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**Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens District Attorneys Announce
Unprecedented Dismissal of Nearly 700,000 Open Summons Warrants**
*Staggering Backlog of Open Warrants, More Than 10 Years Old, to be Vacated Next Month
Allowing Thousands of New Yorkers to Move on With Their Lives without Fear of Arrest
Stemming from Low-Level Warrants Issued More Than a Decade Ago*

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark, Acting Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., and Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown today announced that nearly 700,000 summons warrants that are 10 years or older will be vacated in the next few weeks. The warrants in question were issued for failure to pay a ticket for a minor infraction, subjecting individuals to arrest as well as carrying other negative consequences.

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark said, “By asking the Court to purge these old warrants, we are removing a hindrance to many people’s lives. Those who committed minor offenses a decade ago or longer and have not been in trouble with the law pose no threat to public safety today. These warrants bog down the court system. As a judge, I handled these summonses and I dismissed many of them because they were legally insufficient. The Bronx was ground zero for summonses emanating from questionable stop-and-frisks, so purging the old warrants is a way to not only improve the lives of tens of thousands of Bronx residents but to restore the community’s trust in the criminal justice system.”

Acting Brooklyn District Attorney Gonzalez said, “We have been working in Brooklyn to build trust between law enforcement and the community, and to focus our resources on violent crime. Dismissing these old warrants is an important step in advancing both of these goals. The bulk of these summonses have been issued to mostly poor, Black and Latino individuals, many of whom may not even be aware that they have become open warrants that could trigger an arrest for minor infractions dating back many years. Vacating these warrants enhances public safety and promotes fairness.”

New York County District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., said, “We continually seek to strike the right balance between fairness and public safety and are confident we will be doing that when we collectively dismiss open summons warrants older than ten years en masse. In Manhattan alone, we estimate that approximately 240,000 summons warrants will be expunged through this effort, giving those New Yorkers a fresh start and a new chance to engage more fully in their communities. I applaud my colleagues in the Queens, Bronx, and Kings County DA’s Offices, as well as OCA, the NYPD, and the City Council, for their work on this issue.”

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown said, “The prosecution of thousands of ten year old and older summons part cases would pose serious factual and legal challenges. The NYPD has vetted the list and excluded the most flagrant violators who may still be prosecuted if apprehended. We believe the people of Queens County will be better served by focusing our resources on more serious offenses.”

The dismissal of the warrants poses no risk to public safety as those individuals whose warrants are being dismissed have not been arrested in the past 10 years or their warrants would have been triggered. Furthermore, the warrants stem from summonses issued for minor infractions such as riding a bicycle on the sidewalk, drinking beer in public, disorderly conduct, and being in a park after dark.

There are approximately 1.5 million open summons warrants citywide. These summons warrants, when left unresolved, subject those who have them to an automatic arrest when questioned by police on the street or during a traffic stop. They may also carry a number of negative consequences, including impeding one’s ability to apply for citizenship, to secure employment or obtain public housing, and subject undocumented immigrants to deportation.

Approximately 143,000 warrants will be dismissed in Brooklyn; 166,000 in the Bronx; 240,000 in Manhattan; and approximately 100,000 in Queens.

The warrants will be dismissed in court proceedings in each county next month. The large-scale dismissal of the warrant backlog comes following multiple warrant forgiveness events in Brooklyn (Begin Again); Manhattan (Clean Slate) and the Bronx (Another Chance).

The dismissals follow months of work with the Office of Court Administration, the New York City Police Department and the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice.

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