



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1248

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to amend the New York City Charter to change the police commissioner position from appointed to elected.

By Council Members Williams, Dromm, James, Rose, Rodriguez and Mark-Viverito

Whereas, The New York City Police Department (NYPD) is the largest police department in the United States with a police force of over 34,000 police officers; its mission is to investigate reported crimes, make arrests and address conditions that affect the quality of life in the City; and

Whereas, The NYPD is headed by a police commissioner, who is presently Raymond W. Kelly; and

Whereas, According to the New York City Charter, the mayor appoints the police commissioner to serve for a period of five years unless removed from office; and

Whereas, The charter bestows on the police commissioner many powers and duties including “cognizance and control of the government, administration, disposition and discipline of the department, and of the police force of the department”; and

Whereas, Additionally, the police commissioner is the chief executive officer of the police force; and

Whereas, The police commissioner cannot act alone in fighting crime and in fact he or she needs the public’s cooperation to help him or her identify suspects, and offer crime-fighting tips, along with other forms of assistance; and

Whereas, Because the public must be an integral partner in the police department’s activities, and must

have confidence in the police, the public should decide who becomes the police commissioner; and

Whereas, In order to make the police commissioner more accountable to the citizens, the NYPD police commissioner should be elected rather than appointed; and

Whereas, The practice of electing a head of police can be seen in the sheriff model used by other cities and counties including Los Angeles County; and

Whereas, According to the National Sheriffs' Association, sheriffs are elected in 46 states, or nearly 3,100 jurisdictions throughout the United States; and

Whereas, When voters elect the head of the local police force they have the power to evaluate his or her performance and whether he or she is doing the job the citizens expected; and

Whereas, New York State should change the police commissioner position to an elected one immediately since this form of governance is in line with our ideals of direct democracy; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to amend the New York City Charter to change the police commissioner position from appointed to elected.

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