



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 235

Resolution calling on the appropriate Committee of the City Council to hold an oversight hearing on the New York City Police Department's policies regarding substance and alcohol abuse by its members and what programs are available for officers in need of assistance and treatment.

By Council Members Lopez, Baez, Comrie, Foster, Gerson, Jackson and Serrano; also Council Member Clarke

Whereas, In the recent past, members of the New York City Police Department have been involved and implicated in publicized cases regarding alcohol and substance abuse; and

Whereas, Especially with regard to the abuse of alcohol, these cases do not appear to be isolated, and seem to pervade through the rank and file of the Department; and

Whereas, Police officers who are intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substances become a danger to themselves, to his or her fellow officers and to the public they are sworn to protect, whether on- or off-duty; and

Whereas, In the past year alone, there have been numerous cases involving off-duty police officers who have harmed, killed, or threatened to harm or kill individuals while under the influence of alcohol or driving while intoxicated, including a pregnant woman and three family members in Sunset Park, Brooklyn; and

Whereas, Former Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik began a review of the Police Department's disciplinary actions and treatment policies toward officers who abuse alcohol; and

Whereas, This review was to include an assessment of how supervisors reported alcohol abuse, how those who abused alcohol were treated and monitored, and how to more effectively discipline those who are arrested and charged in alcohol-related incidents; and

Whereas, Former Police Commissioner Kerik also announced that he would expedite the dismissal process and administrative trials for a half dozen officers accused in drunk driving accidents as a result of a number of past incidents; and

Whereas, The status of these new policies and procedures were not made public upon Commissioner Kerik's departure and no indication has been given regarding their status under current Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly; and

Whereas, The published reports regarding substance/alcohol abuse by members of the Police Department have focused on disciplinary and preventive action on a Department-wide level rather than on the individual officers themselves; and

Whereas, Seldom has there been mention in publicized reports of the New York City Police Department's support network and treatment options; and

Whereas, Members of the New York City Police Department are oftentimes reluctant to seek out assistance because such attempts may become part of their permanent employment record; and

Whereas, The inclusion of substance/alcohol abuse treatment and counseling in an employment record can in effect "penalize" police officers by having detrimental effects on their careers and advancement within the Police Department; and

Whereas, The New York City Police Department should not only identify and create a support system that encourages treatment, but also address a culture that forces police officers to worry more about their careers and work history than seeking assistance; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the appropriate Committee of the City Council to hold an oversight hearing on the New York City Police Department's policies regarding substance and alcohol abuse by its members and what programs are available for officers in need of assistance and treatment.

