



May 28, 2017

Dear Fellow East Siders:

I hope you are enjoying the Memorial Day Weekend, and you have a chance to reflect on our military's protection of our freedom. This week's letter discusses open government, police/community relations and next weekend's PVD Fest.

On Tuesday, May 30 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall (Third Floor), the Finance Committee will hold a public hearing on an [Ordinance](#) I introduced last year to extend the scope of the City's Code of Ethics to regulate indicted City Council members, suspending them from their leadership positions and committee assignments while the indictment is pending. (The City Charter requires all convicted Council members to be removed from office.) The Ordinance also will suspend City Council members from these roles while they having outstanding overdue campaign finance reports and Ethics Commission statements. Had this Ordinance been enacted when it was introduced, Councilman Aponte would have been suspended from his President position without the drama and chaos he generated. I introduced this last June in response to Councilman Jackson's arrest, but it was buried in committee. It is being heard now thanks to a petition by more than 50 voters compelling a public hearing under the City Charter. With that said, there is no obligation for the Finance Committee actually to vote on the Ordinance, so I need your help by coming to City Hall to urge the Finance Committee to take action at this time.

In April, the City Council gave initial passage to an ordinance regarding police/community relations, which at the time was named the Community Safety Act. When it came up for second passage, the Chief of Police and head of the police union raised concerns, and the City Council postponed its vote for 30 days to address them. The Ordinance Committee organized a working group, which met several times, producing a [Report](#) and an [Amended Ordinance](#) that addressed those concerns, as well as new concerns raised by community members. The Ordinance Committee will meet on May 30, and likely will adopt the amended Ordinance and send it to the full Council for consideration and debate. Now that the Chief of Police has joined the original sponsors in supporting the bill (which is now called the Providence Community-Police Relations Act, or "PCPRA"), I am optimistic that the new bill will be successful and therefore is ready for passage. If the Ordinance Committee approves the amended version consistent with the Report, I will look forward to voting in favor of it on Thursday night, as likely will the great majority of my colleagues on the City Council.

Beginning on Thursday, the City will enjoy the return of PVD Fest, an arts and music festival that will take place downtown. You can review the [Festival Map](#) and [Event Schedule](#) at these links. Over the past two years, PVD Fest has become a welcome destination for visitors who come to see our City at its best. Many of the events are free and open to the public. The large crowds have been peaceful and the community of shared enjoyment has been memorable. Many of you will return to enjoy the fun, and I encourage those of you have not yet done so to pay a visit.

Sincerely,