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**Testimony of Ronnie Lowenstein  
before the Civil Service and Labor Committee  
Hearing on NYPD Civilianization,  
April 19, 2002**

Thank you, Chairman Jennings and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify today on civilianization in the New York City Police Department. I am Ronnie Lowenstein, director of the city's Independent Budget Office. I am accompanied today by Preston Niblack, deputy director; and Bernard O'Brien, senior analyst.

With the city facing a \$5.0 billion budget gap for the coming year, an important challenge will be to build on the city's recent success in reducing crime while asking the NYPD to do its share to help close the gap. The Commissioner has already publicly indicated that he will take several actions to reduce NYPD costs, including reducing overtime, redeploying uniformed personnel, and making greater use of civilians.

Many observers of NYPD operations have for years argued that the department uses hundreds of police officers to perform duties that could be adequately and less expensively performed by civilian personnel. Such civilianization efforts are the focus of today's hearing. Today I will be presenting data IBO has assembled to help gauge the NYPD's progress in civilianization over the past five years.

To briefly summarize our findings:

- First, civilian employment has increased by about 670 positions since 1997, or 8 percent. This has been accomplished despite a sharp *decline* in federal aid for civilianization, which at one point funded over 20 percent of the department's civilians.
- Second, by a broad definition, the department has made progress in civilianization, because civilian employees have grown at a faster rate than uniformed employees.
- But a narrower—and more appropriate—definition of civilianization would define it as a one-for-one replacement of police officers with civilians. Based on the limited available evidence, we are unable to conclude definitively whether or not the agency has made progress in civilianization on this narrower definition, but it appears that, at least in some areas, it has not.

Let me begin by reviewing the overall numbers. As of April 6, full-time NYPD civilian staffing stands at 9,298. The department's civilians hold a large variety of job titles, including about 3,000 police administrative aides, 2,200 traffic enforcement agents, 1,300 police communications technicians (including 911 operators), 149 school safety division personnel and many others.

<b>Civilian Employees of the NYPD by Job Category</b>	
<i>As of April 6, 2002</i>	
Police Administrative Aides (PAA; all levels)	3,009
Traffic Enforcement Agents (all levels)	2,197
Police Communications Technicians (incl. 911 operators)	1,284
Trades (Mechanics, electricians, painters, etc.)	444
MIS-related positions	194
School Safety personnel (excl. PAAs)	149
All other	2,021
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,298</b>
SOURCE: IBO based on data from the Financial Information Services Agency.	

The current number of civilian employees is 669—or 8 percent—more than in June 1997. The number is set to rise to 9,810 by the end of fiscal year 2003. The ratio of uniformed to civilian employees has decreased, from 4.4 officers per civilian employee in 1997 to 4.1 currently. It is projected to fall to 3.8 officers per civilian employee by the end of fiscal year 2003. In short, the number of civilians is growing faster than the number of police officers.

<b>NYPD Civilian and Uniformed Staffing, 1997-2003</b>								
	Actual						Projected	
	June 1997	June 1998	June 1999	June 2000	June 2001	April 6, 2002	June 2002	June 2003
City-funded	6,806	6,957	8,253	8,371	8,761	n.a.	9,215	9,161
Non city-funded	1,823	1,763	804	613	613	n.a.	649	649
Total Civilians	8,629	8,720	9,057	8,984	9,374	9,298	9,864	9,810
Total Uniformed	38,201	38,144	39,035	40,285	38,630	37,741	37,898	36,878
SOURCE: IBO.								
NOTES: Staffing figures represent number of filled positions on the last day of the month, except where indicated. Non-city funded personnel are those fully funded with federal, state, or private grants. Positions currently fully funded with non-city resources include 575 funded through the federal Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (LLEBG) and 38 IFA-funded positions (set to rise to 74 this year).								

This result has been achieved despite the expiration of the city's grant under the federal COPS MORE program, which provided aid to fund local civilianization efforts. As a result of the expiration of COPS MORE funding, the number of federally funded NYPD civilian positions has declined to 575, from a peak of 1,823 in July 1997. The 575 NYPD civilian positions still funded by Washington are funded through a separate federal grant known as the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant).

What positions do these new civilian employees of the NYPD hold?

Based on the limited data available, the increase in civilian positions over the past five years is primarily attributable to the following categories:

- The number of personnel in the Traffic Enforcement Division has grown by 323 positions.
- Civilians in the department's Communications Division, which houses its Emergency 911 operations, have increased by 309. (The Communications Divisions was one of several units audited by Comptroller Hevesi in a report released in 1999.)
- 161 of the new civilians are School Safety Division administrative personnel transferred to the police department from the Board of Education in December 1998.
- In contrast, the number of civilians employed in precincts and in borough patrol and detective units has declined by 215 and 32 positions, respectively.

<b>Change in NYPD Civilian Employment, 1997-2002</b>			
	<b>1997</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>Change</b>
Traffic Enforcement Division	2,003	2,326	323
Communications Division*	1,120	1,429	309
Other Divisions Audited by Comptroller*	1,401	1,582	181
School Safety Division	0	161	161
Borough Patrol and Detective Units	248	216	-32
Precincts	1,847	1,632	-215
All Other	<u>2,010</u>	<u>1,952</u>	<u>-58</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,629</b>	<b>9,298</b>	<b>+669</b>
SOURCE: IBO			
NOTE: *Included in Comptroller Hevesi's audit.			

To gain insight into whether this increase in the number of civilians employed by the NYPD has resulted in redeployment of uniformed officers, we took a closer look at the seven units directly audited by Comptroller Hevesi.

The Comptroller's report concluded that the NYPD could utilize a total of **9,886** civilian personnel. That total was **1,257** positions more than the number of civilian personnel at the agency on June 30, 1997. For each of the seven units audited by the Comptroller, IBO compiled the level of staffing in fiscal year 1997, the Comptroller's recommended staffing level, the staffing level recommended by the NYPD, and the current (2002) level.

Let me point out that although we used Comptroller Hevesi's report as a reference point, IBO has not conducted—and is not in a position to conduct—an independent analysis of the potential for civilianization in the police department. Moreover, we are not endorsing either the Comptroller's recommendations or those of the NYPD.

For these seven units taken together we found that *both* uniformed and civilian staffing has risen. Civilian staffing increased by 85 positions, or 10 percent, and remained below the Comptroller's recommended level, but close to the NYPD's figure. However, uniformed staffing also rose by 78 positions, or 16 percent, which was almost 200 more positions than the NYPD recommended as appropriate in 1997.

In four of the seven units, the number of civilians in 2002 was actually below the NYPD's own recommended figure, while the number of uniformed personnel had grown—in effect, the opposite of civilianization. In two of the units, both civilian and uniformed staffing had grown, and in one unit, both had declined. Altogether, the number of civilians employed today in these seven units is 33 fewer than the NYPD's recommended level in 1997, while the number of uniformed personnel is 196 above the level recommended by the NYPD. At least in these seven units, it appears that civilianization has not made substantial progress.

## **Conclusion**

To recap, civilian employment in the department has increased in the last several years, despite a sharp decline in federal aid for civilianization. The number of civilian employees has grown at a faster rate than uniformed employees. Nonetheless, it appears that, at least in some of the areas we were able to review, the department has not made significant progress in replacing uniformed personnel with civilians.

The Mayor's proposed budget for 2003 calls for making a significant stride forward in civilianization. The administration proposes allowing peak uniformed staffing to fall by 1,600 positions, while at the same time hiring 800 additional civilians. The new civilian hires would perform tasks currently being performed by uniformed personnel, with the goal of maximizing the number of police officers available for deployment in direct law enforcement activities.

If the additional cuts outlined in the contingency plan released Wednesday with the Executive Budget should become necessary, then uniformed headcount would fall further, and the proposed hiring of new

civilian employees would be cancelled. Although this will make the task harder, it will put additional pressure on the NYPD to make maximum use of its civilian employees.

Analysis of Civilian and Uniform Staffing in Seven Selected Units							
	Actual 1997	Comptroller's Recommendation	NYPD Recommendation	Actual, April 2002	Change, 1997 to 2002	Actual Compared to Comptroller	Actual Compared to NYPD
Motor Transport Division	Civilian	395	352	328	(11)	(67)	(24)
	Uniformed	75	62	102	27	83	40
	Total	414	414	430	16	16	16
Administrative Services Division	Civilian	5	12	80	75	68	68
	Uniformed	14	7	24	10	17	17
	Total	19	19	104	85	85	85
Equipment Section Unit	Civilian	7	16	6	(1)	(10)	(10)
	Uniformed	13	4	9	(4)	5	5
	Total	20	20	15	(5)	(5)	(5)
Building Maintenance Unit	Civilian	134	167	183	49	16	30
	Uniformed	42	9	48	6	39	25
	Total	176	176	231	55	55	55
Quartermaster Section	Civilian	30	56	29	(1)	(27)	(19)
	Uniformed	27	1	37	10	36	28
	Total	57	57	66	9	9	9
Management Information Systems	Civilian	219	302	209	(10)	(93)	(62)
	Uniformed	87	4	121	34	117	86
	Total	306	306	330	24	24	24
Applicant Processing Division	Civilian	127	222	111	(16)	(111)	(16)
	Uniformed	214	119	209	(5)	90	(5)
	Total	341	341	320	(21)	(21)	(21)
TOTAL	Civilian	861	1170	946	85	(224)	(33)
	Uniformed	472	163	550	78	387	196
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>1,333</b>	<b>1,496</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>163</b>

SOURCE: IBC; Office of the Comptroller: Audit Report on the Opportunities for Savings Through Civilianization in the New York City Police Department, MH96-154A, February 1, 1999.

