Kathy Sheehan  
Office of the Mayor  
24 Eagle Street  
Albany, New York 12207

Dear Mayor Sheehan:

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 Police Chief, the District Attorney, and the Common Council President. 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@verizon.net 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 the impact of structural racism on APD operations?

2. Are you willing to deem structural racism a public health crisis in the city of Albany? If not, why not? If so, on what date do you plan to make that announcement?
3. Are you willing to direct Chief Hawkins to release the Department’s racial profiling and use-of-force policies to the public? If not, why not? If so, on what date do you plan to give Chief Hawkins that direction?

4. Are you willing to direct Chief Hawkins to include racial impact statements on all new or revised departmental policies, and to provide annual data reports to the public? If not, why not? If so, on what date do you plan to give Chief Hawkins that direction?

5. What are your plans to appropriately resource and strengthen the LEAD program? Will you provide an annual LEAD report, including annual data, to the public?

6. Are you willing to send a letter to the Governor and legislators urging repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-A? If not, why not? If so, on what date do you plan to send that letter?

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