



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 865

Resolution calling upon the New York City Police Department to initiate a study evaluating the quality of the police services provided by the Housing Bureau to public housing residents.

By Council Members James, Foster and Mark-Viverito

Whereas, Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) entered into between the City Council and then-Mayor Giuliani on September 27, 1994, the Housing Authority Police Department was merged with the New York City Police Department (NYPD); and

Whereas, The NYPD Housing Bureau, as it is now known, has approximately 1,880 uniformed personnel and provides police services to the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), the nation's largest public housing authority, with nearly 420,000 public housing residents, employees, and guests in 2,686 buildings borough wide; and

Whereas, Chief Joanne Jaffe, Chief of Housing for the NYPD, stated in a City Council hearing on November 2, 2006, "Overall, major felony crime in public housing has decreased for several years, [and] crime in the City's housing developments has been reduced 53.5 percent as compared to 11 years ago;" and

Whereas, Even though crime has decreased in public housing, Chief Jaffe stated, "We've a disproportionate amount of violent crime [in public housing]; we have three and a half percent of the City's crime, [although] we're five percent of the population... yet 16 or 17 percent of the City's shootings;" and

Whereas, The Housing Bureau participates in crime prevention programs such as the Impact Program, the Bronx Restructuring Program, and the Trespass Affidavit Program also known as vertical patrols; and

Whereas, Due to numerous incidents in housing complexes, such as the fatal shooting on January 24, 2004, of an unarmed 19-year old Timothy Stansbury Jr., who used the rooftop of the Louis Armstrong Houses

in Bedford-Stuyvesant as a shortcut to another building, vertical patrol tactics have come into question; and

Whereas, Council Committees have heard reports that increases in police initiatives, while aimed at curbing crime and protecting residents, may add to conflicts between residents and law enforcement, including complaints of police misconduct; and

Whereas, Testimony from NYCHA tenants and housing advocates before the New York City Council on November 2, 2006, revealed NYCHA tenants are concerned about harassment and intimidation by police officers; and

Whereas, In numerous neighborhood forums on community policing the Council sponsored in the wake of the Sean Bell tragedy, the lack of respect shown by the NYPD to NYCHA residents was frequently raised by tenants of NYCHA buildings; and

Whereas, In a document dated September 13, 1994 entitled, “Driving Crime, Disorder and Fear from the Public Housing of New York,” then-Mayor Giuliani stated, “Officers of the New York Police Department will learn from the culture, skills and attitudes that have made many Housing Police Officers trusted and effective law-enforcement officials in the communities they have served;” and

Whereas, As part of the September 1994 MOU, the Mayor and NYCHA executed a separate MOU adding that, “all NYPD uniformed personnel will be provided with training in public housing development-focused policing. Such training will ensure that NYPD officers become familiar with specific policing needs in public housing and are aware of and sensitive to the residents’ concerns;” and

Whereas, If such public housing development-focused training ever occurred it was not successful; and

Whereas, Advocates believe that different, including more culturally sensitive, training for police officers would greatly reduce the number of complaints against the police and foster a more amicable relationship between the NYPD and public housing residents; and

Whereas, Public housing tenants fervidly support initiatives that encompass creating a relationship with respectful police officers who are knowledgeable of the community and tenants they are policing; now

therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York City Police Department to initiate a study evaluating the quality of the police services provided by the Housing Bureau to public housing residents.

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5/11/07