



PRESS RELEASE

City of Yonkers Police Department

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Yonkers Police Commissioner John J. Mueller issues order to cease law enforcement activity in NYC

Yonkers, NY – Yonkers Police Commissioner John J. Mueller said today he is prohibiting officers under his command from taking enforcement actions in the City of New York effective immediately.

Mueller said his action was necessary due to the New York City Council proposing, and Mayor Bill de Blasio signing, a New York City Law that requires the jailing and or fining of any police officer that puts a knee on a person's back or chest during the course of arresting that person.

Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano said he supported Commissioner Mueller's order.

Said Mayor Spano, "Here in Yonkers our Police Department works closely with the community, and the low number of complaints is the result of that. We don't use chokeholds, and we don't use more force than absolutely necessary, even when dealing with individuals who are extremely violent or suffering mental distress."

The City of Yonkers has long banned the use of chokeholds by its Police Department except in life or death struggles, and has engaged in a variety of practices to minimize the use of force during arrests. As a result, complaints of excessive force by Yonkers Police have dropped dramatically in recent years. Only six such complaints were made last year.

"Despite our best efforts to minimize the use of force, it remains well possible that a police officer's knee may end up on the chest or back of a violent suspect during a scuffle or arrest, especially during a one-on-one situation," said Mueller, "We will not subject our officers to the threat of a year in jail every time they have to deal with a violent or mentally ill subject resisting arrest. New York City's new law goes beyond effective policing. It jeopardizes the safety of both police officers and the public."

Mueller added that it was important to note that this was in no way a reflection on the NYPD: "The Yonkers Police Department has and will continue to have the utmost respect and admiration for the men and women of the NYPD. The NYPD has been placed in a nearly impossible position by its legislative body to deliver measured, thoughtful, and appropriate policing strategies for residents who need them most. Our brothers and sisters of the NYPD have contributed countless innovative and transformational policing strategies that have greatly benefited citizens and policing alike, throughout the entire world."

Commissioner Mueller further stated, "The New York City law was obviously not written by anyone who has ever had to put handcuffs on a violent individual resisting arrest. The Yonkers Police does not use chokeholds or engage in other actions that endanger a subject's life, but nor can we endanger an officer's own life; and we're certainly not going to ask them to risk going to jail just for doing their job." Commissioner Mueller also noted that the Yonkers PBA has expressed strong concerns about the new New York City law.

Mueller said Yonkers Police, even when engaged in an active pursuit, will halt at the New York City line in the future absent extreme circumstances. ###

Media Contact: Detective Lieutenant Dean Politopoulos
Yonkers Police Headquarters | 104 South Broadway | Yonkers NY 10701
Office (914) 377-6923 – dean.politopoulos@ypd.yonkersny.gov



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