



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## Manhattan Elected Officials Push NYPD to Observe COVID-19 Safety Protocols for Public Meetings

BRIAN KAVANAGH June 29, 2020

| ISSUE: **POLICE, NEW YORK CITY, COVID-19, PUBLIC HEALTH, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



On June 29, 2020, Senator Kavanagh and his colleagues reminded NYPD's Chief of Patrol Services of the importance of maintaining social distancing guidelines during public meetings. Legislators were disappointed to find that precincts were conducting in-person meetings with as many as 40 people. They noted that in addition to posing public safety risks, this also posed concerns related to accessibility and equity—as those who might be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 might not risk attending meetings. The text of the officials' letter is below; the original may be viewed via the link above.

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June 29, 2020

Fausto B. Pichardo

Chief of Patrol Services

New York Police Department

1 Police Plaza

New York, NY 10038

Dear Chief Pichardo:

It is our understanding that under your direction, New York Police Department precincts held meetings on June 25th, for local stakeholders to voice concerns about public safety and to discuss opportunities for partnership. While we applaud the intention to engage with our communities and forge new paths forward to address community safety, we were taken aback to find out that these meetings were intended to be held in person for 25+ people, in contradiction to the gathering directives of Governor Cuomo's Executive Orders and phased reopening protocol, and did not provide call in or video conferencing option for attendees.

While we understand that precincts provided PPE and attempted to locate large spaces for these meetings, these meetings go against Executive Order 202.35 that permits general gatherings of 10 or fewer persons, providing that social distancing protocols and cleaning and disinfection protocols are followed. Executive Order 202.42 permits general gatherings of up to 25 when a region enters Phase 3. It is our understanding that while attendance varied across precincts, some had as many as 40+ people in a room.

We believe that as local leaders and enforcers of the law, the NYPD should hold itself to the same standard it is holding our community members to and align its practices with the

reopening guidance the state has set forth.

Hosting these meetings creates a situation where arguably the most vulnerable, in terms of public safety, cannot participate because they are high COVID-19 risk. It also risks these meetings being a location for spread.

We ask that all NYPD community meetings comply with state guidelines and provide virtual alternatives. I know you agree that our residents should not have to choose between their health and their safety in their community.

Sincerely,

Brad Hoylman

State Senator

27th District

Gale A. Brewer

Manhattan Borough President

Brian Kavanagh

State Senator

26th District

Liz Krueger

State Senator

28th District

Harvey Epstein

State Assemblymember

74th District

Deborah J. Glick

State Assemblymember

66th District

Richard N. Gottfried

State Assemblymember

75th District

Yuh-Line Niou

State Assemblymember

65th District

Linda Rosenthal

State Assemblymember

67th District

Carlina Rivera

NYC Council Member

2nd District

Helen Rosenthal

NYC Council Member

6th District