



BEFORE THE NEW YORK STATE SENATE FINANCE
AND ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES

**Joint Legislative Public Hearing on FY 2026 Executive Budget Proposal:
Topic “Public Protection”**

Thursday, February 13, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Legislative Office Building
181 State Street, Hearing Room B, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12247

STATEMENT OF PATRICK HENDRY,
PRESIDENT OF THE POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION
OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Good morning, Senators and Assemblymembers. My name is Patrick Hendry, president of the Police Benevolent Association of the City of New York. I thank you all for the opportunity to testify on behalf of over 21,000 rank-and-file New York City police officers, the men and women who perform the difficult and dangerous work of protecting every resident in every neighborhood of our state’s largest city.

When we do that work, we often hear from New Yorkers directly, who tell us about their public safety concerns. The one concern we hear again and again is that they want more police presence. They are not seeing enough police officers on patrol on the streets or in the subway system. They say that when they call for help, the response takes too long. And no matter what the crime statistics might say, they do not see the kind of police presence that makes them feel safe on their own block or in their own subway station.

This is not just perception – it is reality. New York City is in the middle of a historic police staffing crisis. The NYPD is at its lowest headcount in decades and nearly 7,000 officers short of its peak staffing.¹ This shortfall is the result of record-level attrition that has outpaced hiring, with an average of 246 members quitting or retiring from the NYPD each month over the last year.² This exodus has created a vicious cycle. The understaffing has caused excessive workloads and unsustainable scheduling practices. These conditions include high levels of mandatory overtime and an inability to get days off – which, in turn, have driven even more police officers out the door.

¹ New York City Independent Budget Office. “Actual Full-Time Positions.” *Fiscal History*, 2025.
<https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/RevenueSpending/FullTimePositions.xlsx>

² New York City Police Pension Fund. *2024 Retirement Activity Report*.

Ultimately, the NYPD's public safety mission has suffered. Over the past four years, NYPD response times to non-critical crimes in progress have increased by almost 10 minutes,³ and some of our busiest commands are left with just a handful of cops to patrol the entire precinct during each tour.

In neighborhoods across the city, New Yorkers are feeling the effects of NYPD understaffing, and they're demanding change. However, as we've said before, the NYPD cannot simply recruit its way out of this staffing crisis. New York City not only needs to compete for the top police recruits in a very competitive market – it must keep the talented police officers it already has.

Among the major factors hindering both recruitment and retention efforts within the NYPD are the inequitable benefits available to our members hired since 2009 under pension Tier 3. New York City police officers in Tier 3 currently lack many key benefits, such as a 20-year service retirement, that are available to virtually every other police officer in New York State.⁴

As a result, police departments across the state are taking advantage of this disparity in benefits in order to build up their own ranks. For example, the Syracuse Police Department recently launched targeted ads at NYPD officers. These ads not only promise overworked NYPD members “more time with your family” – they also specifically reference the 20-year service retirement available for Syracuse police officers, with NYPD service credited toward their pension.⁵ That kind of offer — which, once again, is available in virtually every other police department in the state — is simply too good for many of our members to pass up, and it's making it incredibly difficult for the NYPD to retain police officers who are in the prime of their careers.

To restore police staffing levels in New York City, it is clear that the city must be able to offer competitive pension benefits. Fortunately, this is an area where the Legislature has direct authority and can make an immediate, positive difference. We respectfully request your support for S.2710/A.3968, sponsored by Senator Scarcella-Spanton and Assembly Member Pheffer Amato. This bill would restore the 20-year service retirement for NYPD officers hired since 2009, replacing the current 22-year service requirement.

This change would put our Tier 3 members on a more equal footing with their peers and remove the incentive to jump to another police department with a more favorable pension plan. It would also correct a portion of the injustice that has left our newer members – who are increasingly diverse and largely city residents – with fewer benefits than their senior colleagues.

Correcting this inequity is not only a matter of fairness, but an important step toward allowing the NYPD to deliver the service and safety that New Yorkers demand and deserve. A fully staffed, fully supported police force will move our city and state toward safety. We look forward to working with these committees and the entire Legislature on solutions to this crisis.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

³ New York City Mayor's Office of Operations. *Preliminary Fiscal 2025 Mayor's Management Report*. p. 55.

⁴ See RSSL § 1201(a) & RSSL § 384(d).

⁵ Syracuse Police Department. “NYPD Officers: Take Your Career To The Next Level In Syracuse.” *Join Syracuse Police*, 2025. www.joinsyracusepolice.com/nypd/#benefits.