

CENTER *for* JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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TO: New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
New York City Council

FROM: Elena Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)

RE: FOIL & WEBSITE REQUEST – Section 24 of the New York City Charter
Pertaining to the Public Advocate’s Duties

The “About” tab on Public Advocate Williams’ website, <https://www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov/>, states, as follows, by its link “Duties of the Office”, <https://www.pubadvocate.nyc.gov/about#duties-of-the-office/>:

“Duties of The Public Advocate Office

The Public Advocate is a non-voting member of the New York City Council with the right to introduce and co-sponsor legislation. Prior to a 2002 charter revision, the Public Advocate was also the presiding officer of the Council. The Public Advocate also serves as an ombudsman for city government, providing oversight for city agencies, investigating citizens' complaints about city services and making proposals to address perceived shortcomings or failures of those services. These duties, worded somewhat ambiguously, are laid out in Section 24 of the City Charter. The Public Advocate serves on the committee which selects the director of the New York City Independent Budget Office and appoints members to several boards and commissions, including one member of the New York City Planning Commission. The Public Advocate also serves as chair of the Commission of Public Information and Communication established by Section 1061 of the New York City Charter. Along with the Mayor and the Comptroller, the Public Advocate is one of three municipal offices elected by all the city's voters. In the event of a vacancy or incapacity of the mayor, the Public Advocate is first in line to become Mayor.”

Pursuant to FOIL, this is to request any proposals made by Public Advocate Williams to clarify his supposedly “ambiguously” worded duties – as such would be a duty of his office, if, in fact, there was anything “ambiguously” worded about the public advocate’s duties “laid out in Section 24 of the City Charter”.

The public advocate's duties are specified at Section 24 (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m), and (n) – and there is no reason for Public Advocate Williams' website to fail to identify these 10 subdivisions and link to them – unless it is to conceal his nonfeasance with respect thereto. Certainly, the obvious place for such link would be in his above-underlined description of the “Duties of The Public Advocate Office” – and I hereby request that such link be added, along with the specification that the duties “are laid out” by subdivisions (e) – (n) of Section 24.

Thank you.