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**MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO REAPPOINTS VICTOR CALISE AS COMMISSIONER OF THE
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Champion of New York City's disabled community reestablished as MOPD head

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the reappointment of longtime disability advocate Victor Calise as Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). MOPD functions as a liaison between the disabled community and City government, working to include the rights and needs of people with disabilities in the development and delivery of City services and programs. MOPD Commissioner since 2012, Calise has served the disabled community in various capacities for more than 18 years.

"Victor's relentless pursuit to make New York City the most accessible place in the world is exactly the type of ardent leadership we need to open up our city to more New Yorkers," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "Victor believes in his heart that it is our civic and moral duty to make New York more inclusive for everyone, including the many people with disabilities who live across the five boroughs and visit our city. From his rich personal history and longtime advocacy for the disabled community to his innovative ideas and diplomacy skills, MOPD is in highly capable hands with Victor at its helm."

"I am honored to be chosen by Mayor de Blasio to continue to lead this office and serve New Yorkers with disabilities," said **MOPD Commissioner Calise**. "It has been a privilege to work with the de Blasio administration over the past year to help make New York more accessible. Improving the quality of life for people with disabilities and working to ensure our City is inclusive of all New Yorkers are not only noble deeds, but core principles that underpin the very foundation of this administration."

MOPD works hand-in-hand with other City agencies to ensure that the voice of the disabled community is represented and that City programs and policies address the needs of people with disabilities. To learn more, visit: nyc.gov/mopd.

About Victor Calise

Calise has served the disabled community for more than 18 years, most recently as the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities—a post to which he was appointed by Mayor Bloomberg in 2012. Prior to that, Calise served as the Accessibility Coordinator for Department of Parks and Recreation, where he oversaw accessibility compliance at city parks and in Parks Department programming throughout the five boroughs.

Before joining the Parks Department, Calise held several positions at the United Spinal Association, a non-profit organization focused on disability rights that aims to improve the quality of life for Americans living with spinal cord injuries. As the organization's Director of Sports Marketing, Calise coordinated nationwide adaptive

sports programs for United Spinal members and organizations, such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Calise began at the United Spinal Association as its Recreation Coordinator, providing recreation opportunities for disabled veterans in the VA Hospital System in the Tri-State area.

Calise started his work with disabled New Yorkers as coordinator of the Spinal Cord Injury “DO IT” program at Mount Sinai Medical Center. There, he worked with spinal cord injury patients to facilitate the transition from the inpatient hospital stay to the outpatient setting in their journey to reintegrate successfully into their community.

An avid athlete, Calise was a member of the USA Paralympic Sled Hockey team and represented the USA in the 1998 Winter Paralympic Games in Nagano, Japan. He volunteers for the Wheelchair Sports Federation and is frequently a guest speaker on spinal cord injuries, physical therapy, and adaptive sports. Calise earned his B.S. from St. Johns University and his M.A. from Queens College. He lives on the Upper West Side with his wife and two daughters.

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