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**QUEENS DA MELINDA KATZ ASKS COURT TO DISMISS
HUNDREDS OF CASES AGAINST PEOPLE CHARGED WITH
LOITERING FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROSTITUTION AND RELATED CHARGES**

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz appeared in Court today to request the dismissal of nearly 700 cases where people were detained, arrested and charged with loitering for the purpose of engaging in prostitution and prostitution-related crimes.

Since taking office, DA Katz did not prosecute a single person charged with the vague loitering law that far too often targeted women, trans people and people of color based solely on their appearance. Last month, the Legislature took action and finally repealed Penal Law 240.37.

“Historical data shows that enforcement of this statute had primarily been used to arrest people based on their gender or appearance,” DA Katz said. “Dismissing cases related to this unfair and now repealed statute frees members of our community from the collateral consequences of their arrests.”

In many of the cases DA Katz asked the court to vacate warrants on and dismiss, the defendants were charged with prostitution.

“Instead of prosecuting these defendants, we need to provide a helping hand by connecting them with meaningful services, support options and the necessary tools that will assist them to safely exit the sex trade if that is what they choose to do.”

Before Queens Acting Supreme Court Justice Toko Serita today, DA Katz requested the Court dismiss:

- 146 cases of defendants with outstanding warrants on open cases charging 240.37 and related charges. The DA requested that all warrants be vacated and the cases dismissed.
- 84 cases of defendants with outstanding warrants on cases charging 240.37 and related charges who failed to appear after pleading guilty. The DA requested these warrants also be vacated and that the convictions on those cases be vacated and the cases dismissed.
- 443 cases of defendants with outstanding warrants on pending cases charging 230.00 (prostitution) and related charges. The DA requested these warrants be vacated and the cases dismissed.

In addition to dismissing these cases, the DA also requested that the Court seal the cases so that these individuals do not have a criminal record as to these matters.

In granting the DA's application, Judge Serita thanked DA Katz for her leadership in advocating for the repeal of the law and for the "righteous decision" to dismiss both the loitering and prostitution cases.

DA Katz thanked Judge Serita, Queens Criminal Court Chief Administrative Judge Joanne B. Watters, and the Chief Clerk of the NY City Criminal Court Justin Barry and Queens Criminal Court Borough Chief Clerk Carey Wone for facilitating the application.

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Note to Editors: Archived press releases are available at www.queensda.org.

