



BILL DE BLASIO
MAYOR

CIVILIAN COMPLAINT REVIEW BOARD
100 CHURCH STREET 10th FLOOR
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10007 ♦ TELEPHONE (212) 912-7235
www.nyc.gov/ccrb



DEBORAH ARCHER, ESQ.
ACTING CHAIR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 2017

MEDIA CONTACT

Colleen A. Roache
press@ccrb.nyc.gov
(o) 212-912-2051
(c) 347-267-5105

Civilian Complaint Review Board Issues 2017 Semi-Annual Report
Record Success in Mediation Unit, Surge in Prevalence of Video Evidence Among Highlights

New York, NY – Today, the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) released its 2017 Semi-Annual Report. Data in the Agency’s report, which includes analysis of investigations, mediations, and prosecutions from January through June of 2017, indicates the following: (1) the New York City Police Department (NYPD) imposed discipline in the majority of cases in which the CCRB recommended it; (2) for the first time in more than a decade, successful CCRB mediations outpaced attempted mediations, indicating a willingness among civilians and officers alike to engage in meaningful dialogue and come to a mutual understanding of an incident; and (3) there was a notable rise in the availability of video evidence, which shines a light on the significance of expanding New York City’s body-worn camera (BWC) program.

“The Civilian Complaint Review Board continues to work on behalf of the people of New York to improve transparency and accountability in policing. By reaching out to residents in all five boroughs, taking action to yield positive outcomes through its mediation program and acknowledging the importance of video evidence in completing investigations, the Agency is acting in accordance with its mission of being a national leader in police oversight,” said Jonathan Darche, CCRB Executive Director.

The Agency received more than 2,200 complaints from civilians regarding force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, or offensive language during the first six months of 2017. Of the complaints received during this period, the majority, 72 percent, included abuse of authority allegations. Most typically, this involved an officer unlawfully threatening to arrest a civilian. Of the cases citing force, the second most common allegation, 72 percent involved physical force.

As the semi-annual report reflects, the majority of adjudicated cases closed by the Administrative Prosecution Unit—the division of the CCRB responsible for prosecuting the most serious cases of police misconduct against members of the NYPD—resulted in Department-imposed discipline. Furthermore, 77 percent of reconsideration requests were not presented to the Board

in accordance with the Board's policy. These requests were received after the 90 day period expired and did not include new facts or errors of the law.

This is the Agency's first semi-annual report issued since the NYPD's April 2017 large-scale deployment of body-worn cameras. The report's data regarding the impact of video evidence offers early insight on policies that will shape the future use of BWCs. The report notes that the Board substantiated 33 percent of full investigations of incidents for which there was video evidence in the first half of 2017, a significant increase over investigations for which there was no video evidence. In the latter category, the Board substantiated just 14 percent of full investigations. In the first half of 2017, 31 percent of allegations with video evidence were exonerated, compared to 28 percent without video.

"While a number of past cases were closed as unsubstantiated due to lack of sufficient evidence, the City of New York is moving toward a future in which video evidence will offer our investigators more definitive accounts of incidents," said Darche. "It is critical for the timely completion of investigations that the CCRB gains access to body-worn camera footage in a fast and efficient manner as we anticipate an increase in the volume of video evidence."

As the report reflects, during the first half of 2017, 18 percent of the complaints closed included video evidence, a major increase from 2012, when just one percent of complaints closed included some form of video evidence. The availability of this footage is expected to increase as the City moves forward with its plan to equip more than 20,000 patrol officers with BWCs by the end of 2019.

The complete report is available here: www.nyc.gov/ccrbreports.

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The New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) is the largest police oversight entity in the nation and is empowered to investigate, mediate, prosecute, and recommend disciplinary action for complaints alleging misconduct by NYPD officers. See NYC Charter § 440(c)(1). The agency's jurisdiction includes excessive and unnecessary force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and use of offensive language. To further this mission, CCRB issues monthly, biannual, and special statistical and qualitative reports analyzing trends and recurring issues arising from the many thousands of civilian complaints it receives each year