April 7, 2020

Corey Ellis, President
Albany Common Council
24 Eagle St # 202
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Common Council President Ellis:

Last week, the Center for Law and Justice sent you an advance copy of its latest report, “Structural Racism and Public Safety in Albany.” The purpose of the report is to foster a communications process among government officials and the community, culminating in a “Recommitment to Community Policing Symposium” to be conducted this fall, co-sponsored by the Center, the Office of the Mayor, the Albany Police Department, the District Attorney’s Office, and the Common Council.

As indicated in the report, the Center now sends you this initial letter asking for your responses to questions posed to your office in the report. Comparable letters are being sent to the Mayor, the Police Chief, and the District Attorney. In an effort to model transparency, the Center will post each letter on CFLJ’s website ten days after it has been sent to you four officials. Your initial responses to the Center’s inquiries may require that follow-up questions be posed; these, too, will be posted on the Center’s website. CFLJ will post a bi-weekly update regarding each official’s responses and, in September 2020, post a report card for each on the website.

Please email your responses to the following questions to alice@cflj.org before April 17, 2020. We genuinely appreciate your contribution to alleviating structural racism in Albany’s public safety system.

1. Do you believe structural racism affects the operations of the Albany Police Department? If not, on what do you base that belief? If so, what steps do you intend to take to address it through city ordinances that establish ACPAC as a meaningful APD oversight committee?

2. Will you include in ACPAC’s bylaws a requirement that all APD policies must be subject to ACPAC review? If not, why not? If so, on what date will the ACPAC bylaws be modified to reflect this change?
3. Will you include in ACPAC’s bylaws a requirement that every new APD policy must be accompanied by a racial impact statement? If not, why not? If so, on what date will the ACPAC bylaws be modified to reflect this change?

4. Through your representative on ACPAC, will you encourage ACPAC to require annual data reports for the APD as a whole, and annual data reports for the LEAD program? If not, why not? If so, on what date will your representative be so directed?

5. Are you willing to have the Common Council pass a resolution stating the need for repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-A? If not, why not? If so, on what date will the Common Council take up this matter?

6. Will you send a letter to the Governor and legislators advising them of the Council’s resolution urging repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-A? If not, why not?

7. Are you willing to co-sponsor and personally participate in Albany’s “Recommitment to Community Policing” Symposium to be conducted by the Center for Law and Justice in the fall of 2020? If not, why not?

Thank you in advance for your response. On April 17, 2020 the Center will post these questions, as well as a summary of all answers received before April 17, on its website (www.cflj.org).

Sincerely,

Alice Green
Executive Director