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**SECURITY SWEEP AT NEW YORK'S TWO MAJOR AIRPORTS RESULTS IN ARREST
OF 24 PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES FOR LYING ABOUT CRIMINAL BACKGROUNDS**

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown, joined by Port Authority Director of Public Safety/Superintendent of Police Samuel J. Plumeri Jr., today announced that two dozen individuals seeking employment at John F. Kennedy International Airport and LaGuardia Airport have been charged with falsifying security applications by failing to disclose prior criminal convictions.

District Attorney Brown said, "In this age of terrorist threats and heightened security it is vitally important that those employed at our City's two major airports be above reproach in order to protect the safety of the traveling public. This includes employees with access to secure areas, as well as those who work beyond security check points, such as those employed at retail outlets and restaurants. Moreover, employers who do business at the airports have a legitimate need to know whether prospective employees have relevant criminal convictions before entrusting such individuals with responsibilities within their companies."

Port Authority Director of Public Safety/Superintendent of Police Samuel J. Plumeri Jr. said, "In the course of conducting thorough criminal background checks required to obtain access to secure areas of JFK Airport, Port Authority Police found discrepancies in a number of applications that were submitted and denied. A subsequent operation conducted in cooperation with Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown and his staff resulted in the arrest of dozens of individuals for falsifying business records. We remain committed to working with the Queens District Attorney's Office to ensure criminals are brought to justice."

District Attorney Brown said that, according to the charges filed today, the defendants when asked on their Security Identification Display Area application form if they had ever been convicted of a crime, they indicated that they had not. The complaints charge that, in fact, that the defendants have numerous convictions, including weapons and narcotics possession, and robbery.

District Attorney Brown explained that when an applicant is applying for a job at the airport, he/she must fill out an application for a Security Identification Display Area (SIDA) badge in addition to an individual company's job application form. The badge allows the holder access to secure areas at JFK and LaGuardia airports. Those areas include aircraft parking and maintenance areas, the tarmac and ramp, cargo storage facilities, and passenger and baggage screening areas.

The defendants are each being held pending arraignment in Queens Criminal Court in Kew Gardens on a charge of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, a Class E felony punishable by up to four years in prison.

The investigation, which was undertaken as part of the Fraudulent Identification Task Force – a coalition of local, state and federal agencies under the direction of the Queens County District Attorney's Office – was conducted by members of the Port Authority Police Department's Detective Squad.

Assistant District Attorney Christina Hanophy, Chief of the District Attorney's Counter-Terrorism and Airport Investigations Unit, is supervising the prosecution of the cases under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Gregory C. Pavlides, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Economic and Environmental Crimes Bureau, and Gerard A. Brave, Bureau Chief of the District Attorney's Organized crime and Rackets Bureau, and the overall supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Peter A. Crusco and Deputy Executive Assistant District Attorney for Investigations Linda

M. Cantoni. Also assisting in the prosecutions are the District Attorney's Intake Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Laura M. Henigman, Bureau Chief, and Susan M. Kane and Joshua S. Mandell, Deputy Bureau Chiefs, and the Grand Jury Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorneys Eugene F. O'Neill, Bureau Chief, and Floyd D. Herring, Deputy Bureau Chief.

The charges against the defendants are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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DEFENDANT ADDENDUM

1. Juan J. Baez, 40, of 40, of 834 Park Avenue in Brooklyn.
2. Sonia Burgos, 44, of 20-12 Seagirt Boulevard in Far Rockaway, Queens.
3. Isidro Espinal, 46, of 108-32 48th Avenue in Corona, Queens.
4. Timothy George, 44, of 34-42 107th Street in Corona, Queens.
5. Eric A. Hazel, 42, of 114-35 133rd Street, South Ozone Park, Queens.
6. Lakeia Hickman, 28, of 1996 Gleason Avenue in the Bronx.
7. Raymond G. Jones, 58, of 50 West 139th Street in Manhattan.
8. Tyrone Logan, 40, of 60 East 129th Street in Manhattan.
9. Jason F. McBean, 37, of 155 East Mineola Avenue in Valley Stream, Long Island.
10. Mario M. McClaire, 28, of 176-01 133rd Street in Jamaica, Queens.
11. Edward Murray, 51, of 1402 New York Avenue in Brooklyn.
12. Major Newton, 42, of 126-39 145th Street in Jamaica, Queens.
13. Tamiko Novell, 65, of 25 East St. Marks Place in Valley Stream, Long Island.
14. Michael O'Connell, 40, of 61-43 Woodbine Street in Ridgewood, Queens.
15. Herbert Pena, 35, of 87-25 92nd Avenue in Woodhaven, Queens.
16. Michael T. Penfield, 32, of 42 Old Commack Road in Kings Park, New York.
17. David Ramirez, 26, of 76 George Street in Brooklyn.
18. Natkisha B. Rhoden, 28, of 105-17 Linden Boulevard in Queens.
19. Herbert Riascos, 38, of 1905 2nd Avenue in Manhattan.
20. William Speller, 27, of 411 Beach 54th Street in Far Rockaway, Queens.
21. Robert K. Springs, 32, of 1174 Park Place in Brooklyn.
22. Christopher J. Wala, 20, of 1510 Carroll Street in Brooklyn.
23. Matthew Walton, 48, of 598 Barbey Street in Brooklyn.
24. Jefferson Williams, 33, of 137-05 231st Street in Laurelton, Queens.

Note to Editors: E-version of press release is posted at www.queensda.org.