

The NYPD IG will improve policing

The commissioner of investigations answers critics' complaints

BY [Mark Peters](#)

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Friday, April 18, 2014, 4:30 AM



[Julia Xanthos/New York Daily News](#)

Not a threat to the NYPD.

On May 27, the city's first independent Inspector General for the New York City Police Department takes office.

I know that the road to the creation of the NYPD IG has not been without controversy. But I am confident that once the office is up and running, this city and the Department of Investigation — the agency charged with supervising the new NYPD IG — will continue a rich tradition of independent oversight of municipal government.

Since I announced Phil Eure as my selection for the NYPD IG, there have been a number of misleading statements that I want to correct. It is important that all of us move forward with facts, not rhetoric.

Fact: Local Law 70, which created the IG, empowers the Commissioner of Investigation to review NYPD policies, procedures and practices. To that end, I appointed a Police Inspector General who will work with me to make sure that such oversight occurs.

Fact: Modern policing is strengthened, not hindered, by independent review. The greatest athletes have coaches. The greatest writers have editors. We accept the concept that an independent voice helps make us better, stronger and more effective. Companies have audit committees, scholars submit to peer review and doctors have medical rounds. With the Inspector General, New York City now adopts this universal fact in policing.

Fact: The NYPD is the best trained police force in the country. Officers follow orders and adjust to new leadership and policies with a professionalism that is the envy of the world. The dramatic reduction in the use of stop and frisk, which has happened alongside a continued decline in crime, is all the proof needed. External oversight is not a denial of this but an acknowledgement that in a democracy, even great institutions — most particularly law enforcement, which has the power to restrain people's freedom — need independent review.

Fact: We have reached out to the police unions. I have had productive conversations with them — and we look forward to a good working relationship. They, like all the stakeholders we have spoken with, help us make informed decisions that make an impact, rather than just a headline.

Fact: There is a well-defined place for the IG to do its work of examining and reforming unfair or unjust practices. The point is not to replicate the Civilian Complaint Review Board or the NYPD's Internal Affairs Bureau, both of which investigate individual claims of wrongdoing. (Indeed, the law now requires that both of these entities report to DOI on findings that impact the new IG's work.)

Fact: I have met with many community groups, and while there has been a palpable improvement in police-community relations over the past 100 days, work remains to be done. That's why we are hiring a staff of 50 investigators, data analysts, lawyers and others to look at the facts and follow up on the concerns we continue to hear about. Like the rest of the Department of Investigation, the NYPD IG's office will provide ongoing, independent assessment of where we still need to improve and what we've gotten wrong.

Fact: Where we find problems, we must propose solutions — and we will take pains to ensure that they will work in the real world. Theory and philosophy will not help New Yorkers whose rights have been violated nor lend clarity to a police force safeguarding a diverse and complex city.

The task of the NYPD IG - like policing itself - is hard, serious work, best done with calm facts, not heated rhetoric. We can, and we must, protect the civil rights of all New Yorkers in all our communities. When we do that, we strengthen the relationship with the Department's most important ally in fighting crime, the public, and further its confidence in the Department. The success of each is linked to the other.

Peters is New York City's commissioner of investigations.