

For Immediate Release

Coalition to End Broken Windows Release Statement on Drop in NYC Criminal Summonses, Demands Reduction in Police

October, 2017 (New York) – The [Coalition to End Broken Windows](#), a coalition of grassroots groups made up of New Yorkers most affected by quality-of-life policing, released a statement today in response to the Mayor's Office announcing a recent drop in criminal summonses.

"New Yorkers aren't easily fooled and they shouldn't be fooled into believing that the era of Broken Windows policing is behind them.

Last week's announcement of a recent decline in criminal summonses for certain offenses doesn't signal an end to criminal summonsing or other forms of enforcement. The NYPD-approved Criminal Justice Reform Act didn't end the racist policies that lead to punishing New Yorkers of color for quality-of-life offenses. It simply offered police officers other enforcement options at their discretion and, crucially, solidifies their role as the primary government response to quality-of-life offenses. This also means that the NYPD – next month, next year or under this or a future administration – can simply revert to their usual summons patterns.

Indeed, the rise of over 26,000 *new* civil summonses for many of those same offenses represents a pivot for – not an end to – the racist quality-of-life policing New Yorkers have been subjected to for decades. While no one should go (or should have ever gone) to criminal court for quality-of-life offenses, civil court is not a sensible or just alternative. As we've repeatedly pointed out, civil fines are often more costly, harder to fight and do not come with court-appointed legal representation.

Civil summonses take the "criminal" aspect out of summonsing in an attempt to rebrand Broken Windows policing as kinder and gentler but still keep the same cops as arbiters of social order in communities where they have long been seen like an occupying army. Ask Black or Latino New Yorkers who are stopped, questioned, identified and given a civil summons by an armed police officer whether or not they still feel criminalized – and if the fundamental relationship with the NYPD has changed.

As to the newly released statistics themselves, we question whether lower criminal summons numbers will hold. In 2015, the NYPD engaged in a temporary slowdown where enforcement declined only to eventually climb back up afterwards. It is important for the media and public to understand that these smaller figures represent a relatively small snapshot (just over a three month span), are most likely still racially biased and don't include the Broken Windows offense that's most enforced in our city: fare-beating.

The only way to ensure that racist police enforcement tactics continue to go down and are eliminated is to **reduce the NYPD headcount** and reinvest that money into community-based programs that actually help New Yorkers. It is certainly a question that every New Yorker should ask of both the Mayor and Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito (who spearheaded a headcount *increase* in 2016): if officers are reportedly doing significantly less Stop and Frisk encounters and criminal summonsing, then why do we need so many cops?

Finally, the apparent summons decline represents an inadvertent admission by the Mayor's Office that massive numbers of summons (not to mention arrests) were never necessary for public safety. Crime has not gone up during this reported decline in enforcement. This was also the case during the NYPD "slowdown" in 2015 based on the city's own CompStats reports. The de Blasio administration has again proven that the premise of the Broken Windows theory of policing – that low-level enforcement was needed to keep serious crime down – has always been a vicious lie.

If criminal summoning can go down with no effect on crime levels, then why did Mayor de Blasio's first term see hundreds of thousands of obviously needless summonses? The NYPD's criminal summonses have been so baseless for so long that even judges have deemed them legally bogus, as proven by the [multi-million dollar *Stinson* class action lawsuit](#) – which the de Blasio administration settled.

Quality-of-life arrests and summonses (both criminal and civil) are needless, worthless and as racist a policing policy as there exists in America. We demand that the City vacate ALL quality-of-life criminal summonses and clear ALL warrants that arose from them. "