



The Public Advocate for the City of New York
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Highlighting Recent Spike in Rapes, Gotbaum Announces Proposal to Fight Violence Against Women

(New York, NY, July 22, 2002) – Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum highlighted the 5 percent spike in rapes this year and unveiled four recommendations that will help fight sexual assault crimes against women. The proposals center on awareness and prevention education tactics to be implemented by the Police Department, the Mayor’s office, and advocacy organizations. The Public Advocate is asking the Mayor’s task force on sexual assault to consider these proposals as part of their action.

According to Gotbaum, “This City is facing an escalation in violence against women is downright frightening. We need a better, more proactive rape awareness campaign in the city that starts in the schools and targets neighborhoods with increased incidences of rape and sexual assault. We can turn back the rise in rape if we work together to improve prevention programs.”

Gotbaum’s recommendations include:

Using Compstat Data to Proactively Target Communities– Currently, the Police Department provides sexual assault education lectures to communities by request only. The Public Advocate recommends that the Police Department begin using Compstat crime data to target communities where rape awareness/education is needed, based on spikes in crime, and provide the education lectures proactively.

Police/Advocacy Partnerships – The Public Advocate recommends the creation of a joint program in which the Police Department and community based groups that provide rape and sexual assault services work together to increase information dissemination about rape and exchange information about rape statistics, available services, and communities requesting and receiving training.

High School Curriculum on Sexual Assault Awareness – Now that the Mayor has control of the city’s public schools, the Public Advocate recommends that the Mayor incorporate sexual assault awareness and prevention education into all high school programs, through health education classes.

City-wide Awareness Campaign – The Public Advocate recommends assembling a city-wide work group that would create a public relations awareness and prevention education campaign, similar to what the city uses against domestic violence, smoking and drugs.

Gotbaum’s proposal takes into account different rape scenarios, “We need to address both stranger rape and date rape. The difference between random crimes and date rape is the way women feel and the way they respond to the crime. Prevention techniques and awareness education campaigns must take these differences into account.” said Gotbaum.