit next to me and take a look at my arm. The police officers shrugged nonchalantly and let him sit next to me. He examined it and confirmed that it was most likely broken. He began asking them to take off the zip-ties on my wrists. At this point my hands had started turning blue. There were other protestors on the bus who were asking for their zip-ties to also be cut, as they were experiencing loss of circulation as well. All along, the cops were telling us they did not have the tool to cut our zip-ties. We asked how long it would take for the paramedics to get to all of us. They retorted "a lot of people are hurt right now." I said " you hurt a lot of people!" There was so much yelling. The protestors at the police. The police at the protestors. No one was listening to me as I was just begging for them to make the pain stop. This whole time I was focusing on my breath to extend my exhales and inhales to prevent me from going into a panic attack. There was so much pain. The doctor who had previously examined me, was talking to the cops and they were only responsive to him and not the other protestors on the bus. They were answering or shrugging off his questions. I remember at some point one of the officer's telling me they had called an ambulance and it was on its way. I asked how long? They said a few minutes. Time just kept moving on by. Eventually, I saw what looked like the fire department arrive. I raised the volume of my screaming to try to get their attention. They stood by the bus and blankly stared at me, doing nothing. I asked the officer how soon for the paramedics to help me? He said they're still coming. Eventually, two paramedics got to me on the bus: a white woman named Liz, and a white man with glasses. It was only then that the cops supposedly had the shears to cut our zip-ties. The paramedics asked me my name. They asked me if I could feel my fingers on my right arm while they touched them. I barely could. They asked me to move my fingers. I could not. The paramedics cut the zips, but they were so tight they had to take some time to figure out how to cut them off. They cut my backpack to finally be able to do so. Once the zip-ties came off, they repositioned my arm. They ordered pain medication and we waited for some faceless authority figure to "okay" the medicine. The two paramedics debated the dosage and opted for the smaller one. "Just enough they said," to get me onto a stretcher without causing too much pain. Just enough to stabilize me. They gave me fentanyl. I was in so much pain that I barely felt a difference, just a tingling sensation in my face. But still, all I could feel was pain. They got me in the ambulance. I asked Liz if she could give me more pain medication, she replied that they would have to get authorization again. There were police cars following the ambulance to the hospital. When I arrived at the hospital, the police followed me into the trauma room. I disclosed my trans identity to the hospital staff, and asked them to respect my pronouns. Many of the hospital staff asked me questions "What's my name? Do I have any allergies? Where was I feeling pain? Could I feel this?" I began unfolding the story of what had happened to me, and insisted that I did not feel safe with the police who were in the room. The police rolled their eyes

at my request to the staff. I continued asking for more medication, and again was told that we were waiting for some 'faceless' authority figure to approve my right to pain relief. While we waited for the X-ray machine there was a moment where the hospital staff left me with the police. When my doctor returned, I could not breathe from an anxiety attack, and begged him not to leave me alone in the room with them. Throughout this entire experience, I struggled to maintain even breath, moaned and cried from pain. At that point they turned to face away from me, but none of the doctors would speak directly to the cops and ask them to leave. A resident asked me once more to repeat the story of how I had come to be injured. It was only me, the resident, and the two cops in the room. I saw the resident glancing at the police as he was filling out the chart. In the discharge paper's I observed that the resident charted my cause of injury as "Bicycle accident." I never left police custody until the moment the trauma team had confirmed a fracture on my bone on the X-ray. The officers wrote me a summons for disorderly misconduct and finally left me.

My name is Vanessa Ferrel. I am a medical doctor and a public health professional. I am a Black person who lives and works in the Bronx. I witness daily how structures of violence like racist policing and immigration enforcement harm my patients as pervasively as environmental racism and medical racism do. I understand that my educational privilege does not negate me from experiencing the reality of anti-Blackness, nor does it make my life more valuable than that of other Black people. As a physician, I recognize that remaining silent regarding these injustices would be nothing short of complicity.

Although the police violence I've witnessed has been continuous, it has been amplified in the past week. NYPD arrives at demonstrations looking like they are ready for a war. They are consistently the aggressors; macing, shoving, beating and driving through crowds. I want to speak specifically to one particularly terrifying incident I witnessed last week.

On June 4th, hundreds of protestors assembled in the Bronx for a demonstration led by Black, Latinx, and Indigenous Bronx organizers denouncing racist police violence, and the institution of policing. From the beginning, police presence was heavy, with several officers spotted on roofs of nearby buildings, and many heavily armored officers on bikes nearby. We chanted, wove through the streets and NYCHA buildings of the South Bronx. We visited La Morada, a local restaurant who has especially supported this community throughout the COVID pandemic by distributing hundreds of free meals.

As we made our way down Willis Avenue, we saw at least a hundred officers in riot gear, and diverted our march away from them down 136th street. Tens of officers on bikes followed, riding down the north side of the sidewalk, and blocking the march off at 136th and Brook Avenue. The crowd attempted to turn around, and were met by at least a hundred officers in riot gear on foot at 136th and Brown Place. There was nowhere to go. It was around 7:50pm. We shouted for them to let us through. They refused. Hundreds of protestors were illegally trapped within a half block. There was no way to physically distance ourselves. None of the police officers were wearing masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Nearly all of them had covered their badge numbers with a black band, making it impossible to identify anyone after the fact. They immediately began pushing the crowd on both sides, and started arresting people for curfew violations before 8pm, later altering their tickets. As they played the curfew warning on the loudspeaker, I saw many officers smirking as the crowd began to panic. The police pepper sprayed people, effectively blinding them, and immediately began beating demonstrators with batons, aiming for the head and chest. They brutalized not only the people in the street, but also residents of the nearby NYCHA housing complex. They arrested volunteer medics and legal observers.

Shortly after NYPD started beating and spraying people, a protestor nearby required medical attention, and my colleagues and I began attending to them. They had been maced, and collapsed. They were lapsing in and out of consciousness. Their skin was cold and clammy. We struggled to keep a pulse. We were nearly trampled multiple times as the NYPD brutalized the people around us. We were finally able to move the patient to the northeast corner of 136th and

Brook Ave, which became the triage area. Myself and my colleagues attended to multiple victims of police brutality that night, including a patient who had a seizure, a patient with severe head trauma and possibly a broken kneecap, and a patient who had fainted. There were only a few FDNY EMTs for a crowd of hundreds of injured people. An unknown number of severely beaten people had been loaded onto one of two corrections buses parked on the southeast corner of the 136th and Brook avenue. We were not allowed to assess these injuries despite asking multiple times. We were not allowed off the sidewalk to assess people arrested in the street. We witnessed multiple people with zip-tie cuffs tied too tightly, including one person whose hand had turned purple, a sign that the blood circulation was severely compromised. NYPD had blocked off the streets, not allowing ambulances through leaving us to attend to emergent cases in the street for longer than necessary while FDNY tried to find a route to bring stretchers down to our patients.

As soon as the last patient left our triage area, we were immediately threatened with arrest if we did not leave the scene, despite medic support being classified as essential work, and us carrying ID demonstrating we were essential workers. These actions do not make our community safe. This was clearly a targeted attack on the Bronx and on community organizers.

The institution of policing is inherently anti-Black, a formalized version of slave catchers and night watchers. The police protect property and capital, not people. As a doctor, it is clear to me that the racist institution of policing has no place in our community. As the #8cantwait campaign states, abolition can't wait. Defund police, demilitarize communities, remove police from schools, free people from jails and prisons, repeal laws that criminalize survival, invest in community self-governance, provide safe housing for everyone, invest in care, not cops.

Simply put, Defund, Demilitarize, and Dismantle NYPD. Do not replace the police with the same system under a different name. Abolish the police.

Vanessa K Ferrel, MD MPH
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951-505-5821

Last Saturday, May 30th, at 8:22, I was arrested during a peaceful protest on the corner of Gouverneur Slip E. My crime? Standing peacefully in the street, filming video of the aggressions instigated by members of the NYPD. During my initial arrest and throughout the following 10 hours in custody, I witnessed many instances of unquestionably excessive force, and deplorable conditions which violated the rights guaranteed to any American in custody.

I will begin with instances of excessive force.

1. Violence at the protest was initiated solely by the police as video evidence taken by several other detainees and I will show. They began spraying tear gas and exercising unwarranted force to “clear a path” through protestors. This essentially amounted to shoving peaceful citizens to the ground and surrounding walls with liberal application of batons.
2. Once I was brought behind the police line I saw a young officer dragging an unconscious man with a profusely bleeding head wound across the street. He physically propped him up against the wall next to me and said to my arresting officer, “Hey, I got one!” with an excited grin. Later, during booking the officer laughed about how the man had talked to him and didn’t remember it. He didn’t remember it because of his severe concussion. He wasn’t even a protestor; he was a photographer. His head was slammed into a brick wall and what had he done to warrant this assault? Reached for his camera when an officer made a move towards intentionally damaging the incredibly expensive equipment (which he did.)

Moving on to rights violations:

1. We were restrained and shoved in a police van for approximately 4 ½ hours. Among those in the van was an older man who had recently had shoulder surgery. Having his hands restrained behind his back for that length of time was absolute agony. He made multiple requests for any sort of allowances for his medical condition. None were granted. He asked for just a brief respite from his position if we were going to be much longer. He was told he’d be out of there in under an hour multiple times for over 5 hours. Finally, not being able to stand the pain he requested an ambulance. The officer assured him that this time we really *were* almost there and an ambulance would only ensure longer time spent in custody. He elected to stay in the van. We remained in cuffs for another 1-2 hours. A cursory search shows that any citizen in custody has the right to medical attention. This was violated.
2. After finally being booked, anyone with a disposable mask was stripped of it and sent into an overcrowded room with 30-40+ in it at a time. Lord knows how many people have been through that room in the last 24 hours after having their PPE taken from them. Looking through the glass at a room packed shoulder to shoulder with police, I noticed a total of 3 masks. While looking around at a room sure to be one of the next epicenters of coronavirus outbreaks I couldn’t help but remember NYPD issuing tickets and citations for violating social distancing guidelines. The police violation of the right to maintain

one's health by legally required and enforced protective measures seems a bit contradictory.

3. Upon arriving in the holding cell, there was no water available. There had been no water available for approximately 2 hours before my arrival. There was no water provided for over 1 ½ hours after I arrived. As a group, the detainees were constantly demanding water throughout this entire time. We were either ignored or told that "it was on its way." Among the people denied water were several with head wounds and severe concussions (like the photographer previously mentioned in the excessive force section) and some who had been maced/gassed so badly their eyes were swollen shut. Both these groups were subject to halfhearted and criminally delayed medical attention.

To Whom it May Concern:

I was out at protests this weekend and noticed that the majority of police officers I saw were not wearing masks or gloves even though they were within 6 feet of each other, or in some cases within 6 feet of protestors or passers by. Police and other city employees should be required to comply with Governor Cuomo's executive order and wear masks when within 6 feet distance of others just like every other New Yorker. They are acting against the Governor's executive order and putting themselves and fellow New Yorkers in danger by disregarding these important health and safety rules related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you,

Leanne Fitzner

703-850-9591

Manhattan Resident

Testimony of Hanna Fazio
Training and Implementation Specialist
Community Access
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Hanna Fazio. I am the Training and Implementation Specialist at Community Access and a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

Community Access is a 46-year-old nonprofit that helps people living with mental health concerns by providing quality supportive housing and award-winning peer led employment training. Community Access serves 1,500 tenants in 22 buildings and another 1,000 participants in recovery-oriented training, education, and outreach programs.

CCITNYC and Community Access thank Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with "peers" (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers –

rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51-- June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed

Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed

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Kwesi Ashun, Age 33- October 2019-Brooklyn – shot and killed

We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City. Now.

Testimony of Carla Rabinowitz
Advocacy Coordinator, Community Access
Project Coordinator, CCITNYC:
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Carla Rabinowitz
Community Access/CCITNYC
212-780-1400 x7726
crabinowitz@communityaccess.org

Thank you to the members of the Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Carla Rabinowitz. I am the Advocacy Coordinator at Community Access and the Project Coordinator of CCITNYC, a coalition of 80 organizations and 400 stakeholders whose new mission is to transform how the city responds to mental health crisis by diverting responses to mental health recipients away from law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Community Access is a 46-year-old nonprofit that helps people living with mental health concerns by providing quality supportive housing and award-winning peer led employment training. Community Access serves 1,500 tenants in 22 buildings and another 1,000 participants in recovery-oriented training, education, and outreach programs.

CCITNYC and Community Access thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and

Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of that task force do not go far enough.

CCITNYC is now of the view that substantial resources need to be diverted away from NYPD to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the city receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports redirection of funds away from NYPD to mental health responses so that the city will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role for NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds, \$3 million a year for a peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and detailed budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair peer de-escalators(individuals with lived mental health experience trained in de-escalation) with Emergency Medical Technicians(EMTs). The EMTs and the peers-rather than the police- will be the first responders for people in mental health crisis. The project will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

CCITNYC believes it is essential that the response to these 200,000 calls be peer driven and contain an EMT as well.

The proposal CCITNYC created is much like New York City's Health Engagement and Assessment Teams (H.E.A.T.) consist of a peer and a clinician.

However, the H.E.A.T. teams can not respond to any calls involving urgent need.

Nor can the general public, or even NYC Well, deploy the H.E.A.T. units. CCITNYC would tweak the H.E.A.T. model to allow the general public to access this team..

Further, we ask that the Division of Consumer Affairs at the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene be charged with overseeing this new program.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will not be able to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters to protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises, they are not mental health workers.

From 1996 to 2001, I was one of those people in emotional distress. I was the one breaking furniture, screaming on the street, screaming at children (who I love). I was sick and I needed help. I could have been killed by police.

Instead I got help. I started working part time for Community Access in 2001. Then I became a full-time worker. Then I became a supervisor, a manager. I restored as many family relations as I could, and boy do I have family. I bought a co-op and even have a small Schwab account because I got help. I even convinced the appellate court to give me my law license back despite the fact that I live with mental health concerns.

The people below never got that mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who did not want to and can never be asked to respond to people who are sick.

Since the NYPD started CIT training in 2015, at least 17 mental health recipients have died or been shot in police encounters, including 15 deaths.

Mario Ocasio, Age 51- June 2015- Bronx – shot and killed

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(list may not be complete)

We need a new peer driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crisis. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene Oregon for 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current NYC model of the H.E.A.T. unit.

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years for a peer driven crisis response program in NYC.

No more deaths. No more pain. Help turn people’s lives around. Change is in your hands.

We need a mental health response to the 200,000 mental health crisis calls.

Now.

Testimony of Marlo Pasion,
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Marlo Pasion. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

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**Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.
Now.**

25 Tennis Ct. Apt. 6J
Brooklyn, NY 11226
(503)522-1735

Monday, June 8th, 2020

Dear NYC Committee on Public Safety,

On Tuesday June 2, 2020 I peacefully marched with a group who had earlier met at a vigil to support the recent murders done by police and former police in the past months at the Stonewall Inn National Monument. Our group moved through the neighborhood and as the 8pm curfew approached I noticed police in riot gear lining the streets. At West St. and Rector St. I noticed multiple large police SUV's driving at high speed towards our group which at this point had been split in half by road dividers. The SUV's did not hit any protesters as far as I know however some people had fallen down--many were gathering themselves and afraid. As people in the march rushed to help each other, police in riot gear began to run at full speed in a line at our group. As they got closer I screamed "Stop!" and realized they were not. I extended my right leg as a way to seemingly protect my fellow marchers.

I tripped officer Sade Onyekelueze, shield number 14738. I recognized the uniform she wore as danger charging to harm us. In the midst of her catching her fall she screamed, "How dare you attack a black cop!" I shouted back, "Why are you doing this?" A couple other people a part of the march came to my defense when they saw officer Onyekelueze grab me by my right arm and punch me on the left side of my head multiple times. I was apprehended by multiple officers with extended clubs. I was hit all over my body and shoved to the ground when two pairs of plastic handcuffs were placed around my wrists. As I was eventually brought to my feet I was asked my name by many and told to get my arresting officer's shield number. Officer Onyekelueze picked up the glasses that were knocked from my face and put them into my left pant pocket. As I thanked her she responded with, "You don't get to thank me." At this time I noticed she was not wearing a face mask. Instead it was attached to her uniform safety pinned above her name tag so I could not read her name or her shield number.

Upon my arrest I was taken to the New York City Booking center at 120 Schermerhorn St, Brooklyn, NY 11201. There I was placed in a holding cell where there was no running water, soap, or a working toilet. I spent at least five hours in that cell. The rest of my time was split between the first cell upon entry and the cell I was eventually moved to which did have a working toilet and water. They used the second cell, the one without a working toilet or water, to hold the influx of men who had been brought in. Other protesters who were being processed were not wearing PPE masks and were not offered them. Many police were not wearing PPE masks, homemade or otherwise.

Sincerely,
Hailee Kendrick

Back right shoulder





Left knee



Right knee



Top of right shoulder



Under right arm

Testimony of Tara Nakashima Donahue
Director of Blueprint Supported Education
Community Access
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Tara Nakashima Donahue. I am a program director at Community Access and a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

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Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with "peers" (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have

seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

Particularly when I worked in supported housing, time and again, I witnessed the efficacy of peer-led mediation/advocacy as the most reliable assurance for de-escalation. Police presence was regularly incendiary, spurred panic, escalation, and too often resulted in violence. Even the least-invasive results of NYPD-base response to mental health crises are harmful – trauma, detainment, brief hospitalizations, and renewed doses of medication. At worse, people are jailed, traumatized, there is lasting physical harm, or death of an individual resulting in lasting grief, resentment, and communal-trauma renewed. WE NEED TO DO BETTER. We need training mental health support for people in mental health crises. We need COMMUNITY BASED SUPPORT SERVICES for mental health care. We need to speak to the hopes and goals of people, and not deepen symptoms, nor root illness. If you have ever experienced illness, you know that recovery is takes effort, and that recovery is possible.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

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We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City. Now.

Support for Initiatives 536-A, 721-A, 760-A, T2020-6267, Resolution 0027, and T2020-6256

I fully support dismantling the police and redistributing the resources to the community. Reform is not enough and we must start an entirely new way of managing public health and safety.

However, in the interim I support defunding the police and passing the above measures, with the caveat that none of them generate additional funding for the department. Frankly I have serious doubts as to whether an internal system as described in 760-A would lead to any change, but if the funding is shifted from a source that is already bloated in the department to then I would still support the Initiative.

Testimony for NYC City Council
June 8, 2020
Nadja Oertelt
nadjaoertelt@gmail.com

One June 2 2020 at 23:09 in Manhattan at the corner of Wanamaker and Broadway a peaceful procession of protestors was making its way downtown on Broadway. We had been attacked at the rear of the procession fifteen minutes earlier at 25th and Broadway where I was beaten by police officers with my hands up and holding my bike trying to walk. I witnessed them beat other protestors and pull them from the back of the procession unprovoked. They hunted and tracked us to Wannamaker and Broadway, where the organizer felt it was safe to end the march as we were near a subway station. We were at the train station and as the organizer told folks to go home, the police literally descended on the protestors and started to shove them to the ground, beat them with clubs and arrest those attempting to go to the subway station. These young kids and protestors had their hands up, were trying to leave, and were arrested. An undercover cop filmed arrests of young girls and told us that it would be a good experience for them and that they would 'meet their husbands in there'. They threw a small woman to the ground and shoved and beat many other protestors with clubs - I saw people bloodied, bruised and shielding themselves as police descended on them with abandon, taunting and screaming. Unmarked kevlar-wearing bike cops threw their bikes at us and other protestors. I thought they were white nationalists because they had no markings on them stating they are police or NYPD. I have bruises on my elbows and arms from cops beating me as I was trying to leave, shielding myself and other protestors. My bike is broken from them ripping it from my hands as I was stating that I was leaving. They arrested anyone who was brown or black and left those of us who were white. They beat their batons on scaffolding, threatening and taunting protestors as they attempted to leave the melee.

I had witnessed this behavior by police on two prior occasions before Tuesday June 2, including Friday May 29th at Barclays where police pepper-sprayed peaceful protestors and beat us with batons for simply standing and protesting, and on Saturday May 20th in Soho when police threw me to the ground and beat me or trying to film a violent arrest (I have film evidence of this). After June 2 at every demonstration I attended, NYPD were seen beating protestors with batons, night sticks or billy clubs until they were bloodied, thrown to the ground, or fled from the police. In every instance protestors had their hands up and were peacefully protesting.

Today, I respectfully address the New York City Council Committee on Public Safety. I was born and raised in New York City in the '60s. This basically means I was born during THE civil rights movement. I survived blackouts, underfunded public schools, drug infested neighborhoods, and many other struggles. I am a mother of 4 sons, all adults, and one fear that tortures me is how my sons will be perceived and treated. Sadly, I am less worried about their encounters with the "average citizen" and terrified about their safety in response to any contact with NYPD. Too often NYPD views men like my sons as criminals based on the color of their skin, the curl in their hair, the fullness of their lips, and the style of their clothing!

When one of my sons was in high school, he attended the High School of Art and Design. He sat one block away from the school awaiting his friends and was approached and questioned about his whereabouts. Why? Because he was a young Black man sitting in a public area. My youngest son once fell asleep on the M15 bus and ended up in the Wall Street area. He couldn't figure out where to find the bus to take him back to 23rd Street. He called me panicked, but I couldn't leave work. I told him to call the police and that they would take him to his school. Prior to taking him to school they took him to the police station and interrogated him without calling me! He was a boy in the 7th grade! How could they do this without calling me?

I remember Anthony Baez. I remember Eric Garner. I watched NYPD attack Black men for not wearing masks during COVID-19 – throwing them to the ground and sitting on them! And then we watched as George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis! We can't allow something like that to happen again!

Please help a mother protect her sons, grandsons, nephews, and cousins! Please hear my pleas and my demands. Please represent me and my children and pass the "Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass, and the President to sign, the Eric Garner Excessive Use of Force Prevention Act of 2019 (H.R. 4408), which would prohibit police chokeholds and other tactics that result in asphyxiation."

Please pass the "Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.6144 and S.6670A, legislation that would establish the crime of strangulation in the first degree; disregard of banned employment procedures."

Please amend the administrative code of the City of New York to prohibit chokeholds, excessive restraints, and excessive force.

Thank you.

Tina Pack
New York, NY 10128
June 9, 2020

Testimony for Public Safety and Police Reform

End 'Stop and Frisk' and Proactive Policing

Issue: NYPD 'Stop and Frisk' policy is underreported and racially biased. People of color are disproportionately stopped due to racial profiling under the guise of 'probable cause' and 'suspicion'. There is no data that supports a decrease in crime from 'stop and frisk' policies or proactive policing. In fact, the majority of the cases have been completely innocent only causing fear, dehumanization and division among the individuals who have been profiled by the NYPD. Racial profiling not only undermines the law, but also undermines public confidence and respect for the police, which may lead to deadly altercations.

Racial Bias and Ineffectiveness of 'Stop and Frisk':

- Nearly 9 out of 10 'stop and frisk' NYers have been completely innocent
 - Stop and frisk is overwhelmingly biased and discriminatory. Roughly 60% of stops were Black and 30% Latinx
 - From 2014 - 2016, roughly 43% of stops were due to "Fits a relevant description"
 - A description of "a black man" falls into the ambiguity of "probable cause". The Supreme Court's *Terry* decision further elaborates that an officer can not rely on an unparticularized suspicion or a hunch.
- The Constitution forbids police officers from targeting individuals for investigation *solely* on the basis of their race.
- The Fourth Amendment protects individuals **against** unreasonable searches and seizures by police officers.
 - To justify a stop under the Supreme Court's *Terry* decision, a police officer must have "a reasonable suspicion" of some wrongdoing. In determining reasonableness, an officer "**must be able to point to specific and articulable facts**" that warrant the governmental intrusion; *reliance on "inchoate and unparticularized suspicion or [a] 'hunch'" is not permissible.*
 - Section 140.50 of the CPL (NY's Criminal Procedures Law) authorizes a frisk of the person **only** if the officer "**reasonably suspects that he is in danger of physical injury.**"
- UF-250 (Stop and Frisk reports) are widely unreported. Only 1 in 30 stop and frisk are recorded by a police officer.
 - Based on the analysis of UF-250 data submitted to the Commission, the department's use of "**pattern descriptions**" of alleged suspects is a possible indicator of **racial profiling**. This practice apparently has been a factor in the stop and frisk practices of the NYPD, including its specialized units.

- Furthermore, testimonies before the commission have indicated quotas set by departments and specialized units.
 - Officer Hiram Monserrate provided the following testimony before the Commission: “These quotas vary from unit to unit, but precinct officers on patrol are given specific goals, like 25 summonses a month and at least 2 arrests per quarter. . . . [I]n the Street Crime Unit, 2 felony arrests and a 15 stop, question, and frisk report per quota are the mandate.”
 - Sergeant Noel Leader testified before the Commission regarding the pressure on SCU and other NYPD officers “to just produce numbers.”

Recommendations:

- NYPD should have an immediate adoption and implementation of a written department policy that carefully defines, prohibits, and penalizes racial profiling as the sole motivation in the stopping and searching of individuals.
 - There should be an individual departmental system that reviews and evaluates every UF-250 ticket to determine if racial profiling occurred.
- NYPD should work with the community to constitute what is a legitimate stop, search and frisk.
- Based on the testimonies of former police officers and sergeants, it’s evident that quotas have been a big component of the ‘stop and frisk’ policy and arrests. An officer’s performance and promotion should not be based on the number of stops and arrests performed per month. Get rid of the quota. Police should not be a for profit business, and should be working with its community, not against it.
- **Involve mental health and social worker in public safety policies:**
 - Nation-wide, roughly 23% of those shot by police have unmet mental health needs. Emphasis on meeting quotas for arrests often take away from an individual’s underlying issue. Non-violent misdemeanors should not be treated with an arrest, instead, should be deescalated and dispatched to the appropriate department.
 - NYC Budget FY 2021 for the Department of Mental Health is **0%**. The Department of Probations is **0.12%** of the budget. Altogether, that constitutes **only 0.12%** of the NYC Budget.
 - The Police Department takes **5.84%** of the expense budget and the Department of Correction takes **1.35%**. Together, that is a total of **7.19%** of the total expense budget.
 - **The lack of funding to the departments that are meant to build and support individuals within their communities is staggering.** Budget from the Police Department and Department of Correction should be taken to support the other departments that will help build our communities without treating every individual as an opportunity for an arrest.

Testimony of Jerry Jennings, LMSW
Director of Housing
Community Access
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Jerry Jennings. I am a Director of Housing at Community Access and a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

Community Access is a 46-year-old nonprofit that helps people living with mental health concerns by providing quality supportive housing and award-winning peer led employment training. Community Access serves 1,500 tenants in 22 buildings and another 1,000 participants in recovery-oriented training, education, and outreach programs.

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We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

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We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

June 9th, 2020

Dear New York City Council,

My name is Marie DeLuca and I am an emergency medicine physician and public health research fellow in New York City. I live in Harlem, NY. On June 4th 2020, I attended a protest in the Bronx where I witnessed and experienced police violence. This testimony is intended to describe that violence and to supplement the oral testimony I am providing.

I attended the protest as a street medic – a person with medical training and experience who provides medical care for people at protests. I have volunteered as a street medic at many events over the last three years. I dressed in blue scrubs so that I would be clearly visible as a medic and carried first aid supplies, ID badge from the hospital I work at, and a letter attesting that I was part of the medical care/jail support for the protest - a role which is considered “essential” by the mayor’s office. I chose to provide medical support for this march because as an emergency medicine physician I have seen how systemic racism and police violence harms Black people and people of color.

I walked with the march and did not need to render any medical care until we encountered a large police force at Brook and 136th street. At first, I saw people running away from the intersection, but then the crowd slowed and turned around and walked calmly down the street. Approaching the intersection, the march halted because police were blocking people from moving forward. This was before 8 pm. I then turned and saw a large number of police with batons coming down the street towards us. We were trapped by the police before 8 pm and could not disperse for curfew. I saw two of the other street medics, who were also clearly marked in scrubs, on the ground. One was covering their head to avoid injury, they were surrounded by police with batons and were being arrested.

At this point, I was very close to one of the lines of police officers. They pushed forward and the crowd became so closely packed that we could not move. I felt myself being crushed against the other people in the crowd. I felt an irritant in my mouth and a young man to my right began crying and yelling that his eyes were burning after being pepper sprayed. He was in significant pain. I passed him a bottle of water but was unable to move close to him to render medical assistance because we were so tightly packed together by the police. The crowd chanted “Let us go” but the police did not allow any people to leave the street.

At about 8:15 pm, the police began arresting people in front of me and next to me and hitting and pushing people with their shields. I was grabbed by a male police officer and thrown onto the ground. I tried to stand up and was forcefully pinned to the ground by an officer. I attempted to hold my glasses on my face so that they would not break. The officer forced my hands behind my back and handcuffed me

with plastic cuffs. At this time, I was no longer able to provide medical care to any of the injured people in the crowd, of which there were many.

I told an arresting officer that I was a doctor and a street medic and that I had a letter attesting to my role and an ID badge in my backpack but they did not look at either of these documents or release me. I looked at the officer's badge number. When I looked at it again, I noted that the officer had covered their badge number with a black elastic band.

I heard a man near me say that his cuffs were too tight. His hands were swollen and I could see the plastic digging into his wrists. As a person with extensive medical training I became worried that this man would suffer permanent hand damage if the cuffs were not removed. I informed my arresting officer, who informed the man's arresting officer. At this point the man was sobbing in pain. They brought another officer over who removed the cuffs – they had difficulty fitting the cutting tool between his wrists and the cuffs because there was so little space. The process of removal was extremely painful for the man.

I was placed in a van with 8 other people who had been arrested at the protest. We were driven to a precinct in the Bronx. In the van, another person told me he was beginning to lose feeling in his hand because his cuffs were too tight. Multiple of us in the van informed several officers. They told us they did not have a tool to remove the cuffs and that they would remove them when we went inside. I explained that I was concerned, as a doctor, that he could suffer permanent nerve damage and my arresting officer said that if I was concerned I “should have stayed home.” After being held in this van for more than an hour, the officers told us we were going on “a quick ride” and drove us to Queens. When we arrived, I informed yet another officer about the man who was losing feeling in his hands. They said they would remove the cuffs. At that time I was taken out of the van and I did not see whether his cuffs were removed or not. Throughout the time we were in the van, the officers referred to us as “bodies” when talking about us.

I was placed in a cell with 14 other “females,” my cuffs still on. A person asked for a mask and a guard folded up a mask and pushed it through the metal grating in the cell. The person said she was unable to grab it because her hands were cuffed behind her back and the officer told her she should grab it “with her teeth.” After more than four hours in cuffs, officers cut them off and I was placed in a different cell with between 8-12 other “females.” At this point my wrists were swollen with marks and bruises from the cuffs. There was one toilet in this cell that had blood on the seat, and feces on the floor. There was a dirty sink. There was not soap or hand sanitizer. As a doctor who has treated hundreds of patients with COVID-19 at the height of the pandemic in New York, I was deeply concerned about the crowding and lack of sanitation in the cells. I was released from jail just before 2:30 in the morning.

After I was released from jail, I volunteered at the jail support site to provide medical care. I treated people who had been arrested at the protest who had injuries consistent with being hit in the head and body with batons, and restriction of blood flow to the hands from overly tight handcuffs.

I am an emergency medicine physician. I attended a protest to render medical services to the people of Bronx while they practiced their rights to free speech. Instead, I was violently arrested by the NYPD and witnessed ongoing violence against the people around me. The NYPD inflicted the most terrible violence on Black and Brown people who attended the protest.

The resolutions under consideration today are incredibly important. I urge you to also consider that none of these resolutions would have prevented the violence I experienced and witnessed from the NYPD, and that our communities will not be safe until we abolish the police and abolish the prisons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie DeLuca".

Marie DeLuca, MD

My name is Amber Gonzalez and I am a resident of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. I submit the following comments on Introductions 536-A, 721, 760, and 6267:

Int 536-A: I urge the City Council not to amend this bill in any way that would weaken it. At the June 8, 2020 hearing, representatives from the NYPD asked that the bill be amended to require intent on the part of officer. Proof of intent would effectively render this bill meaningless. Not only is intent on the part of the officer incredibly difficult to prove, an intent requirement skirts around the point that these tactics are violent and should never be utilized.

Int 721: I do not believe that the affirmative defense provision is warranted. "Reasonable officer" is a loose standard and allowing for such a weak and unspecific affirmative defense diminishes the importance of this bill. I also have a concern that this bill doesn't address retaliatory arrests made on unrelated charges of the recording party in the days or weeks following such recordings.

Int 760: It is unclear whether this information sharing system is public or such information would be subject to FOIL. I ask that there be a public database with such information.

Int 6267: I believe there to be an error in the text of the law § 14-185(a) states "An officer's shield number or rank designation" (underlining added). The text should state "An officer's shield number and rank designation." I also believe that an officer's last name should be visible at all times on their uniform or badge because in high stress situations, it may be easier to remember an officer's name than a badge number following such an event. Additionally, it is unclear what penalties an officer will face as a result of a violation of this law.

Finally, I do not believe that NYPD reform will solve the problem of police brutality and systemic racism in the department. I am in support of defunding and dismantling the NYPD. I have attended four demonstrations in the last two weeks and can attest that I have not seen a single police officer wearing PPE at these events. This is just one example of police consistently failing to follow directives and I fear that these proposed laws will either be ignored or covered up by NYPD if violated.

Testimony of Anne Mattson

The New York City Council Committee on Public Safety

Regarding: Int. No. 721-A and Int. No. 760-A

Thank you, Committee Chair Donovan J. Richards and members of the Committee on Public Safety for the opportunity to send in testimony. My name is Anne Mattson and I am here today representing District 35 of Brooklyn.

I currently live at the intersection of Fulton Street and Grand Avenue. On the night of Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 around 10:30pm, I heard chanting coming from the street below. Upon opening my window to see what was happening, I witnessed between 40-50 protestors turning right onto Grand Avenue from Fulton Street. They were peacefully chanting and cheering. Then, suddenly, several demonstrators toward the back of the group began running, prompting the entire group to begin moving quickly. It became apparent that the NYPD, who were previously walking behind the protestors, were now chasing them down the block. The police quickly cornered a majority of the group at a choke point on the block. The police then began hitting some of the protestors with batons, pushing them, and shouting. It was at this point I decided to come downstairs to the front of my building to witness the interaction more closely. The police were acting with extreme force toward the protestors, completely at odds with the behavior the protestors were displaying. At least 3 demonstrators were arrested and forcefully shoved into a police van.

I believe this behavior from the NYPD was unprovoked and entirely unnecessary. This interaction could have been improved or prevented if Proposed Int. No. 760-A were in effect, allowing for officers in need of additional training and monitoring to be identified.

We applaud the City Council's ongoing commitment to public safety and we urge City Council to pass Proposed Int. No. 721-A and Proposed Int. No. 760-A. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Testimony of arrest 6/3/20
Rebekah Souder-Russo

On Wednesday evening, June 3rd, I participated in the protest to remember the life of George Floyd and other black people who have been killed by the police. When the march got to 53rd and Lexington, I was walking with my friend and we witnessed many police cars and officers trailing the march- their lights were flashing and occasionally their sirens sounded. I was never approached by a police officer and told to go home. Suddenly, numerous police officers from behind the march began biking quickly into the crowd and then got off their bikes and started running at the protestors. They provided no verbal instruction to leave, and simply stormed the group. I was walking with my friend and we decided to try to leave because we were scared. We turned right onto 53rd street in an attempt to leave and as we were walking we saw another line of police officers on Lexington Avenue. They were in riot gear and they began running at us with batons in the air. As they ran, they yelled, "Go home," and "Turn around," and "which way are you going to leave?" My friend and I turned around to try to leave from where we came, but we were trapped with police officers running at us from both directions. I witnessed a police officer tackle a woman to the ground and hit her legs with his baton. I heard a protestor say, "I am trying to go home." A police officer ran towards me and grabbed my shoulders and pushed me against the building. He grabbed my hands and said "You are under arrest." He did not tell me why I was under arrest nor did he give me an opportunity to leave the protest.

The police officers patted us down and put zip ties on our wrists. They told us to sit on the ground, which we did. They did not separate us in a socially distanced manner. The zip tie around my hands was incredibly tight and painful. I asked a police officer to loosen the zip tie, he approached me, checked the zip tie and said, "Yours is ok." My friend asked the same and he said, "OK, we will loosen yours." My friend began to cry because of the pain. It took at least 20 minutes for the officers to remove them. We continued to ask in the those 20 minutes and they replied, "yeah we are working on it." One woman's zip ties were so tight that her hand turned blue. The police officers could not cut off the zip tie with their tool because the zip tie was too tight. The protestors asked them to take her to the hospital. They ignored this request. One protestor was a doctor and asked to assist. After 5 minutes of asking, they allowed this protestor to get up and speak to the woman with the blue hand but the doctor was forced to keep her zip ties on. The doctor said that the police officer should not try and cut the zip ties off on the side with her veins for fear of cutting an artery. I did not see or hear the police officers call an ambulance and an ambulance had not arrived by the time I had been put in a police van (about 30 minutes after arrest).

I witnessed verbal intimidation from a police officer. One woman was crying and the police officer said to her, "why are you crying, you should have thought of the consequences before you did this."

Nine of us were taken into a police van and held for 3.5 hours in the van. We were not told where we were being taken. Another man's arm began to turn blue because of the zipties. The

officers did not remove the zip tie despite being asked. We were taken to the precinct, searched, our belongings taken from us, and we were put in the cell. Most of the police officers were not wearing protective masks. The officers spoke to me within 6 inches of my face. There was no soap in the bathrooms. We were released about 30 minutes after arriving at the precinct.

Testimony of Michael Zurkuhlen

For Committee on Public Safety Hearing, June 9th, 2020, 10:00 AM

Personal Experience With NYPD Violence against Peaceful Demonstrators on June 2nd, 2020

Thank you to the committee chair and members for taking the time to hear this testimony, and for granting the opportunity to share it. This testimony details my experience with the NYPD at a demonstration on Tuesday June 2, 2020. I joined a rally for Black Trans Lives outside the Stonewall Inn on Christopher street at approximately 5pm. The speakers concluded and people started marching around 6. The group moved through lower Manhattan. For the duration of the march I can attest that demonstrators were peaceful and completely non-confrontational with police, and there was no damage to property of any kind, organizers were very intentional about this. The march flowed onto the West Side Highway south of Moore St at approximately 7:40 and proceeded south. Police cars and vans were maneuvering to cut the march off and south of Vesey St what appeared to be at least one hundred police with helmets and batons formed a line. I did not hear any words from the police about dispersing or any announcement about the time relating to the curfew before they advanced. They started walking towards the march. I was in a group of people near the front, our arms were outstretched and we were repeatedly saying this was a peaceful demonstration as we walked backwards. NYPD was close enough now that I could see their badge numbers were covered and their body cameras were turned off. As the line of police increased their speed an officer with baton held horizontally shouted "Back the fuck up" and an officer next to him pulled him back. To my left a demonstrator was shoved to the ground which seemed like a signal- groups of police charged into the demonstrators, seeming to strike anyone they could reach and piling on demonstrators who fell or were knocked down. I was still running backwards with hands up, and my partner was nearby filming with her phone. An officer in a white shirt appeared running near me and I asked him to control his officers – he pointed at me and shouted "I will beat the SHIT out of you!" There was one officer in a white shirt I saw try to restrain the officers around him. With that exception the white shirted officers were some of the most aggressive. At this point I turned to see my partner, still filming, get struck in the chest and arms by two officers with batons and then tackled to the ground. Her phone fell, I picked it up to continue filming and approached, shouting that she was not resisting. At this point I was struck several times by an unknown number of officers and thrown to the ground. They had a knee on my neck and back and one of them pried the phone out of my fingers. I was shouting that neither of us were resisting. It took a long time for more than one officer to figure out the zip-tie cuffs, while continuing to keep my face pressed into the ground. They pulled them too tight and had my wrists positioned improperly so that my arms were twisted behind my back. They lifted me and my partner up and sat us with 10 or so other demonstrators, similarly detained. Then they appeared to switch, and the officers who hit and cuffed us were replaced by our "arresting officers." While assigning us to arresting officers ("two bodies each") an officer in charge walked around, completely within earshot of us, and got everyone to agree that the demonstrators instigated the charge by throwing bottles and being disorderly, which did not happen. At this point my hands were numb and I asked if they could switch the cuffs for new

ones that were put on properly. None of the officers on the scene had cutters. I also asked about retrieving the phone an officer took out of my hand and was laughed at, "that shit is gone." We were transported to the Brooklyn House of Detention which was completely overwhelmed. We had to drive around the block several times because our AOs were lost and could not find the detention center. Once there, repeated requests to have the cuffs switched received similar answers of "we don't know where the cutters are." Cutters were easily located when they needed to remove my backpack, however. Officers could not answer questions about charges, and many were from other boroughs and precincts and did not know the systems and processes at the Brooklyn House of Detention. From original detention on the west side highway to release took nearly 7 hours and resulted in a summons. My AO apologized on behalf of the NYPD and said "I was just following orders" which indicates that the NYPD sanctioned all of their behavior and it is in line with their training. Hard to say which was more disappointing, the wanton violence or the gross incompetence. 6 of my fingers continue to be numb from the cuffs, and several areas of bruising from the batons and being thrown. Last, and importantly, it appeared that 95% of officers throughout my experience were not wearing masks, making jokes about how COVID-19 was fake, and utterly and intentionally disregarding the public health measures set up by the city and state government. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Testimony of Sabrina Zurkuhlen

For Committee on Public Safety Hearing, June 9th, 2020, 10:00 AM

Personal Experience with NYPD Violence Against Peaceful Demonstrators on June 2nd, 2020

Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify about this important topic. My name is Sabrina Zurkuhlen and I am here to share with you my personal experience with the New York Police Department during a peaceful demonstration on Tuesday, June 2nd, 2020.

On Tuesday, June 2nd I joined a rally for Black Trans Lives, which began on Christopher Street and continued to move throughout lower Manhattan. Throughout the afternoon, the demonstration was peaceful and non-confrontational with the police. At approximately 7:30pm the march continued to move south of North Moore Street, along the West Side Highway. As we continued to peacefully march south, I noticed more and more police gathering. At around 7:55pm, I was toward the front of the march and just south of Vesey Street I saw an overwhelming number of police officers, it appeared to be at least 100 officers, form a line and began to march north towards us with their helmets on and batons out. Myself and the other protestors began to walk back uptown, away from the NYPD force. I was walking backwards as fast as possible with my hands up, chanting "peaceful protest" along with many other demonstrators. As the NYPD started to pick up their pace, I heard one police officer in a blue uniform yell to the officers picking up pace, "slow down, they aren't doing anything" and another officer in a white shirt say, "hold! hold!". At no point did I hear or was an announcement made to the demonstrators to disperse. The officers were quickly approaching us and one officer (in blue) who was now only a few feet away from me said, "back the fuck up" and pointed his baton at me. To my right, I saw a group of white shirt and blue shirt NYPD officers charge a group of demonstrators without provocation, 2-3 officers beating each person they caught with their batons. The tension, anger, and violence coming from the approaching line of NYPD officers was nothing I have ever experienced before and I feared for my life in that moment. The NYPD continued to speed up as demonstrators continued to walk away, backwards, hands up, still saying "peaceful protest". As the officer in front of me continued to walk faster towards me, baton pointed straight at me, I looked at the officer next to him and, as I was still walking backward with my hands up, I said, "can you please help me?". Immediately after, the advancing officer charged at me, hitting me first in the chest with his baton, and then beating me on the arms and upper body. I don't know how many officers attacked me, as I was beaten by numerous batons and violently thrown to ground by more than one man. The photographs of my wounds clearly indicate that they are defensive and that the blows were delivered as my hands were up, protecting my face and body. I ended up with one officer kneeling on my legs, one officer sitting on my back trying to cuff me, and a white shirt officer yelling in my face to put my hands behind my back (which I was trying to do but proved was impossible as there was another officer pulling my arm and shoulder). At the same time, I was also told to stand up, which was also impossible, as there were two men sitting on my body as it was pressed into the concrete. Throughout this, I did not resist. Finally, I heard the officer in white say to his men, "ok guys, enough, get her up". I was then dragged to the side of the road. I was placed with 8-10 other peaceful demonstrators and told to sit. I asked repeatedly for

information, for an explanation, or for someone to explain why we were beaten and being held on the side of the road, however there was clearly no process or protocol being followed and none of the arresting officers knew what to do. I was continuously told by our arresting officer, "I have no idea what is going on. I work in the Bronx. I wasn't even there. I am just following orders". The other officers responded with, "shut the fuck up". As we sat on the side of road, an officer in a white shirt gathered the arresting officers at the scene (none of whom were actually the officers who beat or handcuffed us), and said, "ok, here is the story. Listen up. One of them threw a bottle and the rest followed. Charge them with disorderly misconduct and breaking curfew or whatever the new rule is about that. Got it? Everyone is clear on the story?". Everyone being detained heard this, as the officer said this right in front of us, and someone said, "excuse me, that is clearly not what happened. We were peacefully protesting. Can someone please tell us why we are being held?". In response, the officer in white said, "shut the fuck up". Another officer also told the other officers at the scene, "if your body cam isn't on, don't turn it on now, keep your names covered". At this point, we had been sitting on the side of the road for at least 45-60 minutes and there were two detained demonstrators whose zip tie cuffs were put on too tight. Their hands were numb, cold, and purple. No one was resisting and they asked if the cuffs could be cut and reapplied, as they were in pain. We were told no one on the scene has zip tie cutters and they would have to wait. Additionally, not one officer was wearing any kind of PPE. When I asked if they could either put on a mask or maintain an appropriate distance I was mocked, laughed at, and ignored. Without being told any information, ten of us were crammed into a small police van and the door was closed and there was no air provided. We sat there for an extended amount of time while the NYPD tried to figure out what to do with us. Finally, we were driven from Manhattan to the Brooklyn Detention Center, I don't know the route as we could not see out of the windows of the van. When we arrived we had to drive around the block a few times, in incredibly unsafe conditions regarding the spread of COVID-19, because our arresting officers "were not there yet". Still, no officers were wearing masks. At this point, my husband had lost feeling in his arm and hand because of the incorrectly applied zip ties (they were twisted, backwards, and too tight) and I begged our arresting officer every 5 minutes to please try to secure anything to cut them off. Our arresting officer rolled his eyes, said he didn't have cutters, and that he would have to wait. He continuously said, "I am just doing what I am told". The disorganization and lack of systems in the Brooklyn Detention Center was appalling. They packed "bodies" in cells, without regard for COVID and public health. They ran out of lockers for the officers to store their guns so officers were told by a woman in a blue uniform who appeared to be in charge to unload their guns in a garbage can that was in the middle of a packed room and then put the gun in an envelope, and stack it in a pile. None of the arresting officers had ever been to the location before so they didn't know who was in charge, where to go, or what to do. Jail cells were left open by accident, officers were yelling at each other for breaking protocols, I must say, in my career as a nurse and teacher I have yet to see that level of disorganization and mismanagement. I was almost processed in the wrong part of the building because my officer was too afraid to ask anyone what to do. He kept telling me, "I'm sorry. This is a shit show. You know, none of us what to be here either". I begged for water for at least three hours and I asked over ten officers to please help us get some water, as we had been in custody for around 5-6 hours at that point.

I was eventually issued a summons. It took about seven hours from when I was tackled on the West Side Highway to my release with a summons at the Brooklyn House of Detention. Amazingly, the arresting officer apologized to me on behalf of the NYPD and said, "I was just following orders. We are just pawns in this system. Keep protesting but stay off the streets after curfew because you are easy pickings and we have been told to get numbers up because of the looting". The police officers' conduct the entire evening was so incompetent, unprofessional, violent, and unhinged, that it's hard for me to understand what "orders" were ever even issued, and whether any police officers followed their training that night or whether their training was to inflict such chaotic violence on peaceful demonstrators. It is hard for me to say whether the wanton violence or the gross incompetence was more disappointing.

I've suffered physical and emotional injuries from when I was attacked by the police. This incident was nearly a week ago and I have numerous areas of bruising from being hit from the batons and being thrown onto the ground. I haven't been able to sleep and I have felt extreme distress since all of this.

Testimony of Timothy Race

To New York City Council

Committee on Public Safety

June 5th, 2020

My name is Timothy Race, I am a resident of Brooklyn, NY. I am here to testify events I witnessed and experienced over the last week in peaceful protests for the Black Lives Matter movement in New York City. I am a vocal, peaceful supporter of BLM, and I am also the son of two police officers, with a lifetime of experience around and with law enforcement. What I've repeatedly witnessed is nothing short of police brutality in the face of vital peaceful demonstration.

I first participated in the protest at Barclay's Center beginning the evening of May 29th, wherein I marched with the group up Eastern Parkway. Eventually we were corralled in front of the Brooklyn Museum where I witnessed uniformed and undercover police indiscriminately pepper spray and arrest particularly vocal protestors. I witnessed assault and attack by baton, all marked with a general attitude of jeering and insult coming from the officers gathered on the edges of the protest.

The next night, I joined a march around 10:30-11pm in the same area, which ended up at the base of the Manhattan Bridge. It was approximately 200 protestors, wherein there were no instances of violence or destruction from the group. I aided the march by using myself and my bike to gently block traffic, all of which showed support for the movement by honking, or joining chants from their windows. We arranged for the cars to be able to make a u-turn and cleared a lane for them and safely directed them around. After a few minutes of this, our group was violently broken up by about 30 police in riot gear with pepper spray, what seemed like tear gas, and baton use on anyone they could grab. They spread out and hunted down "stragglers" and arrested them, they beat who they could, they sprayed who they could. Our demonstration may have been minority disruptive but it was peaceful.

The night after, that Sunday, I returned to Barclay's Center around 9pm and witnessed an unbelievable and threatening police presence forming lines around peaceful protestors gathered in the Barclay's plaza, as well as the area in front of the Atlantic Terminal Target. During these demonstrations, protest leaders actively protected the Target and other businesses from looting, not the police. After an hour or so of growing tension, police began to descend on tightly packed groups of protestors, using their batons and pepper spray to disperse those gathered. This resulted in mayhem and widespread confusion, as people ran, other groups of police grabbed and arrested who they could.

As this was happening I was repeatedly insulted and threatened by police that could not quite reach me while I was on my bike. I witnessed at least a dozen or more cases of assault on peaceful demonstrators this night. The police presence was unreasonable and frightening, nearly a one-to-one ratio of police to protestors. There was no violence or looting occurring from the protestors, and any instance of minor destruction (like turning a trash can over) was immediately shut down and corrected by protest leadership. Still, this seemed to be used against us as cause to violently disperse and punish, while rising tensions with threatening displays of power.

On Tuesday, June 2, I participated in rallies across the city, including one that ended up at Barclay's around 7:45pm. The 8pm curfew had just been put in place, and a significant group of protestors continued a march from Barclay's towards the Manhattan Bridge in an act of peaceful civil disobedience. I again was taking on the role of riding my bike to help direct traffic so the march could continue safely, and my experience was again the same, with drivers wholly in support. We reached the Manhattan Bridge and were met by a group of 50 or so police in riot gear, and after some negotiation were allowed to continue left instead of over the bridge. From there the march went around and up over the Manhattan Bridge on the oncoming side (against traffic, which again, in support). Here's where the outrage begins. Once our march of several thousand peaceful protestors reach the Manhattan side of the bridge,

we were met with barricades and around 80-100 riot police formed in a line. Our leadership attempted to negotiate with the police in charge who eventually promised he would let us pass. He continued to do this while hundreds of riot cops grouped behind him. It should not be downplayed how frightening that is. After about an hour and a half, after again promising to let us pass, he pulled up two riot trucks to further block our way. In the meantime they had driven up a school bus paddy wagon with lights and siren blaring to pressure us towards the barricade. They offered no information for they would do and continued to threaten us. This is psychological assault and is especially dangerous considering we were thousands of trapped, scared people being pressed into a smaller and smaller group. Eventually our march decided to turn around the other way and risk arrest going back to Brooklyn. They left multiple threateningly positioned police vehicles on the bridge and offered no information of what they were going to do until we began to pass them without arrest. This was 2 hours of intentional fear and emotional abuse. We reached the Brooklyn side of the bridge and from above, in the apartment buildings and hotels, people threw water glasses and other dangerous things at us. The police did nothing in response to that, willingly allowing us to be endangered. This is outrageous and clearly meant to punish us in any way they can.

So, the next night, I participated in a peaceful march beginning at Gracie Mansion that weaved its way downtown. We were over curfew by about 20 minutes when they started grabbing people's bikes from the crowd with no explanation, and if you followed you were arrested. People were outraged and therefore swarming them, so I thought it best to encourage the march to continue and leave the police alone. As I attempted to get the march off of them, my bike was grabbed and I took a few confused steps after it. I was then arrested, given a summons for curfew violation. About an hour later that march was violently corralled, sprayed, and threatened while they were rounded up and arrest by the hundreds. This was a peaceful protest. A peaceful protest. Zero instance of violence or destruction. People were willingly lying down and police would rip them from the grounds, beat them, then zip tie them and arrest. People lying down, people surrendering were beaten. As I was arrested, I was handled by a cop in training who was extremely nervous while I remained cool and collected. He had no idea what he was doing. I was lied to multiple times, first being told they were just holding my bike for a few minutes, then for the night, then no summons if I go home now, then cuffs were on my and I was being taken to the 19th precinct. When brought into the precinct I was repeatedly insulted by a group of about 40 cops, where they told me they'd let me go in a few minutes. Then they put me in a holding cell for about two hours before they eventually let me go.

There was a black kid in the cell being held for protest who had been there for days.

It has been this way every single day and night of these protests. There have been short lived and discouraged looting events a few nights, yes, but it should be made clear that this is a fraction of a percent of the people participating, and is actively discouraged and condemned by BLM publicly and at the marches themselves. The police response has been completely disproportionate, aggressive, unwarranted, and vicious. Cops are covering their badge numbers while they beat up peaceful protestors holding cardboard signs. The NYPD has reacted to BLM in a disgraceful manner, totally outside of the scope of what I've learned my whole life that policing is about. They are protecting no one, they are instigating violence and threatening peaceful dissent. It is an absolute outrage and every person from the top tier to the cops swinging their batons should be ashamed and held accountable for denying NYC citizens their rights to peaceful demonstration and free speech as afforded by the 1st amendment of the US constitution. It is difficult to imagine this response is not racially motivated, and police are engaging in violence fueled by anger to criticism of exactly this: police brutality. It must stop, and those sanctioning and engaging in this violence should be held accountable if the NYPD expects to receive any continued support from the communities they police.

Laurens Montanaro

Testimony on police behavior and public safety

I am a Brooklyn resident who marched with a number of protests in Brooklyn in the past week. I am writing to provide my experience at these protests, specifically with reference to the egregious behavior of the police in and around these protests.

Every protest I attended was characterized by the interactions between protestors and police. Left alone, we were entirely peaceful. Walking with thousands of protestors over the course of the week, I saw very, very few cases of vandalism. However, every single night was punctuated by many violent attacks by the police forces that were surrounding the group, and these attacks were almost categorically unprovoked.

I will describe one of these types of attacks in detail. On a residential street in Brooklyn, they marched behind us in riot gear. A number of cops would shout jeers at the crowd, and they would swing their clubs threatening us. They would shout "Move it," shoving us as we were actively walking away from them (To note, there were no instances I saw all week in which protestors advanced on the cops. It was always them, pursuing us and trapping us). Some cops would pull out their tasers and point them at us, in order to incite fear and discord in the peaceful protestors. Every 5-10 minutes or so, a small group of cops would rush in and feint at us, swinging their clubs and causing the protesters in the immediate vicinity to scatter, and start to run. For some reason, all the police officers in the front of the line interpreted any form of running or fleeing as a form of permission to attack, and so any running caused by these charges would result in them charging after us. When they caught us, they would punch us, beat us with clubs, and throw us on the ground. Anyone who fell as a result of their assault was pounced on by a large group of officers and beaten and arrested. I was in a moment exactly like this that was captured on CBS This Morning, a link for which you can watch here: <https://youtu.be/aICiFGQEvdE?t=120>. Between 2:02 and 2:04 of this video, you can see them pursuing me, swinging their clubs in the way I have described to incite running. Then, between 2:08 and 2:12, you can watch what occurred immediately after, one of these charges in which they pounce on someone and beat everyone around them. To the left of me there is a kid who had his head bashed by one of their clubs. He was black, and they often targeted black kids in their attacks. To the right, you can watch me in the khaki shirt get punched in the face by a cop and thrown to the fence. I cannot stress enough the fact that there was no police aggravation leading up to this incident. In fact, there was very little police aggravation in any of the protests this week. Instead, we were chased, kettled, and beaten by cops who pursued us and attacked with no regard for the safety or well-being of protestors being beaten. I would estimate that attacks like the one shown in the video occurred at least 20 times a night, and that was only with the group I was with. The entire crowd was in constant fear of the police. They were deeply, fundamentally, out of line, and categorically violent. This was not a question of a few bad apples. This was a systematic, repeated behavior, consistently committed by the aggressing NYPD officers and consistently enabled by the surrounding officers and leadership.

I watched the Public Safety hearing earlier today, and was deeply infuriated to watch the police leadership shrug off the suggestion that there was anything wrong within the police department to get to where we are today. When asked about police officers who behaved in this way, they said “they will be disciplined.” However, this behavior is telling of a much larger issue than a few wildcard officers who need discipline. This is about the bizarre reality that a vast number of cops in the department think that they are entitled to beat the crap out of peaceful protesters with impunity. I’m sure the couple officers who are in viral videos will be disciplined. What about the hundreds of officers who beat us with clubs every night who won’t be highlighted and called out on twitter? Where are the systemic, structural protections to ensure those officers don’t continue to do this? It seems there are none, and the NYPD clearly doesn’t care about showing their work on this. They need to be reminded that they cannot just do as they please, and need to be seriously punished and held accountable for the across-the-board behavior of the NYPD during this past week.

June 8, 2020

Hello,

I'm writing from Brooklyn, NY. I would like to make a complaint about repeated police brutality from the NYPD against me and many other peaceful protestors. I was protesting last weekend on Friday and Saturday in Brooklyn, and on Sunday in Manhattan. Each night, the police brutalized many of us for no reason. On Friday, the police charged at us, pushed and hit us with their batons and shoved me to the ground. Other protestors helped me get up and again the police shoved me down, this time into a pile of garbage bags. The police stepped on my hands with their boots. I lost my sneakers in the incident and had to walk home barefoot. This was somewhere near Barclays center, where the police have been extremely aggressive repeatedly.

On Saturday I noticed all the police had hidden their badge numbers and hardly any were wearing body cams. The police trapped our peaceful protest on all sides so that we had no way to escape, and then charged at us forcefully again. I was pepper sprayed and shoved to the ground, losing my prescription glasses. Others were hit with batons and arrested at random for seemingly no reason, other than being at the protest.

On Sunday in Manhattan, we were again protesting peacefully and the police kept trying to push us back further and further. At one point we were kneeling with our hands in the air for a while. The police seemed like they were looking for a reason to attack. Suddenly they charged and knocked me to the ground and hit many others with batons. I'm a small woman and none of us posed any threat. The real threat to public safety is the NYPD.

These are only minor instances compared to the many disturbing incidents that have been taking place around the city, especially towards communities of color. The NYPD have been trying to intimidate, brutalize, and arrest us in mass for exercising our constitutional right to protest. How am I supposed to feel safe as a peaceful protestor when each time I'm met with brutal and unnecessary force? And now habeas corpus is suspended which is an attack on our civil liberties. I am angered with the police brutality in protests, but especially with the culture of the NYPD as a whole and the discrimination and brutalization of black communities. It's time we abolish the NYPD entirely. We must defund, disarm, and dismantle this long-standing system of oppression against black people.

I am pleading with you to please stop this brutality by defunding the NYPD by at least 50% and holding the ENTIRE NYPD accountable - including firing and charging all officers with misconduct histories.

Thank you,
Andrea Ferguson, Brooklyn, NY



To Whom It May Concern,

I write today unable to contain my disgust at the violent, sadistic, and racist behavior I have personally witnessed at the hands of the NYPD at Black Lives Matter protests in Brooklyn.

On Friday, May 29, I witnessed NYPD officers mace peaceful protestors in front of the Barclays Center, shove and charge at protestors without provocation, use their bikes as weapons, and arrest civilians as they exercised their constitutionally protected rights. Lawyers, journalists, city officials- no one was safe. Police repeatedly escalated tensions. As I was walking home, an NYPD vehicle hopped the sidewalk, drove up behind me, and turned on their lights and siren, forcing me off the sidewalk and into the street. Two days later, I saw a video of NYPD vehicles drive directly into protesters, wielding taxpayer-funded cars like weapons.

The New York City police department beat a child, 16 year old Jahmel Leach, so badly that they knocked his teeth out. He was kept in a cell with adults. The department's pitiful response is that they thought he was an adult because he is tall.

I am aghast that Mayor DeBlasio would defend this outrageous behavior. I am disgusted that he has repeatedly lied during daily press conferences, claiming ignorance of these instances and bending over backwards to praise police for their "restraint" (what are police restraining themselves from, I wonder?).

His unwillingness to protect the people of his city as they rightfully participate in their democracy is shameful. His cowardice is pathetic. His unwillingness to stand up to a violent and emboldened police department is dangerous. He is not fit to lead our city, and doesn't seem to want to try.

I am calling on the council to defund and abolish our white supremacist police department, and to call for Mayor De Blasio to resign. If he doesn't resign, you should resign in protest.

Sincerely,
Catherine M.

Testimony of Scuria Rahman
Service Coordinator
Community Access
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Scuria Rahman. I am a Service Coordinator at Community Access and a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

Community Access is a 46-year-old nonprofit that helps people living with mental health concerns by providing quality supportive housing and award-winning peer led employment training. Community Access serves 1,500 tenants in 22 buildings and another 1,000 participants in recovery-oriented training, education, and outreach programs.

CCITNYC and Community Access thank Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

I advocate for a peer-driven mental health care response for those in crisis especially after to my own experience of being harmed by the police as a person with emotional distress . Earlier this year on May 3rd, my household called 911 after I made multiple efforts to self-harm. Three police officers entered my home knowing the context of my emotionally agitated state.

I am a survivor of domestic violence with PTSD and other anxiety related mental health disorders. With most of my traumatic experiences involving men that dominated spaces in my life, I was intimidated and afraid of the authoritative figures that confronted me. In response to their presence I asked for them to

leave me alone. I attempted to flee when they refused to leave my room. One of the police brought me down and onto my face with my left arm crushed beneath me. I responded the only way I knew to defend myself: I resisted and flailed in fear. In response to my resistance, the police continued to handle me aggressively, leaving me with bruises and aches through out my body, along with my shoulders maybe requiring rehabilitation since.

I stand at four feet and eleven inches, and weight only 120 pounds. A police officer triple my size handled me aggressively, and sat on me. He demanded I give him my hands for hand cuffs; however, my left arm was crushed beneath my chest, and I felt that my lungs were unable to expand. I started to black out and see flashes of light as I found it difficult to breathe. I feared for my life and pretended to be unconscious in hopes that the police officer would figure that I can no longer react against him.

My sister communicated that I have mental health Diagnoses that contributed to my behaviors but am likely to be compliant. One of the police responded with accusations of me assaulting his partner to condone the officer's actions towards me. It was only at the arrival of the Emergency Medical Technician did I calm down and feel safe. The EMT had showed me compassion and care during my state of emotion hurt and agitation. I was soon admitted into the hospital as EDP, an Emotionally Disturbed Person. This is a clear case of where crisis intervention was required by a specialist, opposed to the force that was inflicted on me. I was fortunate to have a chance to survive.

The people below did not receive mental health care. They never got that chance. They were killed by police who do not want to respond to mental health crises and who should never be asked to respond to mental health crises.

Since the NYPD started providing Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises were shot by responding police, and 15 of them were shot dead:

Mario Ocasio, Age 51– June 2015—Bronx – shot and killed

Rashan Lloyd, Age 25 -- June 2016 – Bronx -- shot 30 times and killed

Deborah Danner, Age 66 -- October 2016 – Bronx – shot and killed

Ariel Galarza, Age 49 -- November 2016 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Jeune, Age 32 -- July 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Andy Sookdeo, Age 29 -- August 2017 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Miguel Richards, Age 31 – September 2017 -- Bronx – shot and killed

Cornell Lockhart, Age 67 – November 2017 – Bronx – shot and killed

Dwayne Pritchell, Age 48 – January 2018 – Bronx – shot and killed

James Owens, Age 63 -- January 2018 -- Brooklyn – shot and killed

Michael Hansford, Age 52 -- January 2018 -- Bronx – shot and killed

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We need a new peer-driven health care response to those experiencing mental health crises. We need a model like the one that has worked in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years, adjusted to fit with the current New York City model of the Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT).

**Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.
Now.**

Testimony of Erica McNeil
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Erica McNeil. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

CCITNYC thanks Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

Substantial resources need to be diverted from the New York Police Department (NYPD) to mental health teams to respond to the 200,000 911 calls the City receives annually for mental health crises.

CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project. CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

Peers are professionals of their field in assisting people with mental health issues. In life everything evolves, there was first the quill, then the pencil, followed by the typewriter, and now computers. We are even able to dictate into a device and have our words written for us. As human’s evolution is what allows us to better ourselves and our community. The time has come for an evolution to take place in terms of how we the people are policed. It is time for us to evolve onto a system less simplistic and more humane. By permitting peer professionals to support the mental ill population at the time they need it the most will help to prevent escalated situations from occurring.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what we have been documenting for years when they respond to people in emotional distress. Police do not de-escalate crises; they are not mental health care practitioners.

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Thank you for your time,

Erica McNeil

Testimony of _____(name)
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

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(EXPLAIN YOUR REASONS FOR WANTING A PEER LED RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS HERE)

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Therefore, we urge you to examine our proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next 5 years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City.

Now.

Testimony of Gwendolyn Knapp
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Gwendolyn Knapp. I am a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

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CCITNYC supports re-direction of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams so that the City will have enough funds to create these mental health response teams and this type of work will no longer be a role of the NYPD.

We ask you to carve out \$15 million of those funds for a five-year peer pilot project.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily-impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The pilot will provide 24/7 mental health team responses.

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Now.

On the NYC.gov resource page for who to contact in specific situations, more than half of the resources direct New Yorkers to call the police.

We call the police to report people drinking underage or in unlicensed establishments, for hazardous biking or skating, for a building construction complaint or a noise complaint. What if we delegated those responsibilities to people who live in the neighborhood and can peacefully mediate conflict instead?

We call the police to report a homeless person in the streets or subways, to report someone who is emotionally disturbed or mentally ill, someone considering suicide, or someone with an addiction to drugs. What if instead of introducing the police, individuals armed with weapons to these incidents, New Yorkers could call on a task force of mental health specialists? Why not broaden the outreach of NYC Well's mobile crisis force?

We call the police for incidents of sexual assault or domestic violence. According to the National Center for Women and Policing, at least 40% of police officer families experience domestic violence. The Minneapolis police were discovered to have thousands of untested rape kits in their facilities, spanning back 30 years, in 2019. One officer involved in the shooting of Breonna Taylor is accused by two women of sexual assault. What if instead of directing victims of sexual assault to call the police, we broadened the outreach of domestic violence support services to aid them as well?

In public schools with predominantly black students such as Franklin K. Lane, numerous police officers survey the property. What if instead of conditioning teenagers to feel like criminals and maintaining the school to prison pipeline, we invested in more counseling and support services?

At Hunter College, which I attend, police officers survey everyone who enters the libraries. Their primary function is to tell students to be quiet or to show their identification cards. Is this form of intimidation necessary? I recognize the need for security guards at the door, given the largeness of our student body, but why do they survey students throughout the school? Why do we assume that police officers armed with guns and batons, have more self-control than anyone else, when numerous videos and reported incidents suggest otherwise?

In subway stations, police officers watch for whoever does not pay the fare and uses excessive force against the brown and black teenagers they catch. Do we need people trained to use force, to intimidate people into paying 2.75? Should the police be the ones initiating fines?

We assign way too many responsibilities to the police, whose primary purpose should be to deal with dangerous individuals in urgent situations. Do we really need people armed with guns, to force homeless people to sleep somewhere else other than the subway? They should be the last resort, not the first. I urge members of the City Council and the Mayor to reimagine what the purpose of law enforcement should be. Also, to decrease a significant amount of the police budget, 1 billion dollars this year at the very least, to invest in safer and more productive alternatives for our communities. To decrease the budget by any less than a billion dollars, during this time of an economic crisis and national mourning over the black lives lost to police violence, is unethical.

Sincerely,

Jada Shannon

Testimony of Willow Smith
TAP Service Coordinator
Community Access
Supporter of CCITNYC,
Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC: Fighting to Transform
Responses to Mental Health Crises

City Council Hearing
Public Safety Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2020

Thank you to the members of the City Council for hearing this testimony today.

My name is Willow Smith. I am a Service Coordinator at Community Access and a supporter of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how the New York City responds to mental health crises by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal legal system.

Community Access is a 46-year-old nonprofit that helps people living with mental health concerns by providing quality supportive housing and award-winning peer led employment training. Community Access serves 1,500 tenants in 22 buildings and another 1,000 participants in recovery-oriented training, education, and outreach programs.

CCITNYC and Community Access thank Council Member Donovan for his role in forming the Mayor's Task Force on Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice. The first task force met in 2014 and the second task force, on Prevention and Crisis Services, met in 2018. But the recommendations of those task forces do not go far enough.

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I have had my own experiences in my work with the police attempting and failing to adequately intervene and support an individual in a mental health crisis. For example: one of my clients had sent me a couple of text messages that sounded as though he was considering taking his life and then was not answering my calls. My supervisor and I decided to take the risk of calling 911 to request a wellness check. We requested a mental health team, but the police were sent instead. I informed my client that we had made the call because we were concerned, and he responded, letting me know that he was okay and asking us to call off the police, but I explained that we could not. I assured him that they were only coming to see that he was okay, nothing more.

When the police arrived at his apartment, they called me because he was not opening the door, and I informed them that he had finally responded and I would be on my way to see him myself momentarily. The police officer told me that they would be breaking down his door if he did not answer. At this point I was on my way and requested that they hold off until I could arrive, since he was responding and confirming that he was okay. They refused to wait, breaking down the apartment door and then kicking in and punching through the bedroom doors. I requested that they just stay with him until I could arrive, as I was almost there, but instead they took him into custody and transported him to a hospital against his will. Shortly before the ambulance left, he called me and told me, “this is why I don’t trust [social workers].”

The damage done by the violent response of the police to both his mental health and our therapeutic relationship was done, and he refused to work with me after that. My supervisor made the decision for our team that we could not trust the police in similar situations going forward, and would need to operate solely on mental health teams not affiliated with the police to avoid further traumatizing or putting in harm’s way the population with which we work.

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Thank you,

Willow Smith

Testimony to the Public Safety Committee
New York City Council
June 9, 2020

Hello, my name is Kate Mikuliak; I am a former Council staffer, current City agency employee, and resident of Brooklyn. This testimony reflects my personal opinions on the bills being heard today.

Regarding Pre-Intro T2020-6267 to require visible shield numbers and rank designations: While this is already NYPD policy, the ability for an individual to take legal action if they request an officer to make visible their badge and they do not comply will be helpful. I hope. We'll have to wait and see how many people want to take the time and effort on their part to enforce a policy the police don't want to enforce themselves.

Regarding proposed Int. No. 536-A to establish a misdemeanor for restraining an individual in a manner that restricts the flow of air or blood: this bill proposes punishment after the harm has already been caused. What good will this bill do for the next person who can't breathe? I would much rather see the police better trained in how to restrain individuals safely, and required to take in depth anti-racism training so that respect and care can be paid to all individuals when restraint is necessary.

Proposed Int. No. 721-A would codify a person's right to record New York City police officers or peace officers and allow any individual whose rights are violated to sue the City in state court. I hope this bill passes though I wish the City were not on the hook financially for the wrong-doing of all the bad apples of the NYPD. Opportunities for when to hold police personally accountable for their actions would be an interesting discussion to explore and one I hope the Council takes up.

I'm not enthusiastic about Proposed Int. No. 760-A in relation to an early intervention system. Given their record, I don't trust the NYPD to be a good judge of who needs intervention, or to conduct transparent recordkeeping on the many items this system seeks to track. This bill puts forth a good idea but one that is better handled by an external party.

I hope this committee will hold oversight hearings in the near future on how this City can completely overhaul how our communities are policed. "Reform" policies such as the bills proposed today are like putting a bandaid on a bullet wound. Let us act on the momentum of the George Floyd protests to dismantle and rebuild the NYPD for today's NYC, not that of one hundred or two hundred years ago.

Good afternoon! In the wake of all of the protests, which I support. I believe that the NYPD, should be defunded. . The money that would have been allocated to fund the police should go to Social Service Programs as well as the 15 million, over the next five years should go to CCIT- NYC. This can truly be a pivotal start, to move forward in positive direction. Take care, and be well.

Kenneth Clemmons

Illegal use of LRAD

I was part of a protest in December 2014 and had an LRAD used against in as a weapon; the device was pointed directly at me from less than 100 feet away, which is less than the safe distance. I have since experienced tinnitus.

On 6/4, NYPD trapped hundreds of peaceful protesters in Bronx before 8pm curfew, refused to let anyone past, and immediately started brutalizing them with batons and pepper spray. then refused to let volunteer medics assess many, including a bunch of folks with serious injuries on a corrections bus. they brutalized people who were coming out of nearby housing complexes and coming home from work. they arrested medics and legal observers. they followed demonstrators TO THEIR VEHICLES when leaving jail support and then arrested them for "curfew violation". these actions do not make our community safe. This was clearly a targeted attack on the Bronx and on community organizers. As a doctor, it is clear to me that the racist institution of policing has no place in our community. Defund, Demilitarize, and Dismantle NYPD.

Vanessa K Ferrel, MD MPH
vanessa.k.ferrel@gmail.com
951-505-5821

Testimony for New York City Council Public Safety Committee
Tuesday, June 9, 2020
Victoria Werdenigg

Thank you, Chair Richards and members of the Committee on Public Safety for giving us the opportunity to submit testimony today in support of the bills that will address police misconduct, criminalize the use of a chokehold by police officers and create much needed standardized police discipline guidelines.

This past week I participated in protests in response to the death of George Floyd caused by police officers in Minneapolis. Protests that also addressed the issues of racism and police brutality. I went to protests every single day for about 10 days in a row, and I saw a range of activity. I also participated in protests during the day and into the night. I want to specifically talk about the evening I was arrested. It was Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020 and I went to an organized protest at the NYC mayors residence, Gracie Mansion, at East End Avenue and 88th Street. At this time, the mayor had imposed an 8pm curfew which I wholeheartedly disagreed with and was going to protest that evening. We sat in the street, for about 30 minutes in complete silence and then the signal was given to start marching. We headed south west, criss crossing streets and avenues. There was a small brigade of police officers marching alongside us and behind us, I noticed that almost none of them were wearing masks, so I started filming them and asked where their masks were. I have that footage and on it only 2 of about 20 or so officers are wearing masks, the rest don't even appear to have masks on them...need I remind you we are in the midst of a global pandemic. We then marched past a group of stationary officers, and I again asked them where their masks were, and the most senior of them (wearing a white shirt) told me "Oh don't you worry about that." And then proceeded to spit at me. A police officer spat at me.

For whatever reason, the police decided to attack a group of completely peaceful protesters with force and violence...It was a little after 9pm (just over one hour past curfew) and we were at the intersection of 50th Street and 3rd Avenue when we were literally attacked from behind by heavily armored police on bicycles. I was right at the back, and they just rammed into the crowd (which was facing the opposite direction) threw multiple completely peaceful people down on the ground, used far too much force on a crowd that was not resisting. I ran away from the avenue and along the street when we were cornered from both sides by more lines of police telling us to go home, but giving us no option to leave. They continued to close in on us and kept yelling go home, but we could not leave. They then took my bike (and a few others who also had bikes) away from us, and threw our bikes into the street, and then slammed us up against the building. Please be aware that at no point did I resist, I am also 5 foot 6 inches and weigh 115 lbs, there was absolutely no need for such excessive force. I was then placed under arrest, my hands were cuffed behind my back, and I was put into a van after being asked some questions and searched. None of the arresting officers had masks on, and that was my experience throughout, apart from literally 2 or 3 officers in the Brooklyn Central Booking (where I was taken) nobody was wearing a mask apart from the arrested peaceful protesters.

I support these actions by the city council because I have seen first hand the violence and lack of control the police have. They have been held unaccountable for too long, and they have too much power without enough training. They do not need to use excessive force, they should be taught different methods, less harmful methods of de-escalation. The system is broken, more needs to be done. Too much is asked of the police, the money needs to go elsewhere and their burden needs to be lifted.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. It is an important step in holding police officers accountable to the communities that they are supposed to protect.

New York City Council
Committee on Public Safety

To whom it may concern,

My name is Viveca K. Licata. I am a white, 31 year old, transgender resident of Brooklyn, and I very much understand that this incident is probably not a top priority, as the overwhelming instances of violence we have seen from police are against people of color. Nonetheless, I want to report it in case it is helpful in holding the NYPD accountable in some way.

On Saturday, May 30th, I was at a protest in Union Square in Manhattan, among the group that had marched over from Brooklyn via the Manhattan bridge around 8:00PM. Once we reached Union Square (walking north on 4th Avenue), we were met with a massive police presence, and after some minutes a portion of us ended up near the northeast corner of the intersection with 14th Street.

Between approximately 9:30-10:00PM, the police began directing us over megaphones to disperse onto the sidewalk or else we would be arrested and charged. We moved to the sidewalk, and the police barricaded us onto it so that we could not return to the street. Once trapped on the sidewalk, a large group of officers passed the barricades and began yelling at us to "move, move, move," forcing us eastward on 14th Street. With no clear direction as to where we should be going or why we could not demonstrate on the sidewalks, some officers began chasing protestors down the stairs to the subway system (again, near the northeast corner of 4th Ave & 14th Street).

At one point an officer (blue shirt, white male, short dark brown hair) began shoving me in the back and telling me to "walk away," and I replied back at him that I was walking. He commanded me to "walk faster." I followed that order. As we gained some space from the wall of officers, I turned around so that my cardboard sign would be facing the police, but I continued to walk backwards as I did this.

After about 5 seconds, the same officer who had been pushing me in the back grabbed his baton with both hands and charged me. He shoved me in the chest with the baton and I flew backward onto the ground. I landed on my back, the back of my head hit the pavement, and my glasses flew off of my face a couple of yards away. Luckily, I had minutes earlier placed my bicycle helmet inside of my backpack, and I believe this significantly reduced the damage that would have been done to my head from the fall, especially after seeing the video from Buffalo of a 75 year old man being shoved to the ground and sustaining serious head injuries.

As I began to lean upward from the ground to get up, I saw the officer's boot coming down, and he stepped on my crotch. As a soccer player of many years, I have fallen or been knocked down many times, and in especially nasty games I have been stepped on or kicked. I instinctively felt as I saw the officer's boot coming down that he had intentionally stretched his leg forward to stomp on my crotch. He would have easily been able to avoid stepping on me, but his foot landed on my crotch. I believe he thought that I had cismale anatomy (a penis), and that this would really hurt me, but since I don't, I immediately got up and began screaming that he had stepped on me. I yelled it 2 times in the middle of a small clearing where this had happened, but people were running everywhere and the officer was already past me.

I made eye contact with a captain (white shirt, black male, shaved head) who was behind the officer who had pushed me, and he looked alarmed. I also saw that my roommate was on the ground, and I ran over to her while yelling at the approaching police officers not to touch her. While I helped her up, the captain who I mentioned previously yelled at us to "get out of here" and we began walking away quickly. We were in a rush of people and police, though, so there was no way to stop and try to get the badge number of the officers who had knocked either of us over, or the captain. We were too freaked out and wanted to get out of there ASAP.

As of yet, I have not seen any videos of this incident, but I know there were many witnesses. The only other person who I know personally that saw the incident take place was my roommate. Again, I believe if I didn't have my helmet inside of my backpack I would have suffered a serious head injury due to this officer's violent conduct.

If you need any other information from me, please let me know and I'll do my best to provide it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Viveca K. Licata', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Viveca K. Licata
305 Quincy Street #3
Brooklyn, NY 11216
licata.viveca@gmail.com
773-213-7344

Hello. I am writing as a concerned NYC resident (and taxpayer) to ask that you consider the following policy changes as ways to fix problems with racially biased policing:

No paid leave for police who commit misconduct.

Freeze hiring until NYPD meets clear improvement metrics.

Shift significant funds from police to education and public health.

Although this has been less of a focus in recent protests, I would also like to underscore that police require much better training in handling sexual assault cases and that any police who themselves commit sexual misconduct — and news reports suggest that police often commit sexual assaults, especially against sex workers and minority groups — should be fired and charged with the crimes they have committed.

Best,

Sharon Marcus
Brooklyn 11216

Alessia Giarracca
1030 83 Street
Brooklyn, NY 11228

June 9, 2020

New York City Council
City Hall Park
New York, NY 10007

To the Committee of Public Safety:

It has come to my attention that today's meeting will be devoted to such a prevalent cause – the use of excessive restraints by the NYPD. Especially in light of recent events, I would like to express my support in banning chokeholds and other such restraints. Through lengthy discussions with family and friends in the NYPD, chokeholds have proven to be unsafe forms of restraint and have already been banned in practice. However, pushing this into legislation will ensure liability amongst officers. Therefore, I urge you to call upon Congress and the president to sign the Eric Garner Excessive Use of Force Prevention Act of 2019. Thank you for your consideration in hearing my voice and the intentions of all your citizens.

Sincerely,

Alessia Giarracca

Marco Giarracca
1429 77th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11228

June 9, 2020

New York City Council
City Hall Park
New York, NY 10007

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Sincerely,

Marco Giarracca

mgiarracca@gmail.com



**Written Testimony
City Council Committee on Public Safety
June 9th, 2020**

**Submitted by Nicole McVinua
Director of Policy, Urban Pathways**

On behalf of Urban Pathways, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony to the Committee on Public Safety.

Urban Pathways is a nonprofit homeless services and supportive housing provider. We assist individuals through a unique combination of street outreach, drop-in services, Safe Havens, and extended-stay and permanent supportive housing residences. Supportive housing provides comprehensive services that allow residents with disabling conditions and histories of homelessness to lead independent and fulfilling lives, while taking care of their physical and mental health needs. Last year, Urban Pathways served approximately 3,700 New Yorkers in need. Of those who received comprehensive services (about 1,800), 78% have a disabling mental health condition and/or substance use disorder, and 95% achieved 1 year of stability in a permanent setting.

As an organization with a high number of clients that live with a severe mental illness, we are very concerned with police responses to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. While we recognize and appreciate the efforts of the NYPD to implement Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training, this is not enough and we believe that the City needs to invest in an alternative to mental health crisis response that does not involve the NYPD. **Since the NYPD started providing CIT Training to its officers in 2015, at least 17 individuals who were experiencing mental health crises have been shot by responding police officers, 15 of which were fatal, including the death of an Urban Pathways client. No adjustments to police accountability can change the fact that NYPD officers are simply not equipped to recognize or properly respond to someone experiencing emotional distress.**

Urban Pathways is an endorsing organization of Correct Crisis Intervention Today in NYC (CCITNYC), a coalition of 80 organizations and over 400 stakeholders whose mission is to transform how New York City responds to mental health crises

by diverting responses away from law enforcement and the criminal justice system. We support the CCITNYC coalition's call for a pilot program to test an alternative response to the over 200,000 emergency 911 calls the City receives each year for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

We support the redirection of funds from the NYPD to mental health teams and ask the City Council to allocate \$15 million of these funds over the next five years to pilot a crisis response team approach.

CCITNYC has developed a detailed plan and budget for a pilot project in two heavily impacted precincts. The pilot will pair emergency medical technicians (EMTs) with “peers” (individuals with lived mental health experience). The EMTs and the peers – rather than the police -- will be the first responders for people who experience mental health crises, and their families. The teams will be available 24/7 to respond to emergencies, unlike the City's current crisis response team models, such as Health Engagement Assessment Teams (HEAT). The proposed model has been used with great success in Eugene, Oregon for over 30 years.

Even with additional training for police officers, the City will be unable to prevent the recurring injuries and deaths that occur when officers respond to mental health crisis calls. The violent response we have seen from the police in encounters with protestors is exactly what the coalition has been documenting for years in police responses to people in emotional distress. The need to de-escalate when responding to emotional crises is a vital skill that is not at the core of police training.

Therefore, we urge you to examine the proposal and reserve \$15 million over the next five years to pilot a peer-driven mental health crisis response program in New York City. We hope to see a partnership between the CCITNYC coalition and the City to successfully reimagine the way we treat New Yorkers experiencing a mental health crisis. Thank you.

For questions or further information, please contact:

Nicole McVinua, Director of Policy
nmcvinua@urbanpathways.org
212-736-7385, Ext:233

The CCITNYC coalition's webpage can be viewed at ccitnyc.org.

