

War Takes A Toll:

The Costs of the War to New York City



**Prepared by:
The Office of
Congressman Anthony D. Weiner**

February 27, 2007

Overview

After September 11th, many New Yorkers felt compelled to serve their country by enlisting in military as a way to contribute to the global war on terror. Many of these New Yorkers, along with Reservists and members of the National Guard who enlisted before September 11th, have now been called up to active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Many of the New Yorkers who enlisted to serve in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan are employees of the City of New York. City employees have missed over 600,000 days of work since September 11th due to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over 350,000 of these lost service days have come from first responders – New York’s Finest and Bravest – at a steep price to New York City’s taxpayers.

In most cases, city employees who leave to serve their country are forced to take a pay cut. But in an effort to reward their patriotism, New York City made the following concession: while deployed, the City would make up the difference between their military salary and their City salary, ensuring that each soldier’s family would not have to make a financial sacrifice beyond the sacrifices already being asked.

For example, if Mr. Smith makes \$55,000 annually as an NYPD officer and his military salary is \$45,000, serving in the military would normally mean taking a \$10,000 pay cut. Instead, the city continues to pay Officer Smith \$55,000 annually, the military pays him \$45,000 and he must refund to the city the lesser of the two – in this case the military pay. In the end, Officer Smith gets paid \$55,000 – his city salary – to serve in the military.

New York’s commitments to its soldiers have translated into a \$57 million price tag. To compensate for lost productivity, Rep. Weiner will introduce legislation requiring the Department of Defense to reimburse state and local governments for the actual costs incurred by a state or local government.

Chronic Drain on NYC's Finest and Bravest

More than 1,800 City employees have gone on military leave since September 11th.

City Employees on Military Leave since September 11th, 2001

City Department	Number of Employees
New York Police Department	1,087
Fire Department of New York	216
Other	529
TOTAL	1,832

Source: The City of New York, Office of Payroll Administration

Workplace Distribution of City Employees on leave since September 11, 2001

Borough of Employment	Number of Employees
Manhattan	738
Bronx	249
Brooklyn	347
Queens	391
Staten Island	53

Source: The City of New York, Office of Payroll Administration

City Employees Currently on Military Leave

City Department	Number of Employees
New York Police Department	166
Fire Department of New York	33
Other	104
TOTAL	303

Source: The City of New York, Office of Payroll Administration

The Toll on the City

Over 600,000 days of work have been missed by City employees since September 11th. The vast majority of lost time is on the front line of New York City's battle against terrorism.

Service Days lost since September 11, 2001

City Department	Days Missed
New York Police Department	359,615
Fire Department of New York	61,437
Other	189,821
TOTAL	610,873

Source: The City of New York, Office of Payroll Administration

Service Days Missed per Year

Year	Days Missed
9/11/2001 to 12/31/2001	15,226
2002	85,011
2003	146,193
2004	134,850
2005	132,478
2006	97,115
TOTAL	610,873

Source: The City of New York, Office of Payroll Administration

The Cost to the City

To honor the service of New York City employees, the City has set up a program to make up the difference in their salaries – so that the families of men and women deployed overseas are not put under any financial hardship. Under City Operations Order #73, “Operation Enduring Freedom Extended Benefits Package,” New York City continues to pay municipal employees while they are on military leave, but requires them to return the lesser of the two salaries to the City.

For example, if Mr. Smith makes \$55,000 annually as an NYPD officer and his military salary is \$45,000, serving in the military would normally mean taking a \$10,000 pay cut. Instead, the city continues to pay Officer Smith \$55,000 annually, the military pays him \$45,000 and he must refund to the city the lesser of the two – in this case the military pay. In the end, Officer Smith gets paid \$55,000 – his city salary – to serve in the military.

The city has spent approximately \$57.1 million to maintain the salaries of City workers who are serving in the war.

Cost to City

	Total Paid By City in Salaries	Refunded by City Worker (Estimated)	Cost to City (Estimated)
NYPD	\$70,105,942	\$32,100,398.65	\$38,005,543
FDNY	\$10,977,573	\$5,541,675	\$5,435,897
Other Municipal Employees	\$27,027,563	\$13,359,254	\$13,668,308
TOTAL	\$108,111,078	\$51,001,329	\$57,109,749

Source: The City of New York, Office of Payroll Administration

New York at the Center of a National Crisis

A survey by the Police Executive Research Forum found that 44% of 976 law enforcement agencies report losing personnel to reservist duty. At the same time, the National League of Cities has found that fiscal conditions have forced one in four cities to cut personnel from their police forces. Last month, the NYPD chose to end its policy of guarding the entrances to subway tunnels under the East River. Why? Because the cost of paying officers overtime was too high – in large part because so many members of New York’s finest are on duty in Iraq. In fact, last year New York spent \$412.0 million on police overtime.

The First Responder Reimbursement Act

Rep. Weiner will introduce a bill that would require the Department of Defense to reimburse any city, county or state government that implements a program like New York’s – encouraging first responders to enlist in the military during a time of war – to cover the costs of providing those soldiers with the salary they would have received as municipal employee. Cities that are willing to bear the considerable costs of finding replacements and paying other employees overtime should not have to bear the additional burden of subsidizing the federal government’s war effort.

Conclusion

New Yorkers should be proud of their municipal workforce. The police officers, firefighters and other city workers who have chosen to defend our nation deserve our honor and respect.

But while these brave soldiers are deployed to the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, the fight to protect the homeland continues.

\$57 million later, it is time that the military reimburse New York for part of its sacrifice.