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Testimony
Of Preston Niblack, Deputy Director
Before the City Council Public Safety Committee
On NYPD Uniformed Hiring and Retention
June 4, 2007

Good morning Chairman Vallone and members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Preston Niblack and I am a deputy director of the New York City Independent Budget Office. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding New York City Police Department (NYPD) Uniformed Hiring and Retention.

As you are aware, the Bloomberg Administration in May 2006 announced plans to at least partially reverse the generally downward trend in NYPD uniformed staffing that had been occurring since the start of the decade. More specifically, the average daily number of uniformed police personnel on the force fell from a high of 40,078 in 2000 to 36,284 during the first four months of the current fiscal year.

An IBO analysis finds that efforts to increase the size of the force may be further complicated by the sharp rise in the number of recruits in the three most recent Police Academy classes who resigned before completing their training. As of May 18, nearly 15 percent of the more than 1,400 recruits in the January 2007 class have voluntarily resigned before completing their six-month training. In comparison the resignation rate for the July 2005 class was 7.5 percent, similar to the rate among the classes over the preceding five years.

The upward spike in the Police Academy resignation rate has occurred in the wake of the June 2005 arbitrator's decision to lower the pay for new recruits to an annual rate of \$25,100 during their first six months of employment, beginning with the January 2006 recruit class. In contrast, the class just before it, the Police Academy class of July 2005, earned \$40,658, almost \$16,000 more than recruits hired just six months later.

Background and Additional Detail

The NYPD's uniformed staffing plan announced in May 2006 seeks to attain peak uniformed staffing of 37,838 twice each year, once in January and again in July. Each new recruit class should be big enough to replace all attrition from the force over the previous six months. But the police department has not yet been able to attract enough new police recruits to reach its peak staffing goal.

In January 2007, the newly hired class of 1,408 recruits raised NYPD uniformed police staffing to 37,080, or 758 below the peak target. In order to reach the budgeted peak of 37,838 this coming July, the agency must make up for the shortfall of 758 recruits in the class entering the Police Academy in January 2007 as well as replace all attrition from the force occurring between January and June of the current year. Such attrition includes not only retirements and other departures from the force, but also resignations among the class of new recruits currently in the Police Academy.

During his May 21, 2007 City Council testimony, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly predicted that his agency's attempt to reach its staffing target this coming July will likely fall about 2,000 recruits short. More specifically, Commissioner Kelly indicated that only 700 to 800 of a projected 2,800 vacancies are likely to be staffed with the hiring of the July 2007 recruit class. Assuming that resignations among members of the current academy class continue at their current rate, IBO projects that of those 2,800 vacancies, 286 will be the result of recruits resigning from the January 2007 class. (As of May 18, 2007, a total of 205 recruits had already resigned from the class. This total excludes recruits who were involuntarily dismissed from the academy.)

In examining the recent upward trend of new police recruits voluntarily leaving the NYPD, IBO has tracked resignation rates from the 12 most recent classes passing through the six-month initial training period at the Police Academy. Beginning with the January 2006 class, the rate at which new recruits resign before completing their initial six-month Police Academy training has risen steadily—from 10.4 percent in the January class to 13.7 percent in the July 2006 class to 14.6 percent (as of May 18) among the current class.

This rate is higher than had been the case for all prior classes going back as far as the class admitted in March 2000. Only one class, September 2000, had a rate near 10 percent, and the rest were substantially lower. The fact that the recruit class admitted in January 2006 constituted the first group of new recruits paid at the reduced annual rate of \$25,100 per year lends support to the argument that the lower rate of pay for new recruits is affecting retention.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Shaded area reflects three recruit classes paid at reduced annual rate of pay of \$25,100. Immediately preceding class (entering Police Academy in July 2005) was paid at \$40,658 annual

Police Academy Resignation Rate, 2000-2007			
Police Academy Class Entry Date	Number of New Hires	Resignations Prior to Completion of Police Academy	Police Academy Resignation Rate
* January 2007	1,408	205	14.6%
July 2006	1,646	226	13.7%
January 2006	1,400	146	10.4%
July 2005	1,906	142	7.5%
January 2005	1,731	99	5.7%
July 2004	1,710	62	3.6%
January 2004	730	52	7.1%
July 2003	1,467	82	5.6%
July 2002	2,549	195	7.7%
July 2001	1,644	125	7.6%
September 2000	1,333	131	9.8%
March 2000	1,542	103	6.7%

SOURCES: IBO, Police Pension Fund

NOTES: *Resignation figure for January 2007 class includes only recruits having resigned as of May 18, 2007. In all instances above, only voluntary departures from the force are included.