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**DARCEL D. CLARK**  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET  
BRONX, N.Y. 10451  
(718) 590-2234

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**For Immediate Release**  
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**BRONX DA DARCEL D. CLARK ANNOUNCES POLICIES ON BAIL AND DISCOVERY AS WELL AS ENHANCED SERVICES FOR CRIME VICTIMS  
Criminal Justice Reform That Aids Defendants And Focuses on Victims;  
As Bronx Murders Rise, Complex Homicide Program Aids Loved Ones**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced policies for bail and discovery, as well as enhanced services and new initiatives for assisting crime victims, dovetailing with her Office's mission of pursuing justice with integrity.

District Attorney Clark said, "We must never let crime victims feel as if they are not a priority in the criminal justice system. We can be fair in our treatment of defendants while we ensure full assistance and protection of victims and witnesses. The residents of the Bronx are counting on me to keep them safe and to be fair to their family members who find themselves on the wrong side of the law. Our purpose as prosecutors is to do justice while maintaining public safety.

"So far this year the Bronx has seen a surge in homicides—34 victims, a more than 60 percent increase over last year—so our enhanced services for victims' loved ones as well as witnesses to these crimes are proving even more crucial."

The Bronx suffers from an inordinate share of the city's crime, and much of it is fueled by poverty and other social ills. No longer will jail be used as a tool for leverage or unfair advantage; neither will an accused's financial handicap be a reason for losing their freedom. The Office will now consider the least restrictive options that will ensure a defendant's return to court, such as Supervised Release. But the safety of the public must also be considered, and as such prosecutors will continue to look at each case individually, giving it a thorough, fair, objective evaluation at arraignment and throughout the life of the case.

Expanding discovery gives defendants increased access to materials and documents used by the prosecution, injects more fairness in the system and helps the trial process flow, but it must also take into consideration the need to protect the safety of witnesses, victims, and

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ongoing investigations. The delicate balance between these competing interests influences the speed of disclosure. Assistant District Attorneys must weigh the import of efficiency and exercise caution when turning over material that may compromise victim and witness safety and on-going investigations.

Ultimately, on misdemeanor cases, discovery will be turned over to defense counsel as early as possible in the adjudication process, well before the 15 days prior to trial required by the Chief Administrative Judge's model order used by trial courts. In order to protect privacy, privilege, and attorney work product, each case may require appropriate redactions, the filing of motions for protective orders, and delivering materials to the defense. As such, the entire Office has a role in expediting discovery.

District Attorney Clark also announced that The Bronx is the only District Attorney's Office in New York State and one of seven nationwide with a Complex Homicide Program, for gang and interfamilial killings. Last year the office was awarded a grant for \$593,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime for a three-year period to identify promising victim-centered and trauma-informed responses to loved ones left behind after a homicide.

The Bronx DA's Office partnered with the NYPD, the Office of Chief Medical Examiner and the Center for Court Innovation to create a multidisciplinary team to respond to the needs of the family and other loved ones of the homicide victim within 24 to 48 hours. Detectives at the Homicide Task Force make referrals to a victim advocate who is on site. The advocate and a trauma therapist immediately assess the family's needs and put a plan in action, involving the the Bronx DA's Homicide Bureau and Domestic Violence Bureau in the process. Since the program began a year ago, 124 family members or loved ones have been assisted.

District Attorney Clark also has restructured crime victims' and witnesses' services, to provide comprehensive assessments, support, direct assistance and referrals, as needed, to increase safety and security. This will allow the Crime Victims Assistance Unit to focus solely on the psychological and social needs of victims and witnesses who suffer the trauma that often accompanies crime. Last year, 238 witnesses/victims were assisted with safety related services.

In addition, the Office has recently implemented the Early Victim Engagement (EVE) program, which connects advocates with victims of intimate partner violence as soon as

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possible after an abusive incident, including immediately following a criminal court arraignment of an abusive partner or following a complaint report filed with the NYPD, to inform them if the defendant has been released. EVE is funded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice.

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