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***ASSEMBLYMAN LENTOL CALLS FOR HEARINGS ON PRIVATE SECURITY
- CSS REPORT SHOWS THAT LOW WAGES, POOR TRAINING, WORKING CONDITIONS UNDERMINE PUBLIC
SAFETY-***

New York, NY – New York State Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol (D-North Brooklyn) today called for hearings to investigate the impact of low wages, poor training and high staff turnover in the private security industry on public safety. Lentol’s call for hearings comes on the heels of a new report from the Community Service Society (CSS), “Shortchanging Security: How Poor Training, Low Wages and Lack of Job Protection for Security Guards Undermine Public Safety in New York City.”

“Hearings are urgently needed to get to the bottom of an alarming state of insecurity in the private security industry,” said Assemblyman Lentol. “As 9/11 has taught us, we must have high quality training and security procedures in place for all security officers. “

The report finds that private security officers and the public are “ill-served by many security guard service companies.” In general, security officers are poorly compensated with few receive benefits such as health insurance. They are not provided the training or the job security they need to effectively enforce safety procedures. These working conditions lead to low morale and high staff turnover.

According to the CSS report, New York’s security guard workforce is largely composed of men of color. A majority (56 percent) are African-American and another fifth (21 percent) are Hispanic. Security officers are receiving wages far below the majority of New Yorkers. The median hourly wage for security officers in the New York City area is only \$10.14 as compared to \$18.39 for all workers in the metropolitan area. Turnover in the security guard industry nationally is as high as 300 percent.

“Security officers need fair wages, health benefits and improved training in order to stay on the job,” said Assemblyman Lentol. “Our city needs a stable and professional workforce to keep us safe and secure.”

“Everyday I work hard to protect the thousands tenants, visitors and tourists that come through the doors of my building,” said Vincent Morales, a security officer employed by Copstat at the Empire State Building. “But it’s a struggle to try to make ends meet. Like many security officers, I have to work two jobs to get by.”

“Private security is a matter of public safety,” said Assemblyman Joseph R. Lentol (D-Brooklyn), chair of the Committee on Codes. “The safety of New York cannot be left to chance,” said Assemblyman Lentol before promising to do everything in his power to ensure the safety of New Yorkers through improved private security.

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