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ALBANY

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SENATOR, 29TH DISTRICT

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July 2, 2009

Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner
New York Police Department (NYPD)
1 Police Plaza
New York, NY 10038

Dear Commissioner Kelly,

I am writing regarding an alleged bias attack that took place early in the morning on June 19, 2009 in Jackson Heights, Queens.

The victim, Leslie Mora, a 30-year-old transgender woman, reports that as she was walking on Roosevelt Avenue, two men severely beat her with a belt buckle while yelling homophobic slurs. The assailants were swiftly apprehended by officers from the 115th precinct, and the Queens County District Attorney's office has charged the men with felony assault with intent to cause physical injury with a weapon.

Ms. Mora, her legal representatives at the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund, and other advocates believe this case should be pursued as a bias attack. However, I understand from a conversation my Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Liaison had today with Detective Rivera at the NYPD's Hate Crimes Task Force that the case was reviewed by that office and not deemed worthy of a bias investigation.

Given Ms. Mora's deeply troubling account of her assault, I ask that the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force re-examine the details of the case and seriously consider whether it may constitute a hate crime.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Thomas K. Duane
New York State Senate
29th District