



*Patrolmen's
Benevolent
Association*

Of The City Of New York, Incorporated

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 13, 2018

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Corey Johnson
Speaker of the New York City Council
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Arrest of Jazmine Headley

Speaker Johnson:

I write to address the outrageous rush to judgment surrounding the December 7 arrest of Jazmine Headley inside a Human Resources Administration (HRA) facility in Brooklyn. As you know, this incident is under investigation and very few concrete details have emerged, apart from the partial video that appeared on social media over the weekend.

Nonetheless, multiple members of the City Council have engaged in dangerous demagoguery against the NYPD members involved, suggesting — without any basis in fact — that those officers should be fired or even imprisoned for their conduct. Their statements are exacerbating the already hostile anti-police atmosphere that exists both online and in the streets, and are sending a profoundly negative message to every single police officer who protects your constituents.

Your leadership is sorely needed here. As Speaker of the Council, you are in a position to temper the rhetoric and encourage your colleagues to reserve judgment until the facts and circumstances of this incident are made clear. The facts, as we understand them so far, tell a different story about our members' involvement in this incident than the one advanced by the media and your colleagues:

Shortly after 1:00 p.m. on Friday, December 7, two NYPD members assigned to the 84th Precinct responded to the HRA location at 275 Bergen Street in Brooklyn at the request of members of the Human Resources Administration Police, who requested their assistance in removing an individual from the premises due to her allegedly "belligerent" behavior. The NYPD members were not present to witness the behavior that led to the HRA Police decision to remove Ms. Headley.

Upon their arrival, the NYPD members informed Ms. Headley that she needed to comply with the directives of the HRA Police, who have authority over the premises. They then attempted to deescalate the situation, noting the presence of Ms. Headley's child and specifically stating that they did *not* want to be forced to arrest her under those circumstances. They suggested that Ms. Headley attempt to visit another HRA facility that could provide the services she sought. In response to Ms. Headley's multiple requests to speak with the supervisor of the HRA facility, the NYPD members informed her that the HRA Police have the authority to order her removal. An HRA Police sergeant was present at the scene for the duration of the interaction.



Following the discussion with the NYPD members, Ms. Headley appeared to be attempting to leave the facility of her own accord. At that time, an HRA Police officer placed her hands on Ms. Headley, preventing her from proceeding towards the exit. The HRA Police officer then began to initiate an arrest, taking both Ms. Headley and her child to the ground. The NYPD members attempted to control the situation by asking the HRA Police to “get off” of Ms. Headley in order to allow her to stand up of her own accord.

When Ms. Headley continued to struggle with the HRA Police officers, the NYPD members’ first objective was to ensure the safety of Ms. Headley’s child by removing him from the situation. Their efforts were significantly hampered by both Ms. Headley’s refusal to allow them to pick up the child, as well as interference from civilian bystanders at the scene.

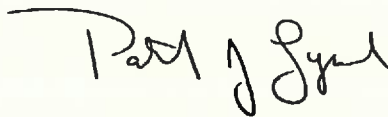
It is at this point that the civilian-recorded video picks up the incident. The entire foregoing context is missing from that footage. There is therefore no factual basis for the claims made by some of your Council colleagues, alleging that the NYPD members did not attempt to deescalate the situation, that they “made a calculated decision” to jeopardize the safety of Ms. Headley’s child, and calling for their summary dismissal from the NYPD and even their imprisonment on Riker’s Island.

This baseless condemnation of New York City police officers has a dangerous impact: it encourages New Yorkers to mistrust and disrespect members of the NYPD, undermining the critical relationships we depend on to protect our city. It also fuels an anti-police narrative that has inspired unstable individuals to carry out violent attacks on police officers. And it leaves NYPD members wondering whether we truly have the support of our city’s elected leadership as we carry out our duties.

Nobody disputes that this was a traumatic incident for both Ms. Headley and her son. We make no claims about Ms. Headley’s behavior or the appropriateness of the actions of the HRA Police personnel prior to our members’ arrival on the scene. However, even Mayor de Blasio has stated his view these early stages of the HRA Police interaction precipitated the unfortunate outcome in this case. We agree that there should be a thorough investigation of the entire incident by both the NYPD and HRA, but those involved should have the benefit of due process, without members of the City Council playing judge and jury before the results of the investigation are in.

We ask once again that you exercise your leadership and encourage your Council colleagues to allow these investigations to proceed, without further inflaming the situation.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Lynch
President

cc:

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

James P. O’Neill
Police Commissioner
1 Police Plaza, Room 1400
New York, NY 10007