



May 20, 2026

VIA EMAIL

New York City Council Speaker Julie Menin
Shekar Krishnan, Chair of the Committee on Oversight and Investigations
Gale Brewer, Chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations, State & Federal Legislation
Sandra Ung, Chair of the Committee on Rules, Privileges, Elections, Standards and Ethics
Linda Lee, Chair of the Committee on Finance

**Mayor Mamdani's Executive Budget Fails to Adequately Fund Anti-Corruption Watchdogs;
Council Should Increase DOI and COIB Funding**

Dear Council Members,

We write to urge the City Council to increase funding for the Department of Investigation (DOI) and the Conflicts of Interest Board (COIB) in the FY2027 budget beyond the inadequate levels proposed by Mayor Mamdani's Executive Budget.

The Adams administration weakened both anti-corruption watchdogs through budget cuts, attrition, and hiring freezes. Rather than reversing course on the prior administration's record of weakened oversight, Mayor Zohran Mamdani's Executive Budget deepens that damage by cutting DOI's staffing by an additional 11 positions and further reducing its budget, reflecting an even lower proposal than in the preliminary budget, despite repeated calls from council members to protect this key agency. It provides only a partial restoration of COIB's capacity that still leaves it far short of what is needed.

Department of Investigation: Further Cuts That Risk Oversight Mission

The Executive Budget proposes reducing DOI to 282 full-time positions in FY2027 — a cut of 11 positions from even the preliminary budget level of 293, and far below the 363 positions DOI had before the Adams administration.

The dollar budget lowers the DOI's funding to \$53.7 million from \$55.8 million, nearly the same level as five years ago, despite an almost 30 percent growth in the overall city budget over that time. The proposal includes additional non-personnel reductions that, [according to the DOI](#), risk nondiscretionary expenses such as rent and mandated monitorship programs for the Asylum Seeker Initiative and Borough-Based Jails construction.

These constraints are already harming performance. According to the [Mayor's Management Report](#), average investigation completion time has grown from 201 days in FY2023 to 251 days in FY2025. With the first four months of FY2026 on track to average 325 days, the situation is worsening. Background checks and vetting of new city hires are similarly delayed. Reducing DOI's headcount further will only accelerate this deterioration.

Instead of those cuts, the Council should support DOI's request for 17 additional full-time positions to assist with investigations, background checks, audits, and operations. DOI also

requires increased OTPS funding to fulfill its expanded responsibilities, including the City Council's directive to investigate the City's knowledge of Ground Zero toxins following the September 11 attacks (Reso. 560-2024), which DOI estimates cost \$4-5 million.

[Speaker Menin has called](#) to make sure DOI is properly funded, and members have supported protecting its budget. We urge the Council to honor that commitment in the final budget.

Conflicts of Interest Board: Modest Improvement in Overall Underinvestment

The Executive Budget proposes \$3 million and 24 positions for COIB in FY2027 — a modest improvement over the current 22 positions and \$2.86 million. We welcome the addition of two positions, which partially addresses the erosion of recent years. But COIB had 26 staff as recently as January 2022, and the Executive Budget still falls two positions short of that level. Meanwhile, the city budget has grown substantially, the workforce COIB oversees has not shrunk, and the volume of complaints and requests for advice has increased.

The widening gap between the size of the city government workforce and the small agency responsible for enforcing ethics laws poses a risk to the city's ability to maintain a clean and honest government.

We support restoring COIB's staffing to 26 full-time positions. In this small, specialized agency, each position plays a critical role in delivering advice, education, legal counsel, and enforcement. Adequate funding is also needed to retain experienced staff, institutional knowledge, and operational integrity.

The Council's Own Charter Recommendations Proposed Higher Funding Under Independent Budgeting

A charter commission appointed by the City Council last year recognized the need to strengthen the capacity of both agencies, including addressing chronic staffing reductions and ensuring sufficient funding for non-salary expenses. The Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy [recommended in its final report](#) that the budgets of DOI and COIB be increased and protected, setting minimum funding levels of 0.06 percent and 0.0035 percent of the city's total budget, respectively. Based on the mayor's proposed \$127 billion budget, these benchmarks would amount to approximately \$76.2 million for DOI and \$4.4 million for COIB—substantially above current funding levels.

Investing in Oversight Saves City Resources, Preventing Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Investing in oversight agencies is an investment in a more efficient and effective city government. Assuming NYC DOI is equally as effective as [federal Inspectors General](#), a dollar spent on DOI saves NYC at least \$18 in taxpayer dollars. If DOI is as effective as the federal [General Accounting Office](#), a dollar spent on DOI saves New York City \$123.

DOI investigations resulted in more than \$6 million in financial recoveries last year and generated additional savings through improved oversight of contracts, vendors, and procurement processes. COIB, meanwhile, trains tens of thousands of city employees annually, helping prevent violations before they occur and reducing the risk of costly misconduct.

We urge the City Council to fund DOI and COIB at the levels they have requested.

Sincerely,

Grace Rauh, Executive Director
Citizens Union

John Kaehny, Executive Director
Reinvent Albany

Susan Lerner, Executive Director
Common Cause/New York

Kai Rosenthal, Co-President
League of Women Voters of the City of New York

Blair Horner, Senior Policy Advisor
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