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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023

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**QUEENS DA MELINDA KATZ AND THE NYPD ANNOUNCE**  
**PROGRAM TO HELP FLUSHING MERCHANTS**

*New Effort to Deter Disruptive, Unwanted Activity in Local Shops & Restaurants  
Comes on the Heels of Successful Program Launch in Jamaica in 2021*

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz joined by NYPD officials, members of the Flushing business community and elected officials today announced the Flushing Merchants Business Improvement Program to enhance safety for retailers and shoppers by discouraging unwanted activity in and around local stores. The initiative is based on a successful launch of the Jamaica Merchants Business Improvement Program.

District Attorney Katz said: “We will put individuals on notice through this program that disruptive and illegal behavior will not be tolerated as merchants try to make a living and residents seek to shop or dine without fear or harassment. This initiative will serve as a deterrent to those who have caused harm, warning them that their presence in particular shops is unwanted, unwelcome, and illegal. Flushing business owners, having seen the success we achieved in Jamaica through this unique initiative, asked to become part of it and we listened.”

U.S. Rep. Grace Meng said: “We must never take a backseat to safety in our communities, and this new initiative will help combat disruptive behavior in Flushing and make clear that illegal activities will not be tolerated. We must do all we can to help our small businesses and keep local residents out of harm’s way, and I thank District Attorney Katz for launching this effort to improve safety in the area.”

Deputy Inspector Louron Hall, Commanding Officer of the 109<sup>th</sup> Precinct, said: “This important initiative furthers the NYPD’s ongoing commitment to assist the communities and businesses we serve. It reflects the active listening to local concerns our officers carry out every day, on every tour, and the intelligence-driven strategies we employ to keep improving public safety. We are proud to work in unison on this program with our partners in the Queens District Attorney’s office. With the approach of summer, we know it will take all of us together — the public, in tandem with our hardworking police officers — to ensure we continue meeting the challenges we collectively face.”

Dian Song Yu, Executive Director of the Flushing BID, said: “Safety is a top priority for our community, and we want to keep everyone in Downtown Flushing safe. With this initiative, we hope it will improve safety and security in our community and promote a more positive environment for businesses to thrive.”

Peter Tu, Executive Director of the Flushing Chinese Business Association, said: “Based on the current social phenomenon, the Flushing Merchants Business Improvement Program may be of great help to merchants. It’s definitely better to prevent it before it happens than to deal with it after the incident occurs.”

Councilmember Sandra Ung said “Disruptive<sup>1</sup> people loitering in our stores and other commercial establishments in Flushing not only has the potential to lead to more serious crimes like vandalism and shoplifting, it also dissuades people who actually want to patronize those businesses from entering them in the first place. So not only does this type of activity potentially lead to an increase in crime, it drives away

customers who fear being harassed. I want to thank District Attorney Katz for expanding the Merchants Business Improvement Program to Flushing and giving our local precinct another tool to ensure public safety.”

State Senator John Liu said: “The Flushing Merchants Business Improvement Program will empower our small business owners who have felt helpless for far too long due to the one-two punch of surging anti-Asian hate crimes and economic hardships following the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as an uptick in unwanted, disruptive behavior in and around their stores. This program puts the power back in the hands of our small business community, and I’d like to offer my sincere thanks to Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, the 109 Police Precinct, and the Flushing BID for coming together to make sure our small businesses have the resources they need to keep themselves, their patrons, and our entire community safe.”

Merchants who enroll in the program can notify the 109th Precinct when they encounter an individual committing a crime and/or otherwise disrupting their business. Responding officers can issue an official trespass notice to the individual in question warning them that their continued presence, or return to a location, can or will result in their arrest.

The District Attorney’s office created the program in partnership with the NYPD and the Jamaica business community in June 2021 to ensure that the community felt safe in patronizing local businesses hit hard by the pandemic.

A total of 25 stores, from mom-and-pop shops to large chain retailers, currently participate in the initiative through the 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct.

Since the program’s creation, the NYPD has issued trespass notices to 23 people and only three of those individuals returned to the locations in question, resulting in their arrest.

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