



A PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN AND INTIMATE PARTNERS

Under the **Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women, Children and Intimate Partners**, we will provide leadership in the city to make violence against these especially vulnerable groups a top priority throughout all levels of government, the private sector, non-profits and our communities. The Plan is based on a distinct and firm philosophy about the importance of ending violence against women, children and intimate partners. Below we outline the philosophies that will guide the Office, and the four areas in which we will work immediately: Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence, Rape (Stranger and Acquaintance), Human/Sex Trafficking, and Stalking. The Anti-Violence Plan is not an end; rather, it is a new beginning of our work to more successfully prevent and prosecute the crimes that have lasting effects on our intimate lives and our families across generations. These crimes form the basis of much of the violence in our society.

THE DA'S OFFICE: OUR OVERALL PHILOSOPHY

Our strategies will be consistent with the fundamental vision for the Office:

- **Strive for Crime Prevention.** We must focus on prevention and invest in programs that work. Our prevention efforts must be developed and implemented in partnership with schools, community organizations and other groups that have relationships with victims and expertise in the relevant areas.
- **Include Cultural Awareness in all Prevention Efforts.** We cannot eliminate violence against women and children until we understand how that violence is an extension of a cultural history of violence against women. The DA's Office will partner with outside groups to ensure that crime prevention programs take into account and address these complex underlying realities.
- **Collaborate with Partners to Provide Services.** Prosecutors alone cannot provide all of the support and services victims need to develop safe and sustaining

lives. We must work with others to improve support for victims of violent crime. The Office will work collaboratively to provide services and develop lasting remedies, bearing in mind that victims and others in need should not be left to wander from agency to agency to get help and make changes that will prevent more crime. We will ensure that the DA's Office is a "one stop shop," providing access to integrated service programs, including mental health, social services, and family services.

- **Ensure that Victims Are Heard in Decision Making.** In many cases, victims of violence must summon enormous courage to enter the legal system. Often they are risking their lives, and those of their children. Awareness of this reality must guide the DA's Office in its work with victims of violence. All staff members in the DA's Office will be trained to ensure that victims are always treated with sensitivity and respect.

DOMESTIC & INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

- 1. Propose Legislation to Increase Sentences for Repeat Offenders.** Research has established that perpetrators of intimate partner violence often escalate the intensity of their violent acts. Once they engage in violence, even at the misdemeanor level, their behavior may become repetitive. Currently, a perpetrator can commit repeated misdemeanors without being subject to more than one year in jail--the maximum punishment for a misdemeanor. We will seek legislative reform to allow the DA's Office to seek felony treatment, with significantly higher sentences, for repeat offenders
- 2. Establish a Family Justice Center in Northern Manhattan.** Over the last few years, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence has opened "Family Justice Centers" in Brooklyn and Queens, located near or in local DA's offices. The Centers provide a wide spectrum of services for the victim, including: meeting with a prosecutor, filing a police report, civil legal services, counseling for victims and children, safety planning, self-sufficiency programs, support groups, English as a second language classes, interpreters, and services for the elderly and disabled. However, there is no such center in Manhattan. We will make it a priority to establish a Family Justice Center in Manhattan, locating it in Northern Manhattan, where a disproportionate number of the city's domestic violence cases are reported.
- 3. Improve the Prosecution of Intimate Partner Violence Involving LGBT Couples.** The attention on domestic violence has predominately been paid to heterosexual couples; however, intimate partner violence strikes people of all sexual orientations. We understand that intimate partner violence profoundly affects the LGBT community. The District Attorney's staff will be trained to handle the specific issues, such as bias and privacy that can arise in all intimate partner violence cases in the LGBT community.

RAPE/SEXUAL ASSAULT

- 1. Improve the Prosecution of Acquaintance Rape Cases:** Acquaintance rape cases present challenges that differ from those encountered in stranger rape cases. In many instances, the criminal justice system has frequently not devoted the necessary resources for effective investigation and prosecution of acquaintance rape. This sometimes results in lower bail, lower plea offers, and shorter sentences in these cases. **To address these problems we will:**
 - a. Enhance training of prosecutors and police in acquaintance rape cases.** The DA's office will work in conjunction with the police department to train police, investigators and prosecutors in strategies that are tailored specifically to acquaintance rape cases.
 - b. Increase attention by law enforcement to the importance of a timely and detailed interview of the suspect.** We will make certain that an attempt is made to obtain a statement from any suspect, as close in time to the reported incident as possible.
 - c. Increase investigative resources.** We will dedicate resources to these cases at a level comparable to other highest priority cases.

- 2. Launch a Teen Rape Prevention Initiative.** Given the increased number of teens reporting sexual assault, including rape and cyberspace stalking, new action by the DA's Office is necessary. We will dedicate staff to work with city schools, youth centers, community groups and service providers to develop and fund an effective program to educate male and female teens about violence problems, to develop prevention and intervention programs, and to ensure teens are provided with necessary support services and legal remedies.

HUMAN/SEX-TRAFFICKING

The Manhattan DA's office can add an innovative and far-reaching dimension to preventing the trafficking in human beings for sexual and other purposes. Some of the methods pioneered by the DA's Office in its global fight against corruption and terrorism can be used to create new models for the prosecution and prevention of human trafficking. In New York, human trafficking cases commonly involve a pimp using abuse, fraud, threats or intimidation to control a person whose body the pimp is selling. The pimp may force someone to enter prostitution via fear, for example by taking away a passport or access to income. **To address these problems, we will:**

1. **Create a Human Trafficking Unit.** This will be led by hand-selected prosecutors. We will also establish an Advisory Council to assist the DA's Office in the formation of additional strategies and tactics to combat trafficking.
2. **Increase Attention and Prosecution.** The policies and practices of the DA's office must catch up with the current law, which has improved in recent years. We must put our full resources into investigating and prosecuting these cases.
3. **Partner with Police.** The Office will partner with the NYPD and other law enforcement agencies to identify trafficking victims at the time arrests are made for prostitution.
4. **Diversion.** In some instances co-operation with prostitutes can give law enforcement a better chance of dismantling trafficking rings. Instead of focusing on prosecuting prostitutes, we must look at counseling and rehabilitation options, which better fit the crime and may enhance the likelihood for cooperation in making cases against pimps and traffickers.
5. **Pursue Enterprise Corruption Cases.** We will aggressively investigate businesses that profit from forced labor, using the same approach and sophisticated investigative techniques as we use against other corrupt enterprises.
6. **Work within Immigrant Communities.** Immigrants may be particularly vulnerable to coercive tactics by human traffickers. Therefore, the office must pay extra attention to the special needs of the immigrant communities affected by trafficking.

STALKING

1. **Establish a Stalking Hotline.** We will activate a hotline into the DA's office, to increase the effectiveness of law enforcement's response to stalking victims, both to prevent crime and to assess the effectiveness of New York's current stalking statute. It is essential to determine whether women are actually receiving the help they need. If not, we must improve our response, and we must begin the process of strengthening New York's stalking statute. The stalking hotline will answer victim's questions regarding whether the harassing behavior they are experiencing is in fact considered a form of stalking under the law. The hotline also will ensure that instances of harassment and stalking for which arrests can be made are dealt with immediately.
2. **Combat Cyber-Stalking.** Cyber-stalking is a significant component of stalking crimes, and has been reported as the most prevalent crime reported to and investigated by the NYPD's Computer Investigation and Technology Unit. Prosecution of cyber-stalkers where the offender resides outside the jurisdiction of the investigating agency, or has a history of cyber-stalking behavior in another state, is a priority. To minimize the negative effects that jurisdictional issues can have on

investigation and prosecution, it is critical to promote coordination with law enforcement in jurisdictions beyond Manhattan and develop solid working relationships between computer crime units.

3. **Work with Communications Providers.** Companies like the phone company can provide victims of stalking with critical help in blocking communications. Our Office will ensure that victims of stalking will be able to block calls from numbers associated with their stalker and have their own phone numbers blocked. In addition, we will work with Internet Service Providers to limit the criminal use of the internet. We will work with social networking sites to address stalking and other issues of public safety.