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CCRB, John Jay Host Symposium on Oversight of Law Enforcement

Elected Officials, Academics, Advocates, and Journalists Joined for Conversations About Improving Accountability for Police, Correction Officers in New York City, Across the Nation

New York, NY – The New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), in conjunction with the John Jay Office for the Advancement of Research, on Friday hosted a symposium on oversight of law enforcement in New York and across the nation.

During the symposium, criminal justice and law enforcement scholars and reform advocates convened for discussions on how oversight entities can better serve civilians. Five panels throughout the day focused on building confidence on the police complaint process, bridging the gap between communities and oversight entities, and using data—including body-worn camera footage—to increase transparency in the oversight process.

“In the midst of a national conversation about how best to hold law enforcement officers accountable, discussions regarding the history of oversight, the current state of affairs, and the ideals we wish to implement in the future are essential,” said CCRB Chair Fred Davie. “The array of thoughtful perspectives shared throughout today’s symposium was a display of invaluable insight, which is fundamental to progress.”

“Getting the stakeholders in the room is just the first step. The real work begins with the dialogue that civilian oversight makes possible,” said Daniel Stageman, Director of Research Operations at the John Jay Office for the Advancement of Research. “John Jay was glad to help provide a platform for dialogue on this matter today, and we look forward to continued work with the CCRB as we engage in the ongoing discourse on oversight of law enforcement.”

Keynote speaker Marilyn Mosby, State’s Attorney for the City of Baltimore, noted parallels between oversight of law enforcement in Baltimore and New York and emphasized the importance of communication between all parties involved in the oversight of law enforcement.

“Building relationships and collaborating with everyday civilians, advocates, scholars, and law enforcement entities is essential to establishing trust within our communities,” said Mosby.

“Oversight agencies play a big role in that process. The mere presence of an all-civilian entity like the Civilian Complaint Review Board makes a difference in the perception of justice.”

“I want to thank everyone at John Jay who made this event possible, and the CCRB for the vital work that they do every day to increase transparency and accountability in law enforcement on behalf of the people,” said Public Advocate-elect Jumaane Williams. “With every reform to policing, there are those who falsely fear monger and claim it will be catastrophic. They even did it when Mayor Dinkins created the CCRB. But now as Public Advocate, I’ll work in a building that bears his name. Progress is possible.

“At the end of the day, members of the law enforcement community just want to go home to their families. Civilians, too, just want to get home safely. Those ends aren’t mutually exclusive,” said Council Member Donovan Richards, chair of the Committee on Public Safety. “By bringing people from all sides together, discussions on oversight of law enforcement like the ones that took place today help inform our approach to the challenges New York City faces and ultimately move us closer to a safer, better city for all of our residents.”

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The New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) is the largest police oversight entity in the nation and is empowered to investigate, mediate, prosecute, and recommend disciplinary action for complaints alleging misconduct by NYPD officers. See NYC Charter § 440(c)(1). The agency's jurisdiction includes excessive and unnecessary force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and use of offensive language. To further this mission, CCRB issues monthly, biannual, and special statistical and qualitative reports analyzing trends and recurring issues arising from the many thousands of civilian complaints it receives each year.