

# Curran defends Ryder amid calls to resign as commissioner

By [Robert Pelaez](#) - June 22, 2021



Nassau County Executive Laura Curran defended Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder amidst calls from members of the community to resign from his post. (Photo by Rose Weldon)

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran expressed support for Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder amid a flurry of civilian demands for him to resign after comments he made about the diversity of the Police Department last month.

The Long Island Advocates for Police Accountability, a group that features civil rights advocates aimed at reforming policing in Nassau and Suffolk counties, said last week that Ryder should be removed as commissioner.

Curran defended Ryder and praised the progress he has made while serving as police commissioner in a statement on Monday.

"I have full confidence in Commissioner Ryder's leadership of the Police Department, and he will be staying in his position," Curran said. "Commissioner Ryder has championed the community policing model now being embraced nationwide as part of reform efforts."

On May 27, Newsday published the findings of its investigation into the hiring process of the Nassau and Suffolk County police departments since 2012. The two departments hired just 67 out of the pool of 6,539 Black applicants, according to the findings. The number of Black applicants who choose to sit for Nassau County written exams fell from 2,055 in 2012 to 1,213 in 2018, according to the findings. From 2012 to 2018, according to Newsday, only 36 of the 2,508 Black applicants were hired by the county Police Department.

Ryder made comments to Newsday addressing the lack of diversity in the department that were met with ire from some members of the community.

"A lot of these kids come from broken homes, these kids struggle in their communities because they don't have both parents around, they don't have a family history of law enforcement, they're at a disadvantage starting off and we have to recognize it," Ryder told Newsday.

Ryder later apologized if the comments he made were offensive and said one goal of the Police Department is to improve diversity throughout the force.

"My intention in my responses was not to be hurtful to anyone but to show how we are continuing to improve recruitment efforts to increase diversity through community outreach and supporting applicants throughout the process," Ryder said.

The Long Island Advocates for Police Accountability said Ryder, along with the comments, "refused to acknowledge racial disparities in arrests" made by the Police Department in December and denied racial bias being a factor in arrests, rather than "probable cause," in March.

"Based on strike one, strike two and strike three, Mr. Ryder, you're out," Frederick K. Brewington, a civil rights attorney, said at a news conference. "And we are calling on you now to resign because you have proven that you cannot address the issues of race when it comes to policing in Nassau County."

Standing with Brewington at the news conference were representatives from the Grand Council of the Guardians, an organization representing Black police officers, the National Latino Officers Association, Long Island United to Transform Policing and Community Safety, the Long Island Progressive Coalition, and the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives.

“Mr. Ryder has said many awful statements about nonwhite candidates,” retired NYPD officer and Long Island Advocate member Dennis Jones said. “We cannot accept those kinds of comments from a police commissioner.”

Those in support of retaining Ryder as police commissioner rallied in Mineola on Monday with signs reading “We’ve got your back Pat!”

Curran, in her statement Monday, cited the Police Diversity Committee launched several weeks ago. She said the 10-member committee, composed of community, civic, civil rights and religious leaders, would help improve diversity in the Police Department.

The 10 members of the committee include First Baptist Cathedral of Westbury Bishop Lionel Harvey, who will chair the committee, Urban League of Long Island President Theresa Sanders, Nassau County Community College President Jermaine Williams, Westbury NAACP President Leslie Davis, Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association Executive Director George Siberón, Asian American Affairs and Indian American Association Council member Jay Singh, Toufique Harun of Muslims for Progress, Gabriela Castillo of the county’s Office of Legislative Affairs, Nassau County Civil Service Executive Director Martha Krisel, and Nassau County Police Department community affairs Officer Shajarah Williams.