

July 14, 2020

Corey Johnson, Speaker
New York City Council
City Hall Office
New York, NY 10007

Re: NYC Pool Access

Dear Speaker Johnson:

We are writing as members of the New York City swimming community to express our concerns following the publication of *New York* magazine's article "The Boss of the Beach" on June 22, 2020 detailing the abuse of power of civil servants employed by the city of New York, namely Peter Stein and Marty Kravitz. With the many current social, health, and economic crises facing the city at this time, it would be understandable if this article, which we enclose here, did not make it to your attention. We are appalled by the behavior outlined in the article and encourage you to investigate this alleged abuse of power as it has a great impact on safe access to pools in our city that are directly related to these crises. We believe that these abuses of power have directly led to lack of access for the public, as these men control not just the lifeguarding staff, but also programming at many of the city's pools.

Lack of safe access presents a threat to the equality of opportunity for communities of color and communities of limited economic needs. Furthermore, having access to pools increases opportunities for exercise, particularly non-impact exercise for seniors. Exercise has been proven to increase immunity, decrease stress, and improve cardiovascular and respiratory fitness, which is imperative to ensure New York City continues to succeed in its fight against CoVID-19.

We are sure you have had the opportunity to visit many of the public pools across your boroughs. Please reflect on the joy on the faces of the children, adults, and seniors that use these pools that you have seen when you visited. It is imperative that we be able to restore that joy to the residents of our city.

Therefore, we are asking for a full investigation be undertaken on behalf of the residents of this city with respect to the abuses outlined with respect to lifeguarding and aquatics programming in this city. We would request that this include discussions with not only the lifeguards, but also Citywide Aquatics and the New York City Parks Department. Then, when pools begin to reopen starting on July 24 and August 1st we are asking for the following actions be taken to support more equitable and safe access for all New Yorkers:

- Socially distanced programming at pools that includes learn-to-swim programs for NYC residents (youth and adult)
- Socially distanced programming that includes practices for non-profit swim clubs
- Socially distanced adult lap swim

We also believe that additional pools could be reopened and encourage you to work with city officials to help make that a reality. We have noticed that in opening 15 pools, many of which are in areas of the city remote to beaches, there will still be many other communities that will still be without a facility. We are also concerned many of those that are open may risk being overcrowded. Organized programming at these

facilities may also help alleviate the overcrowding at these pools and ensure social distancing rules are followed.

Finally, we do not expect that these goals can be achieved without a group of ready, willing, and able volunteers to make them a reality. We are your volunteers! Together, we make up over 10,000 individuals representing all five boroughs across our institutions, all of whom support safe access to water bodies for public recreation. Please reach out to us, as we are happy to share our expertise and knowledge of swimming with the New York City community.

We look forward to hearing from you and thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Joel Abreau
Founder, Bearcat Masters Swimming

Nora Cronin
Board Co-Chair, Team New York Aquatics

Kristin Gary
Founder, Trident Swim Foundation

Kara Meyer
Managing Director, Plus Pool

Brendan O'Melveny
Chief Aquatics Officer, Imagine Swimming

Vadim Shoykhet
CEO, Physique Swimming

Shawn Slevin
Executive Director, Swim Strong
Foundation

Margaret Tato
President, Red Tide Masters Swimming