

MELINDA KATZ
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

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NOVEMBER 2026



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A Message from District Attorney
MELINDA KATZ

COP KILLER SHOULD NOT BE FREED

I remember the murder of NYPD Police Officer Edward Byrne as if it happened yesterday.

The man convicted of shooting and killing Officer Byrne is up for parole and I sent a letter to the state parole board urging its members to again not permit David McClary to be released from prison.

On February 26, 1988, McClary executed the 22-year-old officer, who was on duty in a marked police car as he guarded the South Jamaica home of a witness in a drug case. He was killed instantly.

A jury convicted McClary in 1989 of murder and criminal possession of a weapon. He was sentenced to 25 years to life in prison for the murder conviction and five to 15 years for the weapon possession charge.

This execution was nothing short of an act of domestic terrorism designed to challenge the long established and universally accepted laws of civilized society. McClary should remain behind bars where he belongs.

In Friendship,

Melinda Katz

RECORD GUN BUYBACK REMOVES FIREARMS FROM STREETS OF QUEENS

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz's 14th gun buyback event brought in a record number of firearms. A total of 176 guns and rifles – including 10 assault weapons – were collected during the event, the most since 2020.

In all, 1,025 firearms have been taken off the streets of Queens through buyback events during DA Katz's administration.

The collection was also the second largest in New York City in 2026.

"Gun buybacks are an effective tool to help reduce the senseless cycle of gun violence that exists in our city. These are guns that will never be used to harm another person and the lives that will be saved are priceless," DA Katz said.

The gun buyback event was hosted by both the DA's office and the NYPD at the Majority Baptist Church in Jamaica. Anyone in possession of a firearm was welcome to surrender it – no questions asked and no identification required.

In addition to the assault weapons, the guns collected included 77 revolvers. 55 pistols and five shotguns.

The DA's gun buyback program is part of her ongoing efforts to reduce gun violence and strengthen public safety. These efforts include prosecuting those who use the Iron Pipeline from southern states to traffic guns into New York City.

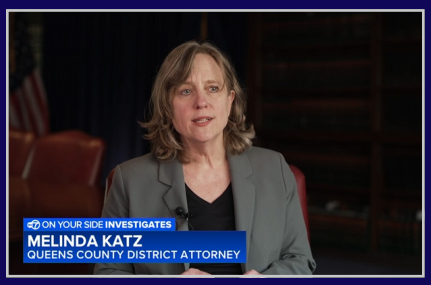
The office is also relentlessly investigating and prosecuting those who buy unserialized plastic gun components to build ghost guns in the privacy of their homes.

The DA joined NYPD Commissioner Jessica S. Tisch, state Attorney General Letitia James and others in late October to announce that more than 4,500 guns have been removed from the streets of New York City this year – including 868 in Queens – through gang takedowns, long-term investigations and arrests.

"Queens recorded the fewest shooting incidents ever for the first nine months of the year because of our shared efforts to keep illegal guns off our streets," DA Katz said. "I commend the Police Commissioner, the brave men and women of the NYPD, State Attorney General Letitia James as well as our dedicated prosecutors for their commitment to ensuring serious consequences for those who make, sell, transport, or buy illegal guns. Every firearm removed from our streets represents a potential tragedy prevented."



SQUATTERS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED



The DA's office recently charged two individuals with illegally occupying a vacant home in Bayside. The pair is alleged to have lived in the house for more than two years.

The legal property owner died in 2018 without a will or heirs.

According to court documents, before the legitimate owner of the home died, he entered into a reverse mortgage with a finance company. After the homeowner passed away, a lien was placed on the property.

The Public Administrator was declared the lawful custodian of the home this year pursuant to a ruling in Queens County Surrogate's Court.

An investigation was conducted after the DA's office received reports from people in the neighborhood claiming squatters had taken over the property.

"You simply cannot move into a home without permission and claim you have a right to stay – even if the property is vacant and the owner deceased," DA Katz said.

The two defendants were allegedly observed by investigators going in and out of the home on 205th Street numerous times. They also added the address of the home to their driver's licenses.

The defendants were arrested and removed from the house in late September. The property was then secured to ensure that the defendants or others could not illegally occupy the space.

The two individuals, a man and a woman, were charged in a three-count indictment with burglary in the second degree, grand larceny in the second degree and criminal trespass in the second degree. If convicted, the defendants face up to 15 years in prison.

CASES OF INTEREST

The ringleader of a theft crew that stole more than $2.2 million worth of merchandise from Home Depot stores in nine states has been sentenced to three to six years in prison. **Armando Diaz**, 52, of Flushing pleaded guilty to grand larceny and other crimes.

Twelve other defendants, who took part in 319 documented thefts of construction material, power tools, smoke alarms and other goods or resold the stolen property, all pleaded guilty to felony charges and were also sentenced.

All the property seized during the investigation will be returned to Home Depot.

In a separate case, a Jamaica resident who pleaded guilty to sex trafficking a 25-year-old woman was sentenced to three to nine years in prison.



Leighton Jennings, 36, admitted in court that he intentionally advanced or profited from prostitution.

BREAST CANCER WALK

Members of the DA's office joined thousands of others during Breast Cancer Awareness Month for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk of Queens in Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

The Making Strides movement supports the mission of the American Cancer Society – to advocate for and fund meaningful research for a cure, provide support for survivors and resources for parents and families nationwide. More than 100 walks took place across the country.



SCOOTERS SEIZED

The DA's office is committed to removing illegal and unregistered motorized scooters from neighborhood streets and commercial strips in Queens.

Detectives from the DA's office teamed up with officers from the 114th Police Precinct, Patrol Borough Queens North and the New York State Police recently in Jackson Heights and Astoria where they seized 33 scooters.

Most of the scooters were unregistered and parked illegally on the street or in some instances parked on sidewalks.



