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INVESTING IN BULLET-PROOF VESTS WILL PROTECT THOUSANDS OF COPS
Speaker Quinn Calls for City Investment to Replace 18,000 Aging Vests, Saving Officers' Lives

CITY HALL – City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, together with Council Members Vincent J. Gentile, Robert Jackson, Hiram Monserrate and David Weprin, today called for a one-time investment in nearly 18,000 state-of-the-art bulletproof vests to help protect the lives of New York City cops. The investment of \$9.9 million is critical, the Speaker said, as nearly half of the police force uses vests with out-of-date technology and less body coverage.

“Police officers are on the frontlines of protecting New Yorkers. We need to take every step to make sure these brave men and women have the tools and equipment they need to stay safe while doing their jobs,” Speaker Quinn said. “By investing in new vests, we are taking a critical step to ensure that all of the men and women who go into harm’s way have the most protective equipment available.”

At a recent hearing of the Committee on Public Safety, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly testified that of the 36,000 police officers in the New York Police Department, only half had Level 3A vests, the most state-of-the-art vests available. Level 3A vests have new bullet-resistant material in the front of the chest and along the sides of the body. The Speaker said that it was simply unacceptable that nearly 18,000 police officers continue using out-of-date vests.

Speaker Quinn added, “Our first priority must be to protect the lives of the men and women protecting us – and the technology is there to do it. This investment will give all of our police officers the protection they deserve when they go out onto the street.”

Patrick J. Lynch, president of the New York City Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, joined the Speaker and praised the investment. “We live in an age when criminals don't think twice about shooting at police officers,” President Lynch said. “New York City police officers deserve to have the best protective equipment available and today that means a level III vest that affords protection from higher caliber gunshots. Police officers equipped with the old level II vest are in dire need of an upgrade. The City Council and Speaker Quinn recognize that every police officer is entitled to the best protective equipment available and we are very grateful to them for funding this critical upgrade in the city's budget.”

Anthony Garvey, President of the Lieutenants Benevolent Association, also thanked Speaker Quinn for her work to increase the protection of police officers. “Together, we are working to protect the safety of those who have made New York the safest, largest city in the world.”

Council Member Gentile added, “In the wake of the tragic deaths of Officers Stewart and Mosomillo, it is obvious that we need to do a better job protecting those who protect New York City. The NYPD is

comprised of New York's finest; they give us the best of what New York has to offer, and they deserve the best in return."

Michael J. Palladino, President of the Detectives' Endowment Association, stated his support of the City Council's proposal in saying, "Today's criminals are more sophisticated and the weapons they carry are more powerful than ever before, making those criminals even more dangerous. Our police officers are entitled to the maximum protection that we can give them. The members of the NYPD place themselves in harm's way everyday to protect the citizens of this great city and I believe that the city should, in turn, protect its cops by investing in new body armor."

Grades of bullet proof vests are determined by the National Institute of Justice based on testing protocols for bullet stopping capability and body coverage. Level 3A vests cost \$560 a piece. The \$9.9 million investment will provide 17,600 with new vests, accounting for the 400 officers who are expected to retire by the end of 2006.

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