



New York County District Attorney's Office

Written Testimony by Chief Assistant District Attorney Karen Friedman-Agnifilo for City

Council Committees on Public Safety and the Justice System

Oversight Hearing on Police Discipline and District Attorney Reports

February 7, 2019

Chairman Richards, Chairman Lancman, and members of the Committees on Public Safety and the Justice System, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for the City Council's oversight hearing on police discipline and District Attorney reports.

Through these bills, the Committees are taking up the important issue of increased transparency for law enforcement. We support that goal broadly and have taken many steps over the years to achieve it, from inviting the Vera Institute of Justice to conduct and publish a multi-year study into racial and ethnic disparities in case outcomes, to posting data on the manhattanda.org website, with an eye towards expanding the information available.

For many months, we have been in discussions with the NYPD and other offices about obtaining more direct, expanded, and expedited access to police disciplinary records, given the inadequacy of the existing disclosure process. Last May, our Office formally requested that the NYPD provide us with this information so that we can make early assessments of witness credibility, explore weaknesses in potential cases, and exonerate individuals who may have been mistakenly accused (this request has been well-documented). We appreciate the Council's leadership and support, and we remain willing to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that this issue is resolved soon.

As to enhanced reporting of data by District Attorneys, our Office has also been working hard in recent months to collect and report publicly the types of data contemplated by the proposed Council bill, and we expect to be in a position to publish such data before the timetable contemplated by the Council.