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For Immediate Release:
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Press Conference

Monday, June 21

10am

60 Centre Street

(steps of the courthouse)

**WHY SHOULDN'T PUBLIC SECTOR LAW ATTRACT
AND RETAIN EXCELLENCE?
BILL TO ENCOURAGE CAREERS IN PUBLIC LAW**

Assemblyman Brian McLaughlin will be joined by a prestigious assemblage of leaders in the judicial and legal communities, including: Judges **Jonathan Lippman**, Chief Administrative Judge; **Juanita Bing Newton**, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives; District Attorneys **Robert Morgenthau**, **Richard Brown**, **Charles Hynes**, **Robert Johnson**, and **Jeanine Pirro**, and **Corporation Counsel Michael Cardozo** to urge the passage of legislation he introduced in the NY State Assembly with Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein, and in the State Senate by Serphin Maltese, which would establish a special fund and program designed to reimburse educational loans of attorneys who enter public sector law. Entitled: "Public Interest Legal Services Loan Assistance Act" (Assembly 7463-B/Senate 6670-A), an "eligible attorney," which includes such offices as district attorneys, municipal government and civil legal services, who has worked for three years, can apply for annual grants of up to \$6,000 per year for the next six years. The program would be administered by the Office of Court Administration, and is funded in part by fees for taking the New York State bar exam and for admittance of out-of-state attorneys in New York courts.

McLaughlin noted that: "Some of our most idealistic young lawyers, who yearn to tackle society's most challenging problems, often don't consider a career in public sector law because of the great gap in income compared with private law. When you earn only \$40,000 a year and have to pay a student loan of \$100,000, the personal and financial hardships offer few options. This legislation will go a long way toward providing incentives for greater numbers of lawyers, and from more diverse communities, to enter and stay in a career dedicated to public law."

At the press conference, the need and the importance of this bill will be discussed. Speakers will address the impact that the legislation will have on reducing the crime rate by bringing criminals to justice faster, as well as the effect this bill will have in providing greater access to justice.

Among the points to be expanded upon:

Judge Lippman: “This legislation will ensure that New Yorkers and their public institutions continue to receive the quality legal services that the Constitution, our laws and the pursuit of justice require. As long as soaring law school debts continue to make public service economically impracticable for so many New York attorneys, New Yorkers and their public institutions will face a growing crisis of recruiting and retaining capable lawyers in public service. This problem must be speedily addressed. On behalf of the State Judiciary, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Juanita Bing Newton and I are pleased to support passage of this important legislation.”

Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau: “Public Service needs to attract the best and the brightest candidates, and loan forgiveness is certainly a step in the right direction. Assemblyman McLaughlin’s bill will enable capable lawyers to join the public sector and will encourage them to stay in public service.”

Queens District Attorney Richard Brown: “We are losing too many talented young prosecutors because they are drowning in their student loan debt. Just as our prosecutors have acquired the knowledge and experience to handle serious felony cases, the crushing burden of their loan debt drives them out of public service and into higher paying private sector jobs. The legislation introduced by Assemblyman McLaughlin and Senator Maltese and their colleagues will help insure that New Yorkers continue to have the most able attorneys protecting their interests in the criminal justice system. It would be a shame if the great strides that we have made in the fight against crime were to be compromised by a lack of experienced professional prosecutors.”

Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes: “This legislation provides a way to insure that worthy young attorneys; starting their careers in public service, get the help they need to alleviate the sometimes crushing debt of their student loans. By helping young attorneys, the legal profession is carrying on a tradition of nurturing and mentoring that will serve it well in the future.”

Westchester District Attorney Jeanine Pirro: “I strongly urge the passage of the Loan Assistance Act for Attorneys in Public Service. For too many years, District Attorneys’ offices have suffered the exodus of talented and experienced assistant district attorneys, forced to leave the job they love, to take higher paying law positions in the private sector solely in order to pay for their overwhelming education loans. Not only would this bill assist District Attorneys in maintaining dedicated, experience career prosecutors, it would help attract new talented lawyers to government service by assisting them in paying their student loan debts.”

Corporation Counsel Michael Cardozo: “The growing expense of law school education and the debt it entails is making it more and more difficult for lawyers to pursue a public career. The Law Department has lost too many excellent lawyers to the private sectors simply because they could not afford to work here and pay their loans as well. Many others haven’t been able to accept employment offers here for the same reason. The program that will be created by Assemblyman McLaughlin will be an important step in allowing those attorneys who want a career in public services to pursue their dream while also allowing the public to benefit from their service.”