

Statement of Elizabeth Glazer

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New York City Council

Oversight Hearing: Using Evidence-Based Procedures and Technology to Keep Innocent People Out of Jail

Committee on Public Safety
Committee on Courts and Legal Services**September 23, 2016**

Good morning, Chairs Gibson and Lancman and members of the Committees on Public Safety and Courts and Legal Services. My name is Elizabeth Glazer and I am the Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice ("MOCJ"). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Wrongful convictions are a critical matter of fairness and something that is important to every New Yorker. Wrongful convictions not only irrevocably damage the lives of those convicted, but also permit the perpetrators of a crime to go unpunished. This both compromises public safety and erodes trust in the justice system. New York City has worked to ensure that policies related to custodial interrogations and eyewitness identification are developed with a key emphasis on ensuring fairness and maximizing reliability. I want to discuss today one example of this work.

NYPD videotapes the interviews of every defendant arrested for index felony offenses and attempts, commonly referred to as the "7 major felonies." These offenses include murder, rape, robbery, burglary, assault, grand larceny, and grand larceny auto. There are some exceptions, for example, when a defendant requests a lawyer or refuses to be videotaped. In addition, Detective Zone Captains are given latitude to record certain misdemeanor arrests based on the circumstances – this occurs most often with misdemeanor sex crimes. In addition, arrests by uniformed patrol for gun offenses are enhanced by the local detective squad and are recorded.

Currently, the New York City Police Department has 82 rooms equipped with video recording software. Each detective squad assigned to a precinct has a room equipped with this software. All Special Victim Squads are equipped as well. Since 2011, the Department has recorded in over 5,000 custodial interrogations. It has been the NYPD's experience that recording not only aids those who are innocent, but also bolsters the work performed by officers by preventing disputes about how an officer conducted him/herself while also increasing transparency as to what was said and done during an interrogation.

While we are confident in our current policies and procedures, we understand that just one conviction of an innocent person is one too many. We are always willing to work with our partners in the Council as well as with concerned stakeholders to ensure the fair administration of these procedures. Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. I would be happy to answer any questions.