

**Testimony before the New York City Council
Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections
Margaret Garnett
November 26th, 2018**

Thank you Speaker Johnson, Chair Koslowitz, and Chair Torres. My name is Margaret Garnett, and I am honored to be before you today as the Mayor's nominee for the Commissioner of the Department of Investigation. I would also like to thank the members of the Rules Committee, the Oversight and Investigations Committee, and other members of the Council for allowing me here to discuss this vital role and my qualifications for it.

I grew up in a family deeply committed to the ideal of public service, and for the past 13 years I have tried to honor that legacy as a federal and state prosecutor. I am proud of my reputation for independence, integrity, fairness, and professional excellence, and if I am confirmed by this Council, I look forward to bringing those qualities to my work as Commissioner of DOI.

As a prosecutor, I am honored to be considered to be the next Commissioner of DOI. As a New Yorker, I am thrilled to have the chance to serve the city I love in a new way. I have lived in New York City nearly all of my adult life, and I am raising my family here. The Department of Investigation plays such an important role in the City and can be a force for tremendous positive change for all New Yorkers. In its role as criminal investigator, DOI helps to ensure that New Yorkers have the honest government they deserve, by rooting out wrongdoers who abuse the public's trust and unfairly stain the work of the vast majority of dedicated and honest city employees. In its oversight role, DOI can play a vital part in improving the work of every part of city government, by shining a light on needed systemic changes, identifying waste and mismanagement, and giving this council, the administration, and the public the information required to push for reforms. Finally, it is vitally important to the integrity of DOI that it be independent from the rest of city government, and also be perceived by the public as independent. I believe that my career up to this point has prepared me well to meet all of these challenges.

I feel lucky to have been trained as a prosecutor at the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, under the leadership of several outstanding U.S. Attorneys. I am confident that the values I learned there will serve me well as DOI Commissioner — to be guided only by what is in the public interest, with total fidelity to the facts and the law. To do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons, every day.

In my work as an Assistant United States Attorney, I investigated and prosecuted a variety of cases, including massive tax fraud, embezzlement, major narcotics cases, home invasion robbery crews, and murders. I became the Chief of the Violent & Organized Crimes Unit, which I supervised for four years. During that time, the Unit charged hundreds of violent criminals endangering the lives of New Yorkers, and solved dozens of murders, including cold-case murders where victim's families had been waiting for years or even decades for answers.

I also became involved in several exoneration efforts, in which information learned from our own investigations allowed us to identify and clear a number of people wrongfully convicted of murder in other jurisdictions. I subsequently was named a Deputy Chief of Criminal Appeals, and then Chief of Appeals for the Criminal Division. In that role, I supervised the entire criminal appellate docket of the Office before the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, as well as serving as a legal advisor to the Office as a whole, including Unit Chiefs and executive staff. I was involved in advising on every category of case the Office prosecutes, including public corruption, securities fraud, violent crime, organized crime, major fraud schemes, money laundering, and terrorism.

For the last year, I have served as the Executive Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice at the New York State Attorney General's Office. In that role, I run the Criminal Division of the AG's Office, and supervise approximately 150 prosecutors, 130 police-investigators, and 150 other staff, including forensic auditors, analysts, data scientists, and clerical staff. The Criminal Division investigates and prosecutes a variety of criminal cases state-wide, including public corruption, organized crime, narcotics and firearms trafficking, Medicaid fraud, patient abuse and neglect, and a wide range of financial crimes including securities fraud, real estate fraud schemes, and insurance fraud. I also supervise the Special Investigations and Prosecutions Unit, which was created by the Governor three years ago to investigate any incident in New York State where unarmed civilians are killed by police officers or die in police custody. Finally, I advise the Attorney General and the civil divisions of the Office on issues that relate to the criminal justice system or law enforcement. I have benefitted enormously over the last year from the mentorship and support of Attorney General Barbara Underwood, and in particular the way she has led the Office these last six months. In a time of upheaval and uncertainty, she has kept the focus of the entire Office on the incredibly important work we are doing on behalf of all New Yorkers, and inspired us all with her brilliance, kindness, and enthusiastic dedication to the public interest. She has been a tremendous example for me of principled and steady leadership.

I believe that I have the professional experience and personal qualities to lead DOI effectively in its vital and important work. I have both conducted and supervised many complex criminal investigations, exercising independent judgment and reaching fair and just results under sometimes intense public scrutiny and criticism. I know how to produce superb written work that is both analytically sound and accessible to a variety of readers. I have built strong professional relationships with key law enforcement partners, including the five city district attorneys' offices, the two U.S. Attorney's offices, as well as the NYPD and other federal and state agencies. If I am confirmed I will work to build those same quality professional relationships with the heads of city agencies and with this Council, in service of DOI's oversight mission. Finally, I am an experienced manager of people, with a proven ability to create and model a culture of collaboration, teamwork, integrity, and the highest professional standards.

I hope to earn your confidence and support today, and then go on to earn the confidence and support of the professional staff at DOI, and the confidence and support of the public as we continue to work on their behalf.

I'm happy to answer any questions that the Council has for me.

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