



Girls for Gender Equity Testimony
The New York City Council's
Joint Committees on Public Safety and Justice System
Delivered by: Kylynn Grier
February 7, 2019

Good morning, Committee Chairs Richards and Lancman, and members of the Committee on Public Safety and Justice System. My name is Kylynn Grier and I am the Policy Manager at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE), an organization challenging structural forces that work to obstruct the freedom, full expression, and rights of girls, transgender, and gender non-conforming (TGNC) youth of color. We are also proud members and leaders of a number of coalitions and joint campaigns that advance our work - pertinent to today's hearing, the Dignity in Schools Campaign, the Sexuality Education Alliance of New York, and Communities United for Police Reform. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

We work daily with young women and TGNC youth of color who are policed at every juncture of their lives, on the way to school by NYPD officers, in school by NYPD School Safety Agents, and while accessing City services as seen with Jazmin Headley at the Department of Social Services. Young women and TGNC young people are criminalized for normal adolescent behavior, often times hyper-sexualized due to historically located racialized and gender-based stereotypes, and their bodies are regularly policed because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression.

Resolution 3709 - Calling for Civil Rights Law 50-a Repeal:

Girls for Gender Equity applauds the introduction of Resolution 3709 - a resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass a full repeal of New York State Civil Rights law 50-a. This would make certain information from police personnel records available to the public, such as reports of misconduct. As an organization that has worked to address gender-based violence

for over 16 years, we understand that acts of gender-based violence are often patterned and repetitive. Frequently, sexual harassment and sexual assault are not a one time or isolated incident. As with other forms of police misconduct against community members, officers often have disciplinary records that reflect former complaints of misconduct against alleged officers. Survivors who report sexual misconduct by police officers are met by a disciplinary system that benefits from hiding repeated misconduct from the public eye.

The Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) already carves out protections around personal records of any city employee, so the overly broad and expansive interpretation of CRL 50-a by this administration offers special protections that go far beyond FOIL and beyond protections offered to other New York City employees. This secrecy unnecessarily causes undue onus on survivors of *all* police misconduct, including families who have lost loved ones to police violence.

Expand the Power of the Civilian Complaint Review Board:

Girls for Gender Equity stands with Anna Chambers¹, an 18-year-old girl who was raped and sexually assaulted by two NYPD officers in Brooklyn and who is one of many survivors of NYPD gender-based violence, including police sexual violence. These experiences and narratives are often unheard in mainstream media or conversations about policing. This silence exists alongside a multitude of systemic barriers to reporting, survivor supports, and often victim-blaming and criminalization of survivors. This is absolutely and unequivocally rooted in racialized and gender-based discrimination.

In February 2018, the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) agreed to begin phasing in taking reports of police sexual misconduct against members of the public. Since the adoption of this policy, the CCRB has reported 130 reports of sexual misconduct with 50 reports with

¹ Two New York Detectives Are Charged With Rape and Kidnapping
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/30/nyregion/nypd-detectives-rape-kidnapping-charges.html>



complaints of sexual assault sent to District Attorneys' offices². Located in a landscape where very few people report experiences of gender-based violence and with limited public awareness of CCRB's recent adoption, this number is significant.

Still, survivors must still participate in a dual process run out of the NYPD Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB), where survivors are treated in deeply dehumanizing ways and the NYPD has ultimate decision authority over disciplinary outcomes for NYPD Officers who engage in harmful behavior. As a city, we must enable CCRB to make final discipline determinations in cases that they already prosecute through the Administrative Prosecution Unit and in cases where the NYPD Commissioner deviates from a CCRB recommendation the Commissioner should document and make publicly available the reason for a dissenting opinion.

Girls for Gender Equity also calls for the expansion of CCRB's authority to explicitly include NYPD School Safety Agents, and other "peace officers" who operate under the direction of the NYPD, though they are not themselves NYPD officers, through the 2019 New York City Charter Revision process. This expanded power must also include complaints of gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Currently, pathways for reporting harmful experiences with school safety agents and other peace officers must go through IAB. Young people who have experienced reportable harm by school safety agents must have their reports handled by the NYPD. CCRB can and should be the primary agency for these reports and should have the authority to make final disciplinary decisions in cases in which they already have oversight power.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, our shared work to continue to ensure that survivors of all forms of violence are treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve.

² [1/22/2019] The New York City Council Committee on Public Safety
<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=670673&GUID=E305F60F-E662-4185-B23B-08060FD6BFCA&Options=info&Search=>