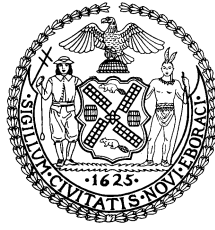


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**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
**Health, Seniors, and Social Services Committee**  
**Thursday October, 27, 2020 - 6:30 PM**  
*Conducted Remotely via Zoom*

**Minutes**

*Present:* Gayle Baron, Lori Bores, Alida Camp, Barbara Chocky, Brian Correia, Rebecca Dangoor, Billy Freeland, May Malik, Barbara Rudder, Barry Schneider, Russell Squire, Shari Weiner

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 PM.

Community Board 8M's Health, Seniors, and Social Services Committee presented an introductory meeting on understanding criminal justice reform which examined defunding the police and bail reform on a rudimentary level.

Councilmember Keith Powers, Chair of the Criminal Justice Committee focused on the meaning of defunding the police. He examined how the correlation between the disparate effects and economic impact of COVID-19 and the desire to reimagine policing brought to light by the protests for racial justice came into play when evaluating the City budget for Fiscal Year 2021.

He believes the word "defund" takes on different meanings for different people. Some people inherently believe in taking away money from the NYC Police Department. Others use the word to suggest a priority shift in City spending so that there is more of a focus on other programs and services as opposed to enforcement. Councilmember Powers stressed that to him, the movement does not devalue the need for public safety in the community and the reflection of that need in the overall budget.

He described the NYC budget process and the need to balance overspending in some agencies with cuts to certain services. The City is facing an economic crisis which will lead to major cuts across the board. Evaluating the funding and purpose of City Agencies is a conversation that will need to be continued in the budget process for Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond.

Next, State Senator Liz Krueger, Chair of the Finance Committee opened by stating that while she will speak on bail reform, she wants to explain three major changes to criminal

justice reform that they made to New York State Law at the same time and how they interrelate.

**1. Bail Laws:** They changed the bail laws to eliminate cash bail as a pretrial option for people accused of misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies. Bail reform has nothing to do with the police's ability to arrest people or charge them for a crime or how long their sentences will be if they are found guilty. Courts can still require electronic ankle bracelet monitoring or regular mandatory check-ins without cash-bail. The main purpose of the reform is so individuals do not end up in Rikers just because they do have enough money to pay for bail. It also does not change the fact that if you are charged with an additional crime while awaiting trial, you can be placed in Rikers until your day in court. The purpose of bail is to make sure people show up for their day in court. It was never designed to punish people or to keep dangerous people off the streets.

**2. New York Discovery Laws.** They also changed the New York Discovery Laws to be consistent with most other States where district attorneys cannot withhold evidence from the charged person. Previously, DA's could avoid giving the discovery ("evidence") to the defense attorney until right before the trial, which put the accused at a major disadvantage in preparing for the trial and led to defense attorneys constantly asking for extensions. While some people complain that this ties the hands of DA's and the police, the fact is that our constitution is set up this way and how 47 States conduct this system.

**3. Speedy Trial Requirement.** New York State had a terrible record of getting people to court for their trial which led to the State being constantly sued for delaying a person's right to their day in court, a fundamental, constitutional right. It also costs the City an enormous amount of money to keep people in Rikers when they should have already had their day in court. 66% of inmates in New York State are unsentenced inmates and 77% of people in New York City jails are unsentenced because they have not completed their trials.

- The previous cash-bail and discovery systems as well as slow trial process worked together to keep many people in jail for unimaginable lengths of time without ever being convicted for a crime. These three changes strive to correct the overall system to ensure an individual's constitutional rights are protected.
- The City and State each passed a Choke Hold Bill, with the purpose of preventing death or injury to the suspect. The City's bill allows for the officer to press on the neck but will be charged with a misdemeanor if presses on the diaphragm. The State bill states the officer can press any part of the body but will be charged with a felony if this action causes serious harm or death.

Following Senator Krueger's remarks, the meeting held a Q&A.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

**Rebecca Dangoor and Barbara Rudder, Co-Chairs**