

Quinn Aims For Middle Ground In Public Safety Speech

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New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn wants the police department to be bigger than it is under Mayor Michael Bloomberg — and to better relate with the people that it protects.

The Democratic candidate for mayor defended most of Bloomberg's current policing strategy and called for an additional 1,600 uniformed officers, but tried to reach a middle ground on the city's stop, question and frisk policy.

While she reiterated her support for an independent police monitor to oversee the department, Quinn distanced herself from a proposed law that would expand the city's law against racial profiling.

"We need to sustain the progress we've made over the past 12 years, fix what hasn't worked and build a stronger bond between police and the communities they serve," she said.

Quinn also defended Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, who Quinn has previously lauded despite disagreement on the stop-and-frisk policy. She called his work "incredible" and said that anyone who fails to recognize his work "is simply out of touch with the reality of life in New York City."

Kelly and Bloomberg have both come out against a City Council proposal to create an independent inspector general. Both the commissioner and the mayor argue that the NYPD has sufficient oversight, including the Civilian Complaint Review Board and the department's Internal Affairs Bureau. Quinn nonetheless celebrated Kelly's time with the force.

"Our city would be incredibly lucky to have him continue on as commissioner," she said.

To continue making progress, Quinn said that the police needs to hire more officers. She proposed that the city hire 1,600 additional police officers, and that the department accelerate its hiring of 500 new officers who are scheduled to start in January.

Quinn would instead have those new officers begin in June, and said that a speedier increase in police hires would not be a financial burden for the department. The additional cost, she said, would be offset by, among other things, the lower wages given to new recruits as opposed to senior officers on the verge of retirement.

Quinn credited Kelly for a number of things, including what she called strides in community relations since former Mayor Rudy Giuliani's tenure. She also praised the increased number of minority officers and the department's "direct community engagement."

Calling stop-and-frisk an "important tool" for police, Quinn said she doesn't want to ban the policy. Instead, she wants the NYPD to better train its officers and build better working relationships with community members to mend the rift between the two.

"A safe city and a city where people in every community feel like they're being treated with respect are not mutually exclusive goals," she said. "We can have both."

She repeated her support for the independent monitor legislation, one of four bills in the proposed Community Safety Act. Unlike previous statements about the act, however, Quinn came out against one of the bills that would enforce the city's law against racial profiling.

She cautioned that the bill is redundant of existing checks put in place against racial profiling. Quinn said New Yorkers can already work file grievances with the CCRB and lawsuits through the federal courts.

"I believe this presents a real risk that a multitude of state court judges issue rulings that could take control of police policy decisions away from the mayor and commissioner," Quinn said, repeating a line often used against her support of the inspector general bill. "This could overlap and possibly conflict with rulings coming out of the federal courts, and could occur before the

proposed oversight through DOI has had a chance to be fully implemented."

The Community Safety Act's lead sponsors, who have worked with Quinn on the inspector general bill, both admonished the speaker for her lack of support for the racial profiling bill. Brooklyn Councilmen Jumaane Williams and Brad Lander jointly stated that recent lawsuits against stop-and-frisk prove that profiling is happening despite existing law.

"We cannot keep our communities safe by profiling our neighbors based on their race, religion, LGBT, or other status," they wrote in response to Quinn's speech. "It violates fundamental civil liberties, breaks down the bonds of trust necessary for good policing, sets New Yorkers against each other and has never been proven to work."

The bill in question, [Intro 800-A](#), has already been amended since it was first introduced last year. The latest language would not allow plaintiffs to seek monetary damages, adopt the city Human Rights Law's definition of profiling and protect supervisors from legal action.

Quinn is expected to join her fellow Democratic mayoral candidates for a larger forum on public safety tonight at John Jay College for Criminal Justice to be aired on NY1.

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