

Brooklyn Councilman: Opposition To NYPD Bills 'Paternalistic'

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Brooklyn City Councilman Jumaane Williams calls opposition to two bills that would increase oversight and regulation of the New York Police Department "paternalistic."

The bills to create an [independent police department inspector general](#) and expand the city's ban on racial profiling are expected to be introduced at tomorrow's Council meeting.

"What sometimes disturbs me is that the most vociferous people against these bills generally are not the ones that deal with gun violence in their district and are not the ones who deal with over-policing in their district," Williams said earlier today after unveiling the latest versions of the bills at City Hall. His district has already seen at least 27 shootings this year.

"I would wager a bet," Williams continued while punctuating his points by thumping his fist at the podium before him, "that I have been to more funerals of young black men than they have. That I have spoken to more mothers just minutes, hours, days after they've lost a young black or Latino male than they have."

Yesterday, Williams and fellow Brooklyn City Councilman Brad Lander, a co-sponsor, announced that they would bypass the chair of the Council's public safety committee in order to get the bills to the floor for a vote in the next few weeks.

The committee's chair, Queens Councilman Peter Vallone Jr., told the Gotham Gazette today that he opposes the racial profiling bill in particular, which builds upon legislation he helped write and pass in 2004.

"Virtually everyone in law enforcement is opposed to this bill," Vallone said. "And I can't think of

anybody more affected by gun violence than law enforcement."

Vallone specifically questioned a part of the bill that would allow residents to sue police for biased profiling, a move that he said would put a hole in the city budget and take police officers off the streets.

"If anyone doesn't think massive costs will not lead to an increase in crime, well, they're absolutely naive," Vallone said, adding that there is no middle ground in a debate between police and those "without a single day of experience in law enforcement."

Lander said the bill only allows for declaratory relief in lawsuits, not monetary, and there's a high bar for plaintiffs to bring about a lawsuit.

"Let's be clear," Lander said during the presser, "the goal of this legislation is to make sure the NYPD does good policies that doesn't involve biased-based profiling. The standards of the law are clear, and if they simply use the clear test provided in the law, they'll easily be able to continue to implement permissible policies."

Lander added that he and Williams were confident that the City Council will have secured veto-proof majorities by the time the bill goes to a vote. Bloomberg has committed to vetoing both bills, which Lander expects will happen before August.

Over the last few months, Bloomberg has used both bills as a measure of his replacement's commitment to public safety, making them a central point of debate in many mayoral forums.

Democratic frontrunner and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn has committed to the inspector general bill, but not to the profiling legislation. Still, she's willing to let the bill go to a vote.

Besides Quinn, only Public Advocate Bill de Blasio is supportive of both bills. Former

comptroller Bill Thompson and former Congressman Anthony Weiner have argued that they would be unnecessary under their administrations.

Sitting Comptroller John Liu often describes stop-and-frisk as institutionalized profiling. Like like Thompson and Weiner, he dismisses the need for a monitor under his leadership. All the Republican candidates support NYPD's stop-and-frisk.

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