



# DETECTIVES' ENDOWMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

POLICE DEPARTMENT • CITY OF NEW YORK

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The Hon. Andrew Cuomo  
Governor  
State of New York  
Albany, NY 12224

March 31, 2021

Dear Governor Cuomo:

As the President of the Detectives' Endowment Association, Inc. (DEA) — the labor union of 19,000 active and retired Detectives of the New York Police Department — we are outraged that a man who murdered one of our Police Officers in cold blood, Richard Rivera, would now be appointed to a State-mandated panel to advise on “police reform” in Ithaca, New York.

This is an affront to the men and women of the NYPD, and to all those involved in the profession of policing, but it is especially an egregious insult to the families of law enforcement Officers killed in the line of duty.

Time does not heal the wounds of those of us whose “brother and sister” Officers were killed while taking lawful police action. It is irrelevant how many years ago P.O. Robert Walsh was killed, or where, or how old Richard Rivera was at the time he committed the most heinous of crimes.

To reiterate, on January 12, 1981, NYPD Police Officer Robert Walsh of the 7th Precinct signed off duty and, while on his way home, stopped at an establishment near his residence in Queens. Three masked young men brandishing firearms entered and announced a robbery. Walsh identified himself as a Police Officer, but before he could take further police action, one gunman shot him in the shoulder. Rivera then approached the wounded Walsh and **shot him, point blank, in the head at close range**. It was a cold-blooded **execution**. All three criminals fled. Officer Walsh died.

All of the subjects, including a fourth who acted as the get-away driver, were arrested. The youngest, age 15, was sentenced as a juvenile to ten years. The three other killers, including the 16-year-old Richard Rivera, were tried and convicted of murder and attempted robbery. They were sentenced to 25-years-to-life in prison, and eventually the triggerman and killer Rivera was paroled in 2019.

P.O. Robert Walsh was a 12-year veteran of the NYPD and he left a grieving widow and young children. He was the recipient of 20 NYPD Commendations and Awards, and was described in the *New York Times* as an, “active, experienced, dedicated, and popular” Officer. He was only 36 years old.

THE POLICE UNION REPRESENTING THE GREATEST DETECTIVES IN THE **WORLD**  
AFFILIATIONS – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS (NAPO)  
NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF PBAs

Because of the manner in which his killers' prison sentences were staggered, for years the members of Walsh's family, as well as his friends and colleagues, had to suffer the indignity of facing a parole hearing for one or more of Walsh's three murderers, including Richard Rivera. As if that was not bad enough, now Walsh's children have to witness the man who murdered their father get to determine how police will be "reimagined" in this State. This is simply a horrendous disgrace.

It does not surprise us one bit that the police unions in Ithaca and Tompkins County are refusing to entertain any "reforms" and dismantling demanded by such a panel, if for no other reason than by virtue of who is sitting on that panel. It is ridiculous enough to have inexperienced, unknowledgeable, and amateur civilians attempting to "reimagine" law enforcement, but it is absolutely egregious to invite criminals and murderers to join them.

Governor, you and your family enjoy the protection of your police security detail 24 hours per day. Every public figure knows the dangers that are inherent in their own work, but then send "thoughts and prayers" when violence erupts at the men and women (and children) who elected them. In New York State we have a rapidly escalating crime rate taking its toll, while legislators play roulette with the citizens' lives.

The Detectives' Endowment Association, Inc. — the largest Detectives union in the world — demands that Richard Rivera recuse himself from any dealings with the Ithaca and Tompkins County "reform" panel. The DEA stands in solidarity with the Ithaca Police Benevolent Association and the Tompkins County Deputy Sheriff's Association. As the crime rate in our own City continues to rise, we are confident that the citizens of this great State will not sit back and watch their State deteriorate into insanity.

Sincerely,



Paul DiGiacomo  
President

PDG/sfk