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## **MAYOR BLOOMBERG AND MPAA UNVEIL ANTI-VIDEO PIRACY CAMPAIGN**

*Mayor Also Signs Legislation Criminalizing Illegal Videotaping Of Films in Movie Theaters and Announces NYPD Has Seized Nearly 200,000 Pirated DVDs This Year As Part of Multi-Pronged Attack on Piracy*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today unveiled a public awareness campaign featuring a series of print and broadcast advertisements designed to combat the creation, distribution, and sale of illegally recorded films in New York City. Featuring PSAs to run on TV and in movie theaters and several bus shelters advertisements, the campaign sends the message that movie piracy harms our economy, kills jobs and impacts all New Yorkers. The Mayor also signed legislation that strengthens the penalty for illegally videotaping a film from a violation to a misdemeanor with increased jail time. The campaign and bill signing follow the October 2006 announcement of the City's three-pronged approach to combating piracy: tougher legislation, stepped-up enforcement and increased public awareness. The Mayor was joined by Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt, Film, Theatre & Broadcasting Commissioner Katherine Oliver, Councilman David Yassky, MPAA Vice President and Director of U.S. Anti-Piracy Operations Mike Robinson, Tribes Film Festival founder Jane Rosenthal, and Director Jay Roach at the announcement and bill signing at City Hall.

"Video piracy is not a victimless crime – it kills jobs for New Yorkers," said Mayor Bloomberg. "Not only does piracy drive up the costs of videos and movie tickets and harm our economy, but every New York consumer is being cheated by poor quality goods. Instead of buying shoddy pirated videos shot by criminals with camcorders, New Yorkers can support our booming film industry and its 100,000 employees – on and off the screen – by getting the 'real picture' and only purchasing legitimate videos."

The City's thriving film, television and commercial production industry employs over 100,000 New Yorkers and generates \$5 billion in economic activity. According to a new MPAA-commissioned study, the New York motion picture industry suffers an estimated \$1.49 billion in lost output annually resulting in 22,986 fewer jobs and \$903 million in lost earnings as a consequence of global and local piracy of motion pictures. The MPAA-commissioned study found that \$637 million in total annual retail sales in New York are lost due to global and local piracy, resulting in a loss of \$50 million in State and City sales taxes. Often taped with camcorders in movie theaters, the MPAA estimates that in 2006, New York City theaters were the origin of 43% of camcorder-source pirated DVDs tracked in the United States, and 20% of pirated movies seized globally.

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Using the universally recognizable look and feel of the iconic ratings system, the campaign highlights the inferior quality of illegally videotaped movies, and features unique television spots with a corresponding series of print advertisements asking all New Yorkers to stop film piracy with the slogan “Get the Real Picture: Don’t Buy Illegal DVDs Off The Street.” The advertisements underscore the losing proposition of purchasing bootlegged DVDs with mock ratings of “RO” for Ripped-Off, “PS” for Poor Sound, “SP” for Stupid Purchase, “OV” for Obstructed View and “F” for Fake. To support the campaign, the City is committing outdoor bus shelter advertising space around New York for the summer release season starting in mid-May. @radical. media, a local New York City design and production company, produced both the bus shelters and video Pass.

The broadcast spots feature film clips from movies including last year’s animated film “Happy Feet,” as they might appear on illegal bootlegged DVDs. NY1, WNBC, WCBS, WABC, Fox-5, WPIX and NYC TV have agreed to run the spots on their stations. Time Warner has agreed to run the PSA on nearly 20 channels in addition to NY1. NYC TV will begin airing the spots on May 7, with the other channels to follow over the month. In addition, the movie theatre community is supporting this campaign and will be showing the trailer on area screens.

### *Tougher Legislation*

This combined effort comes after Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg signed Introductory 383-A, a bill that criminalizes the illegal videotaping of films by strengthening the penalties from a violation to a misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment, a fine or both. Under current New York State law, penalties imposed for conviction are only up to 15 days in jail and a maximum fine of up to \$250. Introductory 383-A makes illegal videotaping a misdemeanor offense with penalties of up to six months imprisonment, fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000.

For conduct that is a misdemeanor, Police Officers can rely upon eyewitness accounts to make an arrest, whereas Police Officers must witness the conduct themselves to make an arrest in the case of violations. Therefore by strengthening the penalty from a violation to a misdemeanor, the police can now rely on the observations of a movie theatre employee or other New Yorkers to bring the case to the District Attorney and have it prosecuted.

“This new law criminalizes piracy at the start of the process,” said Criminal Justice Coordinator Feinblatt. “The City now has another tool to go after these criminals that hurt the entertainment industry and the City. This new law combined with the increased street level enforcement will put pirates on notice that their illegal behavior will not be tolerated.”

“Video piracy hurts all New Yorkers, and steals directly from the pension and benefit plans of the freelance professionals who make their living in the film industry – this includes camera operators, electricians, studio mechanics, lighting technicians, accountants and other temporary office workers,” said Commissioner Oliver. “We’re asking New Yorkers to ‘Get The Real Picture: Don’t Buy Illegal DVDs Off The Street.’”

“Videotaping a movie is theft, and the consequences for that action should reflect the seriousness of the crime,” said Councilman David Yassky. “Currently the penalty for camcording carries the same consequences as a ‘dirty sidewalk’ ticket from the Department of Sanitation, which makes absolutely no sense.”

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“The New York City economy has much to gain by tackling the scourge of movie piracy,” said Mike Robinson, MPAA Vice President and Director, U.S. Anti-Piracy Operations. “New research indicates that thousands of jobs, millions in wages and billions in economic activity would be added to the New York economy if movie piracy were eliminated. Mayor Bloomberg’s multi-pronged strategy of legislation, enforcement and public education is good for New York workers and the New York economy, and I applaud his leadership. Working together, we can make progress in wiping out this problem.”

“This issue affects not only the thousands of New Yorkers who make a living making films, it has an impact throughout our City’s economy,” said Jane Rosenthal. “Video piracy keeps working men and women from realizing their full earnings, and violates the artistic integrity of filmmakers who work hard to bring their vision to the screen. I applaud the Mayor, the Council and the MPAA for their leadership.”

### *Enforcement Efforts*

The City, with the cooperation of MPAA, has been successful in locating distribution points for pirated films throughout the City. The New York City Police Department’s Organized Crime Investigation Division (OCID) has led investigations that aggressively root out piracy and have resulted in the seizure of thousands of pirated DVDs each year. During the first quarter of 2007, OCID made 29 trademark counterfeiting arrests and seized 195,044 counterfeit DVDs.

These existing City enforcement initiatives will continue to be pressed aggressively, and will be accompanied by an expansion of the already successful liaison relationship between MPAA and OCID to include working with the Department’s Deputy Commissioner of Training to develop training materials and working with the Chief of Patrol to plan and execute vendor sweeps.

The Mayor’s Office of Special Enforcement, comprised of inspectors from the Department of Buildings, the Fire Department and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, complements the work of the NYPD by conducting top-to-bottom inspections of buildings where pirated films are distributed, laying the groundwork for nuisance abatement actions that will permanently shutter wholesale and retail counterfeiting locations. These nuisance abatement actions go after the landlords and building owners who permit this type of ongoing illegal activity. Since January 2007, OSE has settled against two building owners for over \$300,000 and retained control over the tenancies of these two buildings for the next two years.

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