



Testimony on Community Policing, March 3, 2015

Submitted by: Cathy Dang, Executive Director, CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities

Thank you, Chair Gibson and the Public Safety Committee, for holding this hearing on community policing. My name is Cathy Dang and I am the Executive Director of CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities, a 29-year old organization with the mission to organize Asian immigrants and refugees for racial, gender, and economic justice. We organize pan-Asian immigrant communities on housing rights and police accountability. We have a membership base of 300 members who live in rent-regulated apartments in Chinatown, we are building out our base and working with 50-70 Bangladeshi, Korean, and Chinese tenants at Queensbridge Public Housing, and our youth come from all over New York City who live in private and public housing.

In many instances of vacate orders in Chinatown posted by the Department of Buildings (DOB) or Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the residents in Chinatown or given only a few days and sometimes only a few hours to leave their home. When vacate orders are posted, we try to get the vacated residents to go to a shelter as in interim plan until we can get the landlord to fix the building. And there have been several times where residents would go back into their apartments even with a vacate order. Our understanding, explained by city agencies, is that the NYPD can come and do a sweep in vacated buildings if tenants refuse to leave. Although we tell the residents that information, they go back into their buildings knowingly and risking arrest because they don't want to leave their homes. This policy needs to change and community organizations, local elected offices, and service organizations should be the main point of contact to work with residents who can't or won't leave their homes, not the NYPD. These sweeps are similar to sweeps in vertical patrols in public housing, except that vertical patrols are racists and discriminatory and targets Black and Brown communities.

CAA AV Organizing Asian Communities is here with Shavon Ford, a family friend of Akai Gurley and one of the organizers for Justice for Akai Gurley, who has been organizing residents in East New York to demand accountability of Officer Liang, the NYPD, and NYCHA. CAAAV and many other Asian community members stand behind the Gurley Family in demanding the end to vertical patrols, which puts residents at harm's – of being injured or killed by the NYPD in these vertical patrols. These are **our** CAAAV members that we are talking about who are seniors, immigrants, parents, grandparents, siblings, sons, and daughters in public housing. These are community members of ours – Black and Latino parents, sons, daughters, grandparents, and most importantly – human life – Black and Brown lives. The City should fund and support the development of community patrols in public housing where residents are trained and equipped to patrol their own developments.

Instead of funding 1,000 new officers, that funding should go towards community patrols. More officers is not the solution and will not improve community-police relations, it will only aggravate our members and New Yorkers, at large, when we haven't even seen justice for the families who have lost loved ones to police violence.