

**Testimony of Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum for City Council Hearing on  
Civilian Complaint Review Board Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, 3/20/07**

Thank you, Chair Vallone, for holding this important hearing. The budget process represents a critical opportunity to strengthen services that protect New Yorkers. Today, I urge the Council to make more funding available to the Civilian Complaint Review Board to hire additional investigators.

The NYPD has one of the toughest jobs in the City. They are out there every day risking their lives to protect New Yorkers. These brave men and women have done such an excellent job in recent years that crime has fallen citywide to near record lows. They should be congratulated for their efforts. Sometimes, however, the rights of civilians are violated and it is necessary for an outside party to intervene in the interests of justice. Unfortunately, the city agency responsible for investigating complaints of police misconduct is under-funded and under-staffed.

Between FY2002 and FY2006, the number of complaints of police misconduct received by the CCRB increased by more than 78 percent from 4,122 to 7,347. Furthermore, we are on pace for another increase of 6 percent from last year to this year, from 7,347 complaints to 7,815.

The increase in complaints has outpaced increases in CCRB's budget and personnel. In other words, the agency is forced to stretch its resources further each year. During the same period that the CCRB saw this dramatic increase in the number of complaints, its budget rose only 12 percent and its staffing levels only 3 percent. As a result, CCRB reported a 93 percent increase in its backlog of cases between FY2002 and FY2007 from 742 to 1,435.

While I am encouraged that the Mayor has added new funding to the CCRB budget for FY2008, I believe more is needed to bring the CCRB budget up to a level commensurate with the increase in complaints. I look forward to working with the City Council on this issue.

Thank you.