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Citizens Union Proposes Reforms to Strengthen Public Oversight of Police Misconduct

Supports CCRB Assumption of Prosecutorial Role, Expanded Range of Penalties, and Establishing CCPC's Enhanced Role and Permanence among Eleven Recommendations

*Good Government Group Believes Reforms will Increase Accountability, Transparency and
Strengthen Public Confidence in System of Police Discipline*

Citizens Union today released its review of New York City's policies and procedures governing the handling of alleged police misconduct and the subsequent internal disciplinary action. It doing so, CU offers a series of policy recommendations designed to improve public confidence and support for the New York Police Department (NYPD) by strengthening public oversight of police misconduct and ensuring a fairer and more independent procedure for handling complaints of misconduct.

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Creating a more independent Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) that is given the power to try the cases it substantiates is at the core of the organization's recommendations, something which the Giuliani administration agreed to in an April 2001 Memorandum of Understanding between the NYPD and the CCRB.

"Citizens Union's recommendations taken together seek to improve public oversight, strengthen accountability, and ensure a fairer and more independent procedure for handling complaints of police misconduct. We believe that Citizens Unions can bring its lens of effective good government to achieving these important policy changes," said Peter Sherwin, chair of Citizens Union.

"Even though the NYPD maintains it has improved its internal handling of allegations of police misconduct under its current leadership, a more independent system of oversight, prosecution and adjudication is required to maximize public confidence and ensure independent integrity in the process", said Dick Dadey,

executive director of Citizens Union. He added, "The vast majority of New York City's police officers are honest and hard-working individuals who perform a vital and dangerous role protecting our city. They merit our respect, support and appreciation, but the system of police discipline needs to be strengthened."

"Though some important changes have been made, particularly the reconstitution of the Civilian Complaint Review Board in the early 1990's, many of the changes previously recommended by the Knapp and Mollen Commissions, Mayor Giuliani's Commission to Combat Police Corruption, and Mayor Giuliani, have not been implemented. It is because of this lack of action and flaws in the current system of oversight that CU is stepping forward and proposing a number of important reforms", said Joel Berger, co-chair of Citizens Union's Municipal Affairs Committee.

Luis Garden Acosta, vice chair of Citizens Union and co-chair of its Municipal Affairs Committee, said, "We consider public confidence in our city's police force to be a cornerstone of a healthy democratic society. When incidents involving alleged police misconduct occur, rather than being channeled through a system of justice in which the public has confidence, they disappear into a disciplinary process that is outside of the public realm. This process results in little, long-term structural reform to reduce future acts of misconduct and further alienates the NYPD from the public."

Citizens Union believes that the measures set forth below are essential to public confidence in the police and therefore to the social fabric of our City.

1. Establish a More Independent and Effective Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB)

- Enable the CRRB to Prosecute Cases it Substantiates
- Grant the CCRB Authority to Prosecute Officers Who Lie Under Oath
- Maximize the Use of Mediation between the Public and NYPD
- Expand the CCRB's Resources for Investigators and Staffing
- More Active Use of the CCRB's Subpoena Powers

2. Expand the Responsibilities of the Police Commissioner and Range of Penalties Provided

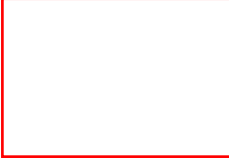
- Expand the Range of Disciplinary Options for Cases of Misconduct
- Reinstate the "Zero Tolerance" Policy for False Official Statements
- Require Reporting when the Commissioner Deviates from Findings or Recommendations of the CCRB or NYPD Trial Judge
- Expand the CCRB's Resources for Investigators and Staffing

3. Establish a Stronger Commission to Combat Police Corruption (CCPC)

- Make the CCPC Permanent through Legislation
- Vest Greater Oversight Authority to Include Misconduct and Grant Subpoena Powers to the CCPC
- Expand Resources to Enable the CCPC to Fulfill a Broader Mandate

Citizens Union of the City of New York is an independent, non-partisan civic organization dedicated to promoting good government and political reform in the city and state of New York. For more than a century, Citizens Union has served as a watchdog for the public interest and an advocate for the common good. Founded in 1897 to fight the corruption of Tammany Hall, Citizens Union currently works to ensure fair elections, clean campaigns, and open, effective government that is accountable to the citizens of New York. We do so by informing the policy debate and influencing the policy outcomes that affect the lives of all New Yorkers.

Click [here](#) for the full report.



Citizens Union of the City of New York, a non-partisan force for good government for more than 100 years, works to inform and engage New Yorkers, to ensure local and state government values its citizens, addresses critical issues, and operates in a fair, open, and fiscally sound manner.

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