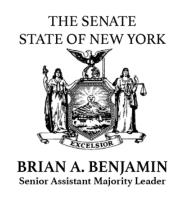
CHAIR Budget & Revenue

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Codes Finance Health Rules Transportation



DISTRICT OFFICE

(212) 222- 7315 163 West 125th Street Suite 912 New York, NY 10027

ALBANY OFFICE

(518) 455-2441 Legislative Office Building Suite 917 Albany, New York 12247

May 7, 2020

Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor Police Commissioner Dermot F. Shea City Hall New York, New York

Dear Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYPD Commissioner Dermot F. Shea:

No U.S. state and U.S. city has been harder hit by the Coronavirus than New York and New York City. Additionally and more tragically, our state and city have the greatest number of Coronavirus deaths and the virus is disproportionately impacting communities of color.

These are highly stressful times as our constituents and fellow New Yorkers: a) deal with the burden and sacrifice as essential workers in the epicenter of this pandemic; b) endure the grief of losing loved ones and colleagues due to the pandemic; c) take on the formidable task of homeschooling their children during a crisis; d) personally experience nationwide record unemployment during a time of extreme income and wealth inequality.

With all that our communities of color are already going through it is unconscionable that we as a city would add the stress and trauma of an unequal and unfair double standard for the enforcement of social distancing rules.

The nation and the world's eyes are on New York City as we collectively fight to mitigate and end the spread of COVID19. As we often do in many areas and with a variety of issues, New York City leads the way for the nation. Unfortunately during this time, with the world's eyes on us, the world is also bearing witness to our long-standing, shameful reputation for racialized policing that singles out and harms people and communities of color. We have seen the images and videos of police officers enforcing social distancing rules in affluent white communities by passing out masks, while in lower income communities of color police officers use unnecessary, brutal force and/or arrests to enforce social distancing.

As a result of the recent as well as the long-standing biased policing actions of the NYPD towards communities of color, we believe that the NYPD should not be the agency to enforce social

distancing rules. We are calling on you to immediately put an end to these practices, and instead partner with trusted community groups (e.g., cure-violence and/or faith-based groups) and have them work in the community through an extensive public education campaign. This will be far more effective in persuading neighbors to adhere to social distancing rules. We want a person of color to oversee this new community program and for these trusted community groups to be compensated for their work and to be the ones engaging our community members on this issue not the NYPD.

Time is of the essence for getting this new community program up and running as summer is fast approaching. Soon more and more of our fellow New Yorkers will be out on the street and we want to ensure that they do not experience a summer of biased policing and arrests. Instead we must emphasize community unity and trust through the collective fight to mitigate the spread of COVID19 through local education and awareness.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Bergamin

Sen. Brian A. Benjamin, SD 30

Sen. Jose Serrano Sen. Jamaal Bailey Sen. Alessandra Biaggi Sen. Leroy Comrie Sen. Brad Hoylman Sen. Robert Jackson Sen. John Liu

Sen. Velmanette Montgomery

Sen. Zellnor Myrie Sen. Kevin Parker Sen. Roxanne Persaud Sen. Jessica Ramos Sen. Gustavo Rivera

Sen. Julia Salazar

Sen. James Sanders, Jr.

Mem. of Assm. Diana Richardson

Mem. of Assm. Charles Barron Mem. of Assm. Michael Blake

Mem. of Assm. Carmen De La

Mem. of Assm. Inez E. Dickens

Mem. of Assm. Harvey Epstein Mem. of Assm. Nathalia

Fernandez

Mem. of Assm. Walter Mosley Mem. of Assm. Yuh-Line Niou

Mem. of Assm. Felix W. Ortiz Mem. of Assm. N. Nick Perry

Mem. of Assm. Victor M.

Mem. of Assm. Daniel Quart

Mem. of Assm. Robert

Rodriguez

Mem. of Assm. Linda Rosenthal

Mem. of Assm. Al Taylor

City Comptroller Scott

Stringer

City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer

Council Mem. Alicka Ampry-

Samuel

Council Mem. Diana Ayala

Council Mem. Justin Brannan

Council Mem. Andrew

Cohen

Council Mem. Brad Lander

Council Mem. Bill Perkins

Council Mem. Keith Powers

Council Mem. Donovan

Richards

Council Mem. Carlina Rivera

Council Mem. Rafael

Salamanca