



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## QUEENS ELECTED OFFICIALS, COMMUNITY LEADERS AND COMMISSIONER OF THE NYC OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIALS AND HEARINGS (OATH) MAKE ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT UPCOMING EVENT FOR RESIDENTS AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS "HOW TO RESPOND TO SUMMONSES FROM NYC ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES"

**QUEENS, NY** – On Monday, June 11, 2018, U.S. Representative Grace Meng, Borough President Melinda Katz, State Senator Toby Stavisky, City Councilmember Peter Koo, Queens Community Board 7, the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) and local community organizations announced an upcoming public forum called "How to Respond to Summonses from NYC Enforcement Agencies" for Queens residents and small business owners. Due to the event's overwhelming success last year, this is the second year in a row that the hosts and sponsors are producing the event in Flushing.

The informational forum will have real-time translation in Mandarin and Korean and will be held on Thursday, June 14, 2018 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Flushing Queens Library, located at 41-17 Main St., Flushing, NY 11355. The forum will feature a presentation by and Q&A session with OATH Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge, Fidel F. Del Valle, who will discuss what to do when a summons is received, remote hearing options, translation services, OATH Help Centers, and more.

"New Yorkers and small businesses deserve a level playing field when contesting City-issued summonses and the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) continues to work towards the goal of creating a truly user-friendly court," said **OATH Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge FIDEL F. DEL VALLE**. "Partnering on informational events like this one in Flushing Queens gives OATH the opportunity to provide residents and small businesses with important information about the hearing process and the many options that are available to them should they or their business receives summonses from the City's various enforcement agencies."

"It can be intimidating to receive a summons from any governmental entity, and informational forums like this are designed to help demystify the process for residents and business owners alike," said **Queens Borough President MELINDA KATZ**. "The forum will help inform participants of their legal rights, ensure fair treatment, and open lines of communication with the adjudication arm of the city. All are encouraged to participate and to be assured that OATH is a civil court, not

criminal nor federal. OATH, led by Commissioner Fidel F. Del Valle, deserves to be commended for embarking on this important citywide public outreach effort.”

“To many new immigrants, OATH can be their first experience with New York’s justice system, and if English is not their first language, the process can be intimidating and confusing,” said **Council Member PETER KOO**. “I thank OATH Commissioner and Chief Administrative Law Judge for showing good faith by reaching to our immigrant populations in Flushing, and for helping our community understand their rights by making information widely available.”

“I thank the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings, Borough President Katz and Councilman Koo for organizing this important workshop,” said **Congresswoman GRACE MENG**. “This forum, which is being held for the second year in a row, will provide Queens residents with important information on how to respond to and fight summonses they receive from NYC enforcement agencies. Borough residents will also learn about resources that are available to help them with the process. Replying to summonses from City agencies can be a confusing and overwhelming experience. The public deserves assistance and a level playing field, and this workshop will go a long way towards providing that needed help.”

"It is imperative for the public to remain informed, particularly in how to engage with government agencies," **State Senator TOBY ANN STAVISKY** said. "This event will empower the community with the tools to be more aware and inform how best to navigate the summonses system. I hope we continue to see events providing similar insight on other government functions and operations."

Partnering organization include Asian Americans for Equality, the Chinese-American Planning Council, the Downtown Flushing Transit Hub Business Improvement District, the Flushing Chinese Business Association, the Forest Hills Asian Association, the Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce, the Korean American Association of Queens, the Korean American Parents Association, the Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York Inc., and Queens Community Board 7.

“Education is key to preventing summonses issued when the law is broken, said **Queens Community Board 7 District Manager MARILYN MCANDREWS**. Queens is the most diverse community in the world, with a large immigrant population and OATH has taken the lead by walking individuals who have received summonses through due process. This outreach can help prevent summonses issued by various city agencies to the community in the future.”

"With the many government agencies that New Yorkers have to contend with, it is no wonder that those on the margins risk drowning in bureaucracy," said **DORIS KOO, Interim Executive Director of Asian Americans for Equality**. "Council Member Koo and Borough President Katz recognize this gap -- and the support that is needed to fill it -- and we commend them for partnering with OATH to help Queens residents face their punitive challenges. I encourage the community learn more about this process by attending this event."

"The Chinese-American Planning Council is pleased to be partnering with the NYC Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH), Congresswoman Grace Meng, Senator Toby Stavisky, Borough President Melinda Katz, Councilman Peter Koo and other community based organizations for the upcoming public forum on June 14," said **WAYNE HO, President and CEO of the Chinese-American Planning Council**. "Many immigrant families and low-income communities experience immense frustration because they don't understand the reasons or the options available when contesting summonses at OATH. It is important that we can bring the community together with city

agencies to clarify how Administrative court system runs and to make contesting summonses in New York City a more maneuverable and transparent process.”

“Small business operations play a major role in Downtown Flushing’s economy”, said **DIAN YU, Executive Director of the Downtown Flushing Transit Hub Business Improvement District**. Since 2003, as a not-for-profit organization, we have worked with local small businesses. We understand the difficulties in running a successful operation. Always, we encourage business owners to attend workshops on business conduct in compliance with gov’t regulations; and not routinely pay citations/fines issued by city agencies, as a cost of operating in Flushing.

“Because laws and regulations continue to change, small businesses benefit by paying more attention to the policies announced by the municipal government, we help the small businesses by communicating these policies as much as possible. Co-sponsoring this ACCES community event help us communicate with the small businesses by helping them navigate municipal government,” said **PETER TU, Executive Director of the Flushing Chinese Business Association (FCBA)**

“The Forest Hills Asian Association looks forward to participating again this year to help small business and business owners in general. Thank you to OATH and the electeds for their efforts in organizing this event again,” said **KALEENA MA, FHAA Vice President and Small Business Owner**.

“We thank the Queens Borough President for bringing this much-needed resource to our community,” stated **TAEHOON KIM, President of the Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce**. “Targeted enforcement and excessive ticketing by regulatory agencies is one of the biggest complaints we hear in our business community. We encourage our members to attend this forum and learn how to effectively respond to violations and fines.”

“A lack of information and knowledge creates a barrier for individuals to know their rights and access to the legal system. Co-sponsoring an informative event with OATH will help familiarize the Korean American Community with the City’s court system and regulations, thereby educating them about the legal processes and the options that are available to them. We are pleased to co-sponsor this event with OATH and grateful to OATH for reaching out to our community,” said **THOMAS KIM, President of Korean American Association of Queens New York**.

### **About OATH**

OATH is the independent administrative law court where nearly all City enforcement agencies file their summonses for hearings. The agencies that file summonses at OATH for hearings includes the Departments of Sanitation, Buildings, Health, Parks, Environmental Protection, Consumer Affairs, FDNY and NYPD, among many others. Last year, OATH received approximately 850,000 summonses from the City’s various enforcement agencies. On average, 44% of summonses that were fought at OATH hearings were dismissed by OATH Hearing Officers last year.

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