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**Subject:** Our experiences with Amit Bagga - City Workers

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**To:** undisclosed-recipients;;

Many of us are unable to speak publicly on account of being city employees.

- Successful candidates for City Council should have to pass a two-part test. First, that they are an effective and compassionate advocate for *all* those they represent, and second that they exercise sound judgment, particularly for those difficult decisions that may not be politically expedient but serve their constituents' interests. Individuals who have either worked with or under Amit Bagga as colleagues in city government know that he fails to meet this basic test.
- District 26 needs a Council Member who will treat its constituents with dignity and respect. Our experiences working with Amit was that he did everything he could to cultivate relationships with powerful City leaders while creating a toxic work environment for colleagues and the people below him that he had nothing to gain from.
- With Amit, a decision to personally involve himself in an effort, irrespective of its merits, often begins and ends with a singular calculation, "Will this forward my political career?" This general ethos has invariably informed short tenures across city government and abrupt departures.
- To place this into context, the vote to defund the police will almost certainly be made by the next City Council, which will include new members from this election cycle. It is essential that council members put the lives of New Yorkers before their political careers. There was no more defining moment to speak out against the Mayor's disgraceful handling of the NYPD's brutal crackdown of protests and defunding the NYPD.

Our experience with Amit is that when he had the opportunity to speak out on this issue and impact the outcome of the City budget, he put his own political career first. After the murders of George Floyd and Beannah Taylor, over 700 current and former City Hall, Mayor's Office, and City agency staff took a risk by writing an [open letter to the Mayor](#) calling on him to cut the budget of the NYPD. Amit did not sign the letter. [A second more moderate letter](#), was written specifically for senior staff, including many deputy commissioners, addressed to the Mayor. Amit did not sign this letter, either. Nearly 1,000 staff including several deputy commissioners, chiefs of staff,

and other senior de Blasio aides who had everything to lose, rallied at City Hall and marched over the Brooklyn Bridge. [Amit did not join](#).

- As a Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs at the Department of Consumer Affairs Amit was charged to lead citywide marketing and public education efforts. Over the course of his time there, he proved incapable of conducting this work responsibly or in an organized manner, or with the interests of all its constituents in mind; instead he actively leveraged his role for self promotion at public events in and around Queens CD 26 and to undermine the commissioner of DCA, before his abrupt departure to another agency.
- The issue at hand is about how Amit treats those he supervises or those that he perceives do not have relevance to his professional aspirations, and what this history tells us of future actions as councilmember. Many of Amit's validators can claim to have worked with him, but notably either hold extremely high-placed roles in the De Blasio administration, are currently his campaign employees/volunteers, or simply have had cursory professional interaction with him. This immediately begs the question of whether they are providing earnest assessments of his character and decision-making. Where are the subordinates, colleagues, or even superiors at Census2020, the Department of Social Services or the Department of Consumer Affairs attesting to his skills or character? This is a fundamental question that the WFP and its affiliates must ask themselves.
- It is ironic that Amit is using the Census 2020 Campaign to bolster his run for City Council, while continuing to disparage the hardworking New Yorkers who had the unfortunate experience of serving as his staff. Amit would often isolate members of staff he did not like by purposely not including them in necessary meetings and emails, being unresponsive to their communication, changing their scopes of work without notice, removing them from all projects, instructing other members of staff to not communicate with them, among other types of abusive behaviors.
- This not only created an incredibly toxic work environment but severely impacted the ability of these staffers to do their jobs well, undermining the success Census. He would often gaslight staffers into thinking that the purposeful exclusion of the important context to their work was a result of their own incompetence, all while expressing his scorn for these staffers to anyone who would listen, further denigrating their reputation and ability to do the important job at hand.
- It has been nearly impossible for active or recently departed civil servants to publicly speak out for fear of retaliation. For others, simply reliving certain

circumstances may be traumatic. Even still, we have heard the experiences of these civil servants at WFP chapter meetings or after being approached confidentially. These stories speak to unethical workplace practices, disruptive workplace behavior, and short-sighted judgment. These experiences should be thoughtfully considered and not diminished by those who did not have to live those moments.

- Nonetheless, this conversation is all the more relevant based on recent events in the City Council, including the expulsion of a Council Member, in part, for [disparaging and harassing staff](#) or a Council Member abruptly leaving office for a new opportunity that [left staff suddenly unemployed](#). We need individuals who care about people, not just those that can help their careers. CD26 deserves a Council Member that they can trust will be in the news only for the right reasons.
- Affirmatively endorsing a candidate is a solemn act that places the values of the WFP in the political arena, and one that should be done with a clear conscience and without fear of a candidate's insincerity toward the community we all strive to serve. The bottom line is that Amit does not have the character necessary to represent thousands of constituents in city government, let alone the moral fortitude to do so during one of the most consequential moments in our city's history.