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Civil Rights Groups, Advocacy Organizations, and NYC Officials Send Letter to Gov. Hochul Condemning Deployment of National Guard and State Police into NYC Subway System

New York City, NY – Today, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#), advocacy organizations, and a number of New York City elected officials [sent a letter](#) to New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, condemning her five-point plan that includes the deployment of National Guard and state law enforcement personnel to conduct searches in New York City subway stations, legislation expanding judicial discretion to ban New Yorkers from public transit, and expansion of co-responder models that utilize New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers as part of a mental health crisis response team.

“The deployment of military personnel and state police in New York City subways is reminiscent of the city’s failed “stop-and-frisk” era that threatened the safety of Black and Brown New Yorkers and their right to be free of unwarranted intrusions. To achieve real safety, we need proven methods like community investments that will promote the health and economic well-being of residents, instead of surveillance and harassment from law enforcement and military personnel. We strongly urge Governor Hochul to reconsider this dangerous and ill-conceived plan,” said **Jin Hee Lee, Director of Strategic Initiatives at LDF**.

"Governor Hochul’s kneejerk reaction to sensationalized tabloid headlines is straight from the playbook on how not to effectuate public policy,” said **Jennvine Wong, Staff Attorney with the Cop Accountability Project at The Legal Aid Society**. “Straphangers want a subway system that fully functions, not wrongheaded policies that perpetuate invasive police searches, which will disproportionately impact Black and Latinx communities. New Yorkers don't want their morning commute turned into some dystopia, and Governor Hochul should immediately rescind this plan in favor of meaningful investments into social safety nets."

"New Yorkers know deploying troops to subway entrances is a scare tactic that does nothing to keep millions of us safe underground," said **Riders Alliance Policy & Communications Director Danny Pearlstein**. "Riders want to see major new public investment to address the root causes of the widespread problems uniquely visible on the subway, starting with housing, healthcare and basic support services."

“This latest push to expand police surveillance in the subways stems from our current administration's relentless sensationalization of subway crime. It's a thinly veiled attempt to further marginalize and target vulnerable communities, particularly people experiencing homelessness and Black and brown New Yorkers. This strategy not only funnels more resources into an already overfunded police force but also blatantly ignores the proven efficacy of alternative solutions like housing and mental health services,” said **Anthony Feliciano, Vice President for Community Mobilization at Housing Works**

"Our communities know that Governor Hochul saturating our City's subways with the National Guard is not only a misallocation of resources, but a fundamental misunderstanding of the needs of New Yorkers. Showing instead a prioritization of an intimidating presence over genuine safety and community support. Instead, we advocate for solutions that address the root causes of our challenges, promoting a sense of security through community-based initiatives," said **Donavon Taveras, Lead Organizer, El Puente, CPR Member.**

“The Gathering for Justice vehemently denounces Governor Hochul’s Five-Point subway plan. All proposed measures only serve to increase the already loosely restricted power of law enforcement and embolden them to continue to act with impunity, while limiting the rights of civilian New Yorkers, and improperly target vulnerable populations, including individuals with records, youth, unhoused people, and those suffering from mental health crises. We join the call of numerous organizations and elected officials to urge Governor Hochul to reconsider this approach and pursue more measured and effective strategies, grounded in the community, that will actually promote meaningful public safety,” said **Jessica Persaud, Director of Policy & Advocacy at The Gathering for Justice.**

The letter identifies several ways the coalition believes the Governor’s Plan is ineffective and will negatively impact public safety, including:

- Increased searches that will likely disproportionately harm Black and Brown people without delivering the intended public safety benefits, which historical data shows has been consistently characteristic of stops by law enforcement officers in the city;
- Increased involvement of NYPD in mental health responses, which significantly raises the risk of criminalizing and using force against people with mental health disabilities;
- Expansion of judicial discretion to ban people from subway ridership, which will prevent people from meeting their basic needs or any requirements set by probation or parole authorities;
- Embrace of an ineffective and counterproductive approach to community safety, which is best achieved through investments in public services, not policing.

Read the full letter with the list of signatories [here](#).

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