



Public Safety Policy Speech  
City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn  
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Hunter College

It's great to be here at Hunter College today, and looking out at a group of some of the best young minds in the five boroughs, it's hard not to feel optimistic about the future of our city.

That doesn't mean we don't face some challenges. We need to do more to create economic opportunity in every community, so there'll be good jobs waiting for all of you when you leave Hunter. We need to continue to improve our public schools, until every child graduates ready to go to college or start a career. And we need to build more affordable housing, so that families can afford to stay in the neighborhoods they helped make great.

But the fact remains that for many, there has never been a better time to be in New York City. So many of our communities are booming, whether it's new tech startups in DUMBO or small business owners in Flushing.

We need to work to bring that success to every community. And as we do, there's one critical truth we must keep in mind.

So many of these successes would have been impossible if the NYPD under the Bloomberg Administration had not transformed this city into the safest big city in America.

A visitor seeing New York for the first time today would find it hard to believe that just over two decades ago we were the murder capital of the United States, with 2,245 homicides in 1990.

Last year, that number had dropped to 419. That's a 77% reduction, and the lowest it's been since they started keeping records in 1963.

Our overall rate of violent crime is half that of nearby cities like Philadelphia and Washington. And it's not just violent crimes we've seen go down - everything from burglaries to quality of life crimes have plummeted.

And for the last 12 years the NYPD has kept us safe from the threat of terror, a threat that our entire nation was reminded last week, remains ever present. Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with the people of Boston, the victims, and their families and loved ones. And we hope that anyone who proves to be responsible will face swift justice.

Now a safer New York has been critical to our city's growth and prosperity. It makes businesses want to invest here, knowing that they'll be able to attract and retain employees. It makes families want to raise children here, knowing they can walk home from school or play in the park without fear.

And we've seen nearly 80% reductions in violent crime even in neighborhoods with historically high levels of poverty and violence. But that doesn't mean it's time to rest on our laurels. In the 75th precinct in East New York, an 80% reduction in murders still means that 18 people were killed last year. 18 lives lost is 18 too many.

Crime continues to disproportionately affect lower income communities. Only 4% of New Yorkers live in public housing, but 20% of all crime takes place in NYCHA developments.

And some categories of crime, like domestic violence, sexual assault, and hate crimes have proven tougher to prevent.

Now the good news is, we already have a blueprint for how to address these challenges. We need to sustain the progress we've made over the past twelve years, fix what hasn't worked, and build a stronger bond between police and the communities they serve.

Our police strategies need to continue to evolve. Because the fight against crime and terrorism is not stagnant or static. It's not a job that is ever finished.

It's not like a road that can be left alone until a pothole appears. The battle against crime is a moving target, a constant fight that the NYPD must wage every single day.

The threat of crime and terrorism cannot be understated. If we were to suffer another major attack, or if our streets become once again unsafe, the very foundation of New York City's economic viability would erode.

And let me be clear - anyone who doesn't recognize the incredible work that Ray Kelly has done as Police Commissioner is simply out of touch with the reality of life in New York City.

That doesn't mean I've agreed with every last decision he's made. But he has brought crime down to levels many experts never believed were possible, even as other major cities have seen increases in the past few years. Our city would be incredibly lucky to have him continue on as Commissioner.

Over the next decade, the NYPD must be as nimble and agile as it has been over the last decade.

We need to learn from what's worked, both here and in other parts of the country. We need to redouble our efforts, to get even smarter and even more focused. And we need to hear the concerns of people in every community across the city.

I'm proud that in my seven years as Speaker, I've served as a real partner with the NYPD. When I learned that the NYPD needed more money to ensure all police officers had the most modern safety equipment, I provided funding to make sure every officer had a state-of-the-art bullet proof vest.

In difficult budget times my colleagues and I restored cuts to put an additional 1400 officers on the streets. We created new criminal penalties for individuals participating in gang initiations, and passed a package of legislation that improves safety at nightlife establishments.

With Council Members Fernando Cabrera and Jumaane Williams, I launched a Task Force to Combat Gun Violence, and provided more than \$4 million to put their community-focused strategies into action. I've provided millions of dollars to support victims of domestic violence.

Time and time again, we've gotten results for New Yorkers and helped keep our city safe.

And today I'm going to outline five strategies that will use what we've learned in the last decade to take our city even farther in the right direction. To continue to drive down crime where it has remained persistent, while refusing to cede one inch of ground in neighborhoods that are now incredibly safe.

First, devote more resources to policing and crime prevention, while targeting those resources to areas with the greatest need. Second, continue to strengthen police community relations - a relationship that remains central to our ability to fight crime. Third, increase resources for strategic prosecution, while also working to reduce the number of youth offenders that end up in prison. Fourth, continually embrace new technologies that allow us to fight 21st century crimes. And finally, redouble our efforts to keep New York City safe from the threat of terror.

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Over the last decade we've continued to see record reductions across every crime category. At the same time we've gone through a deep recession, and the City has been forced to enact budget cuts that have led to a smaller police force.

To the NYPD's credit, even with fewer resources they've continued to drive crime to new lows. But they've increasingly taken on new responsibilities - like counterterror operations - that take officers away from more traditional functions.

Although the department has risen to the task of doing more with less, we don't want to reach a tipping point where we find ourselves doing less with less.

Well over the next six months, we're projected to lose 500 police officers who are up for retirement. That threatens to further deplete police resources that have already been stretched thin.

That's why I propose that we accelerate the hiring of 500 new officers that were scheduled to start in January 2014. We should instead have them join the force in July of this year. It may cost a little more up front, but it's imperative that we maintain consistent resources to make sure we're not taking one step backwards in the fight against crime. This is one of my top priorities this year.

And maintaining the current police headcount isn't enough. So I'm also proposing that over the next three years we hire an additional 1,600 police officers to bring our total ranks up to 36,000.

We'll be able to do this without a significant increase to the Department's budget. Hundreds more senior officers are scheduled to retire in the next three years. Because their salaries are significantly higher than that of a new recruit, this attrition will free up enough money in the NYPD's budget to replace every retiree, with enough money left over to hire new officers.

With additional investment in civilianization of jobs that don't require a uniformed officer and further investments in things like reducing the time between arrest and arraignment, we will have ample resources to meet our goal of 1600 new officers.

At the same time we should expand the NYPD's successful cadet program, which allows college seniors to work part time for the Department, and receive additional points on their civil service exam when applying to join the force.

It not only helps bring more college educated New Yorkers into the ranks of the NYPD, it also helps increase diversity, with roughly 75% of cadets coming from communities of color. Ray Kelly was part of the NYPD's first ever cadet class, so who knows - we could also be recruiting a future Police Commissioner.

Now it's not just police officers that deter crime. Cameras play a key role in helping police to monitor, identify, and more quickly apprehend perpetrators of traditional street crimes, and more calculated acts of terror. And when criminals know they're being watched, they're far less likely to attempt a crime in the first place.

A camera is no replacement for a cop, but we simply can't afford to have a cop on every corner. That's why since I became Speaker, my colleagues and I have provided \$76 million for cameras at NYCHA facilities and in other communities around the city.

Now we've got a new technology at our disposal - wireless surveillance cameras that can be more quickly and efficiently shifted to different locations.

So I'm proposing that the City use capital funds to purchase 1,000 new mobile security cameras for deployment around the city - starting with 200 cameras this year. These new cameras will give us three distinct advantages.

One, we can better adapt to changing data and crime patterns. Two, we'll be able to temporarily shift cameras to cover soft targets that may be at risk for terrorist attacks. And three, since they move around, criminals won't be able to predict where the cameras are located at any given moment.

As we add new resources to the NYPD, we'll devote more of them to smart, targeted policing that's geographically and community based - programs like Operation Impact.

And I'm also proposing that we redouble our commitment to a strategy called Focused Deterrence. Here's how it works:

Law enforcement officials identify a particular category of crime that they want to target. Police and prosecutors work together, often at local, state, and federal levels. They bring in social service agencies and community leaders, and engage directly with individuals known to be involved in or at high risk of criminal activity. And they lay out a clear set of options and consequences.

Today I'm proposing that we expand a Focused Deterrence model that's already proven successful - the Juvenile Robbery Intervention Program, or JRIP. This program started as a pilot focused on a group of young people in one NYCHA facility who had previously been arrested for robbery.

The Police Department met with these youth and their parents or guardians. They offered a range of support services, including assistance finding a job or getting back on track to a diploma or GED. At the same time they delivered a clear message that these young people were now on the City's radar, and that future robberies would result in strict and specific penalties.

The success of JRIP has led to an overall decrease in robberies of 54% in the surrounding police precinct. I propose that we move quickly to expand this program to the next five neighborhoods with the highest number of robberies.

This will build on the Council's previous efforts funding another model of Focused Deterrence - the CureViolence program that was recommended by our Task Force to Prevent Gun Violence.

CureViolence connects outreach workers with at-risk young people to help them change their behaviors. We provided \$1 million this year to pilot two programs, and if they prove successful we will work to expand them as well.

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It's important to note that one of the key components in all of these programs is community engagement.

That's why my second strategy is to continue improving police community relations - the foundation of both crime fighting and crime prevention.

Community engagement is critically important – it fosters relationships, it builds trust, it eliminates misconceptions, and it helps achieve two goals at the same time – a safer city and a city where our police force and our citizens share the same goals, the same mission, the same priorities.

Nearly every time I meet with public safety experts, across the political spectrum, they've consistently said the same thing. Our continued success preventing everything from street crime to terrorist plots depends on police maintaining a positive relationship with community partners. Only they can provide certain kinds of ground level information and help intervene with potential criminals.

Now Commissioner Kelly and Mayor Bloomberg have made real strides to improve community relations since the Giuliani years.

They've made the NYPD more reflective of the communities they serve - and in 2006, the ranks of police officers became majority-minority for the first time in city history.

And they've found new opportunities for direct community engagement. When a group of Brooklyn ministers approached them saying they wanted to be more involved in violence prevention, they created the NYPD Brooklyn Clergy Coalition. Along with programs like Operation Impact, the NYPD credits the Clergy Coalition with helping drive Brooklyn homicides to all-time lows.

We need to increase those efforts to engage community stakeholders in formal and informal ways. We need to expand training and opportunities for officers to build relationships with individuals in the communities they serve.

Because in spite of the progress we've made, there is a rift between the NYPD and some of our communities. Much of the conflict has centered on increases in the use of Stop, Question and Frisk over the last decade.

Stop and Frisk, when used correctly, is an important tool that allows officers to take immediate action when they see suspicious behavior. But as I've said before, the number of stops has skyrocketed to unacceptable levels. It has sown distrust of police among many communities of color, and has not led to a major increase in the confiscation of significant contraband.

The solution is not to ban the practice, but to take smart steps to increase accountability within the Department, so New Yorkers concerns are being acknowledged and addressed, and that stops are being conducted in a constitutionally sound manner. A safe city and a city where people in every community feel like they're being treated with respect are not mutually exclusive goals. We can have both. We must have both.

I'm proud that through my advocacy on this issue we've already seen some progress. I worked with Commissioner Kelly on an agreement giving the CCRB power to prosecute its own cases. At my request, the NYPD has taken steps to improve training, monitoring, and protocols around Stop and Frisk, and create an early warning system to identify officers who receive public complaints. Since then we've seen the number of stops go down - but we clearly still have more work to do.

To address continued concerns about oversight and accountability, several of my colleagues recently introduced a package of legislation collectively known as the Community Safety Act.

I want to thank the sponsors for their efforts around this important issue. While I may not agree with everything in the Community Safety Act, it has contributed to a conversation about policing

that goes beyond stop, question and frisk. A conversation which at the end of the day will help rebuild bridges between the police and communities across the city, and will lead to a safer city in the long run.

I've previously indicated my support of one of those bills, which would create an Inspector General in the Department of Investigations to review and make recommendations on NYPD policies and practices.

This is the same kind of oversight that applies to other city agencies, and to law enforcement entities like the FBI. After Los Angeles instituted an Inspector General, crime actually fell by 33%, and public satisfaction with the LAPD rose to 83%.

The Inspector General will not pose any kind of threat to the authority of the Mayor or the Police Commissioner. The buck will and should stop with the Mayor. Because as much as we need to continue to improve trust and accountability, it's critical that we avoid anything that would damage the Department's ability to keep us safe.

Another issue at the forefront of this conversation is that of racial profiling. Let me be clear - racial profiling is an illegal practice, one for which we must have zero tolerance. No New Yorker should be targeted based on the color of your skin, what you look like or where you come from.

That's one of the main reasons I've worked so hard to reform the CCRB. When we heard complaints that the CCRB was not fully responsive, and lacked the authority to hold people accountable, we took action.

Working with Commissioner Kelly we strengthened the CCRB - we added prosecutorial powers to the CCRB - so now any New Yorker who feels wrongfully targeted can go to the CCRB knowing it has the tools and the teeth to respond aggressively. Because all New Yorkers must feel they are being treated fairly under one system of justice.

And beyond the CCRB, New Yorkers can also sue the NYPD and the city in federal court. There are three such cases related to the use of stop and frisk in court as we speak.

I appreciate the intent behind the proposed legislation. But I'm opposed to expanding this cause of action against the NYPD to State Courts in New York.

I believe this presents a real risk that a multitude of State Court judges issue rulings that could take control of police policy decisions away from the Mayor and Commissioner. This could overlap and possibly conflict with rulings coming out of the federal courts, and could occur before the proposed oversight through DOI has had a chance to be fully implemented.

I believe these risks could lead to a fragmentation of oversight and policy making for the police department that could be detrimental to the safety of our city.

And just as importantly, it could hamstring individual police officers, and make them fearful of the decisions they have to make on a moment's notice, putting both their safety and the public's safety at risk.

For these reasons, and recognizing that real judicial remedies already exist, I do not support the legislation pending before the City Council.

It takes a strong Mayor and a strong Commissioner to keep a city safe. Having an IG who is part of the city's government makes sense. Outsourcing police policy to State courts does not.

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Now so far I've talked about policing and prevention, but there's a third P that needs to be part of any approach to public safety - prosecution. We need to match smart policing with smart prosecuting. And when police arrest dangerous and violent criminals, we need to make sure our District Attorneys have the resources needed to put them behind bars.

I'm proud that thanks to my advocacy, our District Attorneys have seen an increase in their baseline funding - one that better reflects their workloads. We need to build an even stronger and more stable funding base for our DAs - one that is less subject to the ups and downs of our economy. Because crime doesn't take a break just because we're in a recession.

We also need to expand on some of our DAs more innovative and effective techniques. We've worked with DA Vance to build a state-of-the-art cybercrime lab that will help him prosecute everything from identity theft to terrorist plots.

We now have intelligence driven prosecution systems in parts of the city, which provide increased resources to neighborhoods with high levels of crime. We need to find ways to expand these kinds of innovative approaches to all five boroughs.

And smart prosecution also means that not every successful case should lead to a prison sentence. We know that locking juveniles up for non-violent offenses makes them more likely to commit more serious crimes in the future.

Yet New York State is one of only two states that still treats all 16 and 17 year olds as adults - not just for violent crimes, but for all crimes.

That's why I'm proud to support Chief Judge Lippman's proposal to create a separate system within the court that focuses on adolescents. It would be staffed by judges that understand adolescent development, and provide opportunities for rehabilitation, mental health treatment, and other interventions that can help keep these kids out of prison.

And if we're going to divert more young people away from the corrections system, we'll need to increase funding to Alternative to Incarceration Programs. The City Council has provided more than \$3 million a year to programs that allow judges to use sanctions other than prison - like mandatory drug rehab, or community service.

Some serious young offenders still need to be locked up. But for many young people, these ATIs can provide a lifeline at a critical moment, helping them get connected to services and back on the right track. And as an added bonus, they save the system money that can be put back into prevention and policing.

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My fourth strategy for keeping New York City safe is to continue to explore and adopt new technologies.

Today I'm proposing that we equip more police officers with mobile devices that provide instant access to police databases, expanding a pilot program that is already showing great results.

Officers are provided smartphones, so when they respond to a call at a residential building, they can immediately pull up information on residents with previous arrests or outstanding warrants, photographs of parolees, and lists of every registered gun owner. They can even get the location of video surveillance cameras in the area. Knowing what to look for in any given situation makes officers more effective, and keeps them and residents safer.

And speaking of smartphones, lets also work with the tech industry to develop mobile apps that will help more New Yorkers keep themselves and the city safe.

Let's develop an app that helps crime victims get help even in the middle of an altercation. It would work a lot like the panic button at a bank. With the push of a button on your phone, you could request assistance from a nearby officer who will locate you using GPS technology. This kind of app could save the lives of New Yorkers in situations where it's impossible for them to call 911.

The possibilities of using new technology to fight crime are limitless. Over the next decade we'll need programmers and engineers to create new software systems and mobile apps. We'll

need lab technicians to help with DNA analysis, and data scientists to look at changing crime trends.

That's why I'm calling today for more strategic cooperation between law enforcement officials and our great colleges and universities, to make sure our students can get the skills they need to perform the crime fighting jobs of the future.

We can develop new technologies and techniques here in the five boroughs. And there's no reason why the city with the best police force in the world shouldn't be training young people from all over the world, and bringing in more revenue in the process.

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The final strategy I want to discuss today is keeping New York City a leader in the fight against international terror. We learned 12 years ago, and were reminded last week, that cities need to be at the vanguard of that fight.

In the aftermath of 9/11, New York City realized that we could no longer afford to be reactive when it comes to guarding against terror. We could not leave our security solely in the hands federal agencies like the FBI. The face of international terror had changed, and the way we protect our citizens needed to change too.

So starting in 2001, the NYPD literally wrote the book on how municipalities defend themselves against terror - how to be more proactive and more coordinated.

They became the first Police Department with it's own counterterror bureau. We now have an intelligence division made up of over 1000 officers, including 100 that gather information in cities around the world.

We formed a Joint Terrorism Task Force with the FBI, so they can pass down information coming in from foreign governments. At the same time, we have access to 35,000 officers, not to mention 8 million sets of eyes on the ground, and we can feed information back up to them.

When a plot was uncovered that would have targeted trains and stations along the Northeast Corridor, the NYPD helped convene an Amtrak Security Coalition of local, state and federal officials from all along the route. That coalition still meets regularly to coordinate intelligence gathering and counter-terrorism activity, and help prevent attacks like the one that was thwarted in Canada earlier this week.

The importance of coordination is just one part of what we've learned. We know that random deployment of police resources can deter and disrupt terrorist plots too.

That's why we need to continue efforts like the Hercules Teams - heavily armed officers who are deployed without warning to high level targets around the city. Or the random search of bags and packages in subway stations. The same goes for our new mobile cameras when deployed strategically to soft targets. These measures send a message to terrorists that you never know when or where we'll be watching.

We also know that having a good relationship with community members is just as important to fighting terror as it is to fighting conventional crime. It's how we get many of our tips about suspicious objects or behavior that may prove part of a coordinated attack.

Not every would be terrorist is connected to an international ring, but they may be connected to local schools, businesses, or houses of worship - all of which can be helpful in providing information.

Community engagement is also how we fight homegrown terrorism and that radicalization of young people. We need to work with those same community stakeholders on social inclusion programs that can get young people back on the right path before they turn to hatred and violence.

New York City is already the national model for municipal counterterror efforts, but we can and must find ways to do even more.

That's why today I'm proposing that we expand basic counterterror training to agencies like the Department of Sanitation, the Department of Transportation, and the MTA.

These trainings could be similar to the tactical instruction the NYPD provides to private security directors through the SHIELD program, or the information they provide to 32BJ members on how to identify suspicious packages or activities.

We have 6,800 sanitation workers and over 34,000 transit workers moving around our streets and our subways every day. By making them a bigger part of our surveillance program, we can keep our communities even safer.

I'm also proposing that we develop an app called "Text Something" that would allow New Yorkers to report suspicious activity directly to the NYPD via photo or text. In the wake of the Boston bombing, thousands of people sent pictures and videos of the crime scene for the FBI to analyze, information that ultimately helped with their investigation.

Using this same technology - our smart phones - we can make it easier for New Yorkers to say something or text something when they see something. The more we empower New Yorkers to share information, the better our chances of preventing terrorist attacks.

We also need to engage in a regular review of our infrastructure to better identify vulnerabilities. As we saw in the Boston attack, metal trash cans can be an attractive target for terrorists because they create deadly shrapnel when bombs go off. The NYPD already clears trash cans during major events, but London has gone a step further - replacing metal cans with hoop and bag style receptacles in subways and other high profile targets. That's just one example of the kinds of small but significant infrastructure changes we should constantly be evaluating.

The City has done a tremendous amount of work around emergency preparedness - whether its a terrorist attack or a natural disaster. But as our understanding of threats continues to evolve, we need to make sure all relevant agencies and all available resources are part of a coordinated response to any possible attack.

And again we should be partnering with our colleges and universities to develop even stronger counterterror and intelligence programs. We can attract more top talent to this critical and growing field, make sure students are learning the latest techniques, and bolster the ranks of the NYPD and police forces around the country.

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Because it's not just about what the NYPD can do here in the five boroughs. If there's one thing we've learned in the last 12 years, it's that when it comes to public safety, everything is connected.

Information gathered in Washington or Tel Aviv can foil an attack in New York City. The same police officers patrolling our streets for illegal guns are collecting data that might uncover an international plot.

In the next ten years, crime will only continue to get more complex. Terrorists work every day to find new holes in our defenses. Gangs look for any opportunity to flood our streets with guns.

But the voices of New Yorkers can be heard loud and clear. We will not be victimized. We will not be terrorized. We will do what is necessary to remain the safest big city in the world.

It takes a strong and well funded Police Department, one that embraces new techniques and knows how to work with every community. It takes our district attorneys and our courts, and agencies on both the state and federal level. Smart use of technology, and a willingness to evolve. Investment in strong schools and strong neighborhoods.

And it takes each and every New Yorker. Sharing information. Looking out for one another. Making sure our young people stay on the right track.

That's what we've done for the past decade, and it's what we'll do in the decade ahead.

This is the most important responsibility we have. There is no more critical task before us, there is no higher calling.

That's my commitment to you today, and it must be all of our commitment in the decade ahead.

We will keep New York City moving forward, keep our economy strong. And we will remain a beacon to people around the world, a national model of urban success, and a place where future generations want to come and stay and thrive.

that looks always more boldly to the future.

So thank you for listening today, and I look forward to working with all of you to make this plan a reality.