

[CLOSE WINDOW](#)**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****PR- 020-11****January 19, 2011****MAYOR BLOOMBERG DELIVERS 2011 STATE OF THE CITY
ADDRESS - PROGRESS AT WORK**

The following is the text of Mayor Bloomberg's State of the City address as prepared for delivery at the St. George Theatre on Staten Island

"Thank you. Good afternoon and welcome.

"First, let me thank Borough President Molinaro for those kind words. I also want to thank sisters Doreen and Luanne for opening the St. George for us today.

"There's not much that Liza Minnelli, Tracy Morgan, and I have in common, but someday we can all say we appeared on this famous stage.

"The first movie to ever play here back in 1929 was called *So This Is College*. For those who haven't seen it – which is probably everyone – here's the synopsis: Biff and Eddie are best friends and star teammates on the football team. Then a flapper named Babs enters the picture. Biff and Eddie start competing for Babs and the rivalry affects their ability to play football together. Fortunately, the Coach is able to mediate just in time to win the big game.

"I don't know if there's a great message in that film for us today, but I do like the ending, because at no time has it been more important for us to put aside rivalries and focus on what's truly important: winning the big game. And of course, I'm talking about the Jets winning the AFC Championship game on Sunday.

"Last year, when we gathered together to consider the state of our city, I spoke of the twin challenges we faced: creating jobs in the midst of a national economic downturn and balancing our budget in a way that protected vital services and taxpayers.

"Today, I am glad to report that over the past 12 months, we have met both of those challenges better than almost any other city in the nation.

"Last January, I said we'd lead the nation in job growth, and you know what? We have. We have created jobs at nearly twice the national rate. And compared to the rest of the state our job creation rate is eight times as high.

"Jobs bring hope and opportunity, independence and security and creating them is our job number one. Too many New Yorkers are still struggling to find work and our unemployment rate is still too high, but over the past year, we have added 51,000 private sector

jobs – in industries with average salaries between \$35,000 and \$92,000.

“For instance, last year we passed Boston in venture capital funding in technology, putting us ahead of every place but Silicon Valley. We also had a big year in tourism, in spite of fierce competition from cities around the world. The number of people employed in tourism hit a record high here and for the second straight year, we remained America’s number one tourist destination.

“And with growth occurring in many other industries, unemployment is down from a year ago, commercial vacancy rates are down and home values are up.

“In fact, for the first time in decades – New York City entered a national recession later than the rest of the country and now, we have come out of it faster and stronger than the rest of the country.

“We’re not out of the woods yet – not by a long shot, but we sure are going in the right direction.

“City government cannot end a national recession – nor can we control the business cycle, but we can shape our own destiny, and we have.

“We’ve done it not only by spurring new jobs in growing industries, but by managing our budget to protect the vital services that are so crucial to our economy.

“We cut crime to record lows. We kept the welfare rolls at historic lows. We cut fire deaths to their lowest level since before 1919. We raised graduation rates again – they’re up 27 percent over the past four years, compared to just three percent in the rest of the state. And that means 15,000 students who would not have finished high school did finish and earned a diploma that will change their lives for the better.

“We’ve gotten those results by working closely with the City Council and Speaker Chris Quinn to manage our budget carefully – and reduce spending responsibly. Over the past three years, we’ve cut spending nine times for a total of \$5 billion, including a \$1.6 billion cut this year.

“But now, the cuts we face are more severe than ever. Because of unfunded mandates and pension benefits, we face multi-billion dollar deficits for years to come. And there is no magic wand to make them disappear. There is no rabbit left to pull out of the hat. And there is no windfall coming from Albany or Washington this year. There is only us. Our resolve. Our courage. And our commitment to the fiscal discipline we have shown over the past nine years.

“We have several options before us. We can stop investing in the future and watch the gains we have made in public safety, education, and every other area disappear before our eyes.

“That is one choice. And it would be an utter disaster. We all know how it turned out in the 70s – and we paid for that mistake for decades to come.

“Yes, the city is now far stronger than it was then. Yes, we are far more resilient. Progress, however, is not inevitable. It’s up to us to create it. And I guarantee you: we will not walk away from what we

have built. We will continue driving progress every single day.

"Another choice would be to raise taxes. But as New Yorkers know all too well, our taxes are already too high. Higher than most other places in the country. With the national economy still struggling, and even though job growth here has been strong, raising taxes now would undermine our recovery by driving people and businesses to lower-tax cities and states and deterring investment from overseas.

"So let me be clear: we will not raise taxes to balance the budget.

"Instead, we will choose a third approach – a smarter approach. An approach that respects the short-term needs of taxpayers, and protects the long-term prospects of our economy. We will grow our way out of these tough times, by shrinking the costs of government.

"Every mayor who comes into office faces a defining challenge. For Mayor Koch, it was bringing the city back from the brink of bankruptcy. For Mayor Dinkins, it was uniting a city torn by racial tension. For Mayor Giuliani, it was proving that New York City could be made safe again.

"When I first came into office, it was bringing the City back from the attacks of 9/11 and turning around a broken public school system.

"We've made enormous progress doing both – and now, a new defining challenge confronts us: forcing government to live within its means, by forcing government into the 21st century. I believe we can do it – because we must do it. The economic future of New York City is hanging in the balance.

"We can look back and continue funding a government operating system that was built for another era. Or we can look forward and continue rebounding, continue growing, continue forging ahead and leading the nation.

"But we cannot do both. That is the choice we face.

"The State of our City is strong, but to remain strong, we must make the right choices. We must embrace the future. If you stand with me, I promise you we will look forward – and move forward – together.

"In many ways, this beautiful old theatre represents the choice we face. As you heard, for most of the past 30 years, it sat vacant and padlocked – falling apart and fading away. It seemed destined for the wrecking ball until Mrs. Rosemary and her daughters came along. Their vision and passion brought this tarnished treasure back to life and brought new energy – and new jobs – to the Saint George community.

"I asked Doreen and Lou Anne to sit on stage today – surrounded by some fellow

Staten Island business owners. These are the people whose faith and hard work have been responsible for a true recovery and I wanted to acknowledge them.

"That work of transforming the old and making it new, not to recover a bygone past,

but to re-imagine a brighter future lies at the heart of the challenges we face this year.

"We must continue transforming our economy into a more diverse, more dynamic, and more durable engine of growth. And to do that, we must transform the way government serves the public and the way it spends the public's money. Today, I'd like to outline our plan for achieving both goals and keeping New York City moving forward.

"Let's start with how we'll continue to transform our economy into a 21st century engine of innovation.

"Just as Mrs. Rosemary and her daughters transformed a decrepit old movie house into this spectacular new theatre – spurring new jobs and economic opportunity, we must make those transformations across all five boroughs, creating new reasons for people and companies to invest their future – and their finances – in New York.

"In 2011, the progress we are making transforming old into new will be more visible than ever. Just around the corner from here, we'll begin seeing it at the old Navy Homeport – abandoned for nearly 20 years. This year, we'll begin turning it into a Home-Park – with 800 apartments, shops and a waterfront walkway.

"We'll see the transformation across the Narrows at Coney Island, once a sad shadow of yesteryear, and long written off by skeptics, but now drawing record crowds with new amusements and new excitement.

"This year, we will break ground on Steeplechase Plaza, and we'll open the new 'Scream Zone' a one-of-kind amusement area that will include a 'Human Slingshot.' On Governors Island – off-limits to the public for decades – we'll expand our work to create a one-of-a-kind park in the heart of the harbor.

"We'll see the transformation at the old piers that are now becoming Brooklyn Bridge Park, where a new carousel will open this year. At the Brooklyn Navy Yard, which we've transformed into one of the country's most successful, and greenest, urban industrial parks, Steiner Studios will begin to double what are already the largest soundstage and production facilities on the East Coast. And they'll partner with Brooklyn College to create the first graduate level film school of its kind in the region.

"In Queens, shovels will go into the ground at Hunters Point South, where we'll begin to transform long vacant land into a new middle-class development fueled by \$2 billion in private investment that will create 4,600 jobs.

"All along the East River, with support from Speaker Quinn, we'll begin running a new ferry service with stops at Long Island City, Greenpoint, Williamsburg, DUMBO, Wall Street, and 34th Street.

"And at Willets Point, once the inspiration for F. Scott Fitzgerald's 'valley of ashes,' we'll begin building roadways and waterlines that will give rise to whole new neighborhoods with good jobs, and affordable housing.

"And in the South Bronx, we are transforming an abandoned dead end street into Hunts Point Landing – new waterfront open space and a fishing pier next to the bustling Fish Market.

"All of these projects are happening because of dedicated civic leaders like the ones who have joined us on stage today. Thank you all.

"All of these projects share something else in common: they lie along our waterfront. And they are part of what is one of the most sweeping transformations of an urban waterfront in American history.

"Across the city, we are reclaiming our waterfront from decades of decline and disuse and investing hundreds of millions of dollars to build and expand parks, and create jobs.

"At the same time, through the Green Infrastructure Plan we launched last year, we are cleaning our waterways by not spending \$2 billion on tanks and tunnels, and instead capturing storm water before it reaches our sewer system.

"This year, we'll invite New Yorkers to help us green their communities, by launching a new grant program that will empower local civic groups to help us build a more environmentally sustainable city, with projects that are right for their neighborhoods.

"Together, we will continue transforming the old into new across the city. We'll open the second section of the High Line – once an abandoned eyesore, now the most popular railroad trestle in the world.

"In the Bronx, we'll join with the Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy to do something that has been talked about for more than a decade: we'll turn unused tennis courts into an ice-skating rink open all winter long.

"We'll also invest in our cultural infrastructure: new homes for the Staten Island Museum and the Whitney Museum. New facilities for the Queens Museum of Art and the Bronx River Arts Center. And the expansion of downtown Brooklyn's cultural district.

"Now, let's be clear: money is tight. Very tight.

"We will have to reduce our capital spending. Some projects will have to be slowed down. Others will have to be scaled back. Others will require more private funds.

"But we will not forget the single most important lesson of the 1970s: when you stop investing in the future, the future hits the road. Jobs, people, capital – they all leave. We didn't allow that to happen after the attacks of 9/11 and I promise you we won't allow it to happen now.

"The investments we are making create more than infrastructure. They create something you can't see or touch. It's that feeling you get when you come to New York.

"The feeling that anything is possible in this city – that the future happens here first. This feeling – of energy and optimism – is why our population is growing and why more and more young people, in particular, are moving to our city.

"Many of them come in search of jobs, but more and more are coming to start their own businesses right here. Recently, New York was named the number one city for young entrepreneurs and that's a great sign for our future, because as much as we are competing

with places like London and Hong Kong for private investment we are competing with places like Boulder and the Bay Area for the college graduates whose ideas will attract investment, and power the 21st Century economy.

"We have a few of them with us onstage today and let me just mention the companies they've started: there's ZocDoc, a web site that makes it easy to find doctors and dentists in your neighborhood – and named by Crain's the number one place to work in New York City in 2010.

"There's Energy Hub, which builds electromechanical systems for NASA's Mars missions. Pixable is a photo management web site that was the first company to graduate from the small business incubator we started in 2009.

"Rent the Runway allows you to rent clothes at a 90 percent discount, making fashion more affordable. And then there's the social networking site that was started around a kitchen table in the East Village and that now has more than 5 million users: Foursquare.

"All of these companies have been started in the past few years by young entrepreneurs. All of them are succeeding. And – most importantly – all of them are hiring.

"Thank you all. And be prepared to get a few resumes.

"This year, with Deputy Mayor Bob Steel leading the charge, we'll do more to continue attracting the next generation of industry pioneers.

"We'll launch business incubators that will hatch more start-ups in new media, fashion, the arts, and other industries where innovation is key. We'll bring together the leaders in 'eds and meds' – our academic institutions and bioscience firms – to map New York's course to the top in that growth industry.

"We'll look to partner with a top university to build a new applied sciences and engineering facility. We'll fuel the growth of clean energy firms by encouraging new wind and solar power projects. And joining with Columbia, NYU-Poly, and CUNY, we'll create a center connecting green building pioneers to real estate developers and building owners.

"Of course, the single biggest step that we can take to promote innovation in New York City, and across the country, is to fix our broken immigration system.

"It's not only hurting national security, it's the most ruinous economic policy you could ever conceive of. It's destroying American jobs every single day. We've got to change it.

"We are a nation made great by immigrants. And if we are to remain great, we cannot turn our back on our history, our heritage, and our highest values.

"It's a national issue, and that's why I enlisted Rupert Murdoch in creating a national coalition of business leaders and elected officials and we are going to work with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle to pass sensible, economically smart immigration reform and pass it this year.

"We can't wait. Every day businesses are starting overseas, and we want them to start here. Let's make it happen.

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"Of course, we won't wait for Washington to act. We'll do what we can on our own.

"We'll launch a new program to connect immigrant entrepreneurs to the information they need to open small businesses – and the loans and expertise they need to grow and expand. We'll also enter into a new partnership with a major bank – Citi – that will get credit flowing to hundreds more qualified small businesses in all five boroughs.

"In addition, a new loan program will offer minority- and women-owned businesses access to loans covering their upfront costs when doing business with the City. That's just one way we're going to strengthen efforts that, in just four years time, have nearly tripled the value of City contracts going to MWBE firms. New business assistance programs will help certified MWBE firms and small businesses compete for City jobs.

"And to help connect growing businesses to the employees they need, we'll expand our Workforce One Career Centers – I just stopped at one on the way here, and they're doing a great job.

"Last year, as tough as the economy was, our Workforce One centers connected New Yorkers to more than 30,000 jobs – compared to only 500 in 2005.

"One of those former job hunters is a man named Arian Lena. Born and raised in the Balkans, he arrived in our city seven months ago. Like so many immigrants before him he didn't have a job. But thanks to Staten Island's Workforce 1 Career Center, today he is working in a private investigation firm, steadily improving his income and getting his new life started in a new land.

"I would like to introduce you to him, but he couldn't be here. He's working.

"This year, we're increasing our goal from 30,000 job placements last year –

up to 35,000, and we'll reach it by opening ten new Workforce One Express Centers across the City, including one here on Staten Island.

"We're also setting the goal of placing 10,000 more welfare recipients into jobs – going from 75,000 last year to a record 85,000 this year. Instead of the City using tax dollars to support them, they'll be paying tax dollars to help support the City.

"At the same time, we'll help more New Yorkers stay self-sufficient, by taking a privately funded pilot program – the one-on-one counseling at our Financial Empowerment Centers – and use public funds to expand those critical services, which will help more residents eliminate their debt and increase their savings.

"It's a hand-up, not a hand-out and it's one of the best ways we can keep our welfare rolls down and our neighborhoods strong.

"One of the biggest employers in New York City is the restaurant industry. Last year, in partnership with Speaker Quinn and the Council, we launched a 'new business acceleration team' to help restaurants cut through red tape and open their doors faster.

"We've since helped more than 200 new restaurants open up
from the south, including Big Dave's Restaurant on Richmond

months early, including Big Ben's Restaurant on Richmond Terrace. Lorenza and Leodore Benn came here from Trinidad worked hard and saved and now, they've opened a Caribbean restaurant. I hear your chicken roti is delicious.

"Last year, Health Commissioner Tom Farley implemented a plan that hands out letter grades to every restaurant based on their cleanliness, because the public has a right to know and because the grades are an incentive to run a clean kitchen.

"If a restaurant doesn't get an A, it gets re-inspected as an incentive to improve its grade. But a re-inspection can also mean more fines, even if the restaurant gets an A. The cost of fines cuts into the tight profit margins that small businesses run. So from now on, we will add a new incentive: any restaurant that earns an 'A' – either on its initial inspection or on a re-inspection – will not have to pay one penny in fines for any violations found on that inspection. Not one penny.

"This year, we'll build on the customer-service model we've created to help cut red tape for restaurants, and offer those same services to the small retail shops that define our neighborhood main streets.

"At the same time, again working with the Council, we will fundamentally simplify the number of approvals necessary and the means for securing them. I think mom and pop deserve that, don't you?

"Making it easier for businesses to open and expand is just one part of a broader vision for City government that we call: *Simplicity*.

"It's an effort being led by Deputy Mayor Steve Goldsmith and it's based on the very basic idea that government should be organized around the needs of its customers – and that means taxpayers, businesses, and service users.

"Over the past year, we've been working to consolidate the City's real estate holdings, reduce our vehicle fleet and streamline our technology infrastructure and back-office operations. By 2014, these steps together will save taxpayers \$500 million dollars annually. But that's just the start.

"*Simplicity* is about transforming all of City government by modernizing it making it smarter, more efficient, and oriented around customers.

"For instance, why shouldn't homeowners know when they have a leaky water pipe that's running up their water bill? It happens more than it should. This year, through the wireless water meter readers we're installing at properties across the city, they will know and they'll be able to fix problems before they become major drains on their finances.

"And why shouldn't someone in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, or Staten Island be able to hail a legal cab on the street? 97 percent of yellow cab pick-ups happen in Manhattan or at the airports – even though 80 percent of New Yorkers live outside of Manhattan.

"This year, we'll establish a new category of livery cars that can make on-street pickups outside of Manhattan. It will give New Yorkers in all five boroughs another safe, reliable and convenient option for getting around. Because whether you're standing on 42nd Street in Manhattan or 42nd Street in Sunset Park, Brooklyn or 42nd

Street in Sunnyside, Queens, you ought to be able to hail a cab

Street in Sunnyside, Queens, you ought to be able to hail a cab.

"At the heart of *Simplicity* is the belief that government should make it easier to live and work in New York, not stand in the way. In the year ahead, we'll launch online forums where every City employee – and every New Yorker – can post ideas that he or she thinks will improve services or save the City money. Others will be able to comment on those proposals, and then we'll implement the best ones.

"This kind of open call for ideas – or 'crowdsourcing,' as it's called – has helped cutting-edge companies like Facebook and Netflix improve services and save money. And with more than 8.4 million people in our crowd, imagine what we can come up with.

"Saving money is a critical part of *Simplicity* – and we're going to need every penny. But right now, we are spending more and more on pensions, health care benefits, and other unfunded mandates, and that leaves us less and less to spend on the services and investments that are so crucial to our economy.

"We will continue cutting budgets, but to reduce the pain New Yorkers feel, we will need help from Albany. In the 1970s, after years of fiscal mismanagement, the City was forced to ask Albany to step in and manage its affairs.

"Today, after years of responsible management, we have a different request of Albany: let us manage ourselves. Let us manage areas that should be matters of local policy, not State law, and let us achieve the savings that would result.

"Let us save tens of millions of dollars on our workforce by reforming the antiquated Civil Service laws that stifle innovation and add unnecessary costs.

"Let us save money on our legal bills, prohibiting people who are harmed in accidents from suing the City for millions of dollars if the City is not primarily at fault, or at fault at all. That costs taxpayers more than \$30 million a year.

"Let us save money on our administrative costs by letting the City's Department of Finance administer City income tax collection instead of paying the State absurdly inflated costs to do it. That would save us tens of millions of dollars.

"Let us save tens of millions of dollars on procurement costs by freeing us from overly restrictive rules that force us to buy inferior products.

"And let us save more than \$100 million a year in wasted education spending by capping the amount of time a teacher can spend in the Absent Teacher Reserve pool. Right now, it can stretch on for years, and this year, as it stands now, we'll have to fire teachers so we can pay those who don't have full-time teaching jobs. It's ridiculous.

"Most important – most important of all – allow us to reform our pension system to make it fair for workers and taxpayers.

"This year, we will spend \$7 billion on pension costs, up from \$1.5 billion in 2001. That means this year, the average New York City tax filer will be paying \$2,400 more to cover pension costs than they did back then. And next year, we'll be paying even more.

"If all consumer prices had gone up at the same rate as the price of

If all consumer prices had gone up at the same rate as the price of our pensions, the subway fare would be \$7.05 this year and \$8.39 next year. For the same service we're getting now. New Yorkers can't afford those subway fares, and we certainly can't afford pension costs on that level either.

"City workers deserve a safe and secure retirement, but right now, they receive retirement benefits that are far more generous than those received by most workers in the private sector – and that provide for a much earlier retirement age. It would be great if we could continue to afford such generous benefits, but we cannot.

"The only way to protect pensions for our City workers – including our police officers, firefighters, teachers, sanitation workers, and correction officers, is to reform the system so we can afford it, and at the same time afford the vital services that New Yorkers want and depend on. We have proposed and pushed pension reform before, and we have achieved some improvements with the United Federation of Teachers. But now we must go further – and capitalize on the reform agenda that Governor Cuomo has brought to Albany. Governor Cuomo campaigned on pension reform, and he will have our full support.

"In the weeks ahead, we will make pension reform our number one priority in Albany. And today, I'm glad to announce that a great New Yorker has agreed to take up our cause: Mayor Ed Koch. Last year, he formed a group – New York Uprising – that convinced a majority in both houses, and Governor Cuomo, to pledge their support for redistricting reform, something I strongly support, too. This year, he'll expand his crusade and if you know Ed, he won't do it quietly. Thanks, Ed.

"Working with Ed and our partners in State government, we will work to pass several basic reforms to bring our pension system into the 21st century.

"First, we can save \$8 million a year right off the bat by consolidating pension systems, an administrative reform that will not affect benefits at all.

"Second, we'll seek a new tier for employees hired in the future that would raise the retirement age to 65 for non-uniformed workers. That would produce billions in long-term savings, and bring our retirement age in line with the private sector, even as we offer far more generous benefits. We can also save another \$200 million every year by eliminating, for future uniformed retirees, what is effectively a \$12,000 annual bonus, paid on top of full pension benefits every year around the holidays. City taxpayers just cannot be expected to give substantial holiday bonuses when so many of them are out of work or having their own wages frozen or cut.

"The third piece of our pension reforms would overturn the State law that prohibits the City from negotiating pension as part of the collective bargaining process. Pension and health care benefits are a substantial part of a City employee's compensation, and so it only makes sense they should be part of the collective bargaining process.

"Right now, State elected officials are setting pension benefits for City workers, and sticking another group – city taxpayers – with the bill. Again, our message to Albany is: we'll pay the bills, but let us get better prices. And the only way we will be able to afford raises for City workers in the future is if we can find some savings

...because for every worker in the future is if we can find some savings in our pension and health care bills. That is not a negotiating stance. It is reality.

"And so today, I will make this commitment: I will not sign a contract with salary increases unless they are accompanied by reforms in benefit packages that produce the savings we need to continue making investments in our future and protecting vital services.

"All together, the reforms we are asking of Albany would allow us to save billions of dollars in the years ahead and continue making the investments that we need to strengthen our neighborhoods and our economy.

"We understand how serious Albany's situation is. And we are not asking them to spare us from budget cuts. We are willing to do our part to close their deficit.

"We are willing to do our part to close their deficit. But we are asking them to ensure those cuts are fair, and to give us the ability to save money, so we can off-set some of those cuts. That is our ask – and we will package these reforms together into a Financial Reform Bill that will put our financial house in order not just for this year – but for years to come. It's the single most important thing we can do for our city's future, and this is the year we must do it.

"Otherwise, we face even more severe cuts and layoffs, and that will harm our ability to invest in our economy and create jobs. We just cannot allow that.

"There is one more piece of our legislative agenda that is critical to our future, and that I want to mention today, and it concerns education. Our new schools chancellor, Cathie Black, has a deep understanding of the skills our students need to succeed in the job market – that's why I picked her. She knows that first-rate teachers are the key to success.

"But this year, if we are forced to lay off teachers, we will be forced to lay off some of the most effective, and keep some of the least effective. State law says that the last ones to be hired – no matter how good they are – must be the first ones to go. By not allowing schools to take merit into account, the State would not only deprive our children across the city of great teachers, it would increase class size, because more teachers would need to be laid off, since the newest teachers get paid lower salaries.

"It's not right. It's not fair. And it's not something we can allow to happen. We've made too much progress. Our kids deserve better. Parents and taxpayers deserve better. Teachers deserve better. We've got to change the law and change it this year.

"The last major area I want to touch on today underlies everything else, and that is the centerpiece of our efforts to continue growing the economy and creating jobs: public safety.

"Over the past nine years, we've driven crime down 35 percent. We've done it through innovative new law enforcement strategies that have focused on preventing crime. We are not giving up one inch in that battle, and to take it to the next level, we will launch a comprehensive new effort to prevent young people from getting off track and keep them connected to family, school, and job opportunities.

"For instance, we know that truancy is an early warning sign of

For instance, we know that truanting is an early warning sign of trouble, and so this year, we will double the number of volunteer school mentors who are currently helping over 2,000 students overcome chronic absenteeism.

"We also know that summer jobs lead to high school graduation and college, and so this year, we'll make up for cuts in Federal funding to summer youth employment by raising private money that will put thousands of young New Yorkers into jobs that can change their lives forever.

"And as part of our Fatherhood Initiative, we'll construct three new family centers on Rikers Island to provide incarcerated fathers more opportunities to spend time with their visiting children, so that their time apart does not become a lifetime, and hopefully that connection will also impart some tough life lessons.

"We can't keep every young person out of trouble – but we can do more to get them back on track. This year, we'll work with the judiciary and the Center for Court Innovation to develop a Youth Justice Center that will handle delinquency and criminal cases for young people up to the age of 21, engaging the community in preventing crimes.

"We will also work with Governor Cuomo and our partners in Albany to overhaul the State's juvenile detention system so we can keep more young offenders in supervised, secure programs close to their homes and families instead of hundreds of miles away upstate. We know we can do a better job of helping young offenders turn away from a life of crime, and if Albany will allow us, we will.

"One of the best ways we can prevent crime from occurring is listening to community members. This year, we'll expand a promising partnership that began several months ago, when a group of Brooklyn Clergy members approached the NYPD with a proposal: tell us more about the violence in our communities, like where and when it is occurring, and we'll work with you to help eradicate it. Now, more information is flowing from precinct to pulpit, and back. And that is truly good news.

"This year, we'll also conduct a pilot program to bring more mental health services right into jails, as a way to help inmates with mental illness and reduce violence among them.

"Eleven days ago in Arizona we saw the horror that can result from mental illness and drug abuse and we must pledge ourselves not only to do more for the mentally ill, but to do more to keep guns out of the hands of people who, by Federal law, should not have them.

"Our bi-partisan coalition of Mayors Against Illegal Guns has been working to close gaps in the Federal background check system, gaps that allowed both the Virginia Tech shooter, and the Arizona shooter, to buy guns.

"There has been a lot of focus in Washington lately about the Constitution. But we must remember that we have a duty to honor and uphold not only the Bill of Rights, but also our Founding Fathers' common purpose: to 'establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.'

"As long as we allow dangerous and deranged people to buy guns.

the promise of a more perfect union will remain empty for the thousands of Americans who are murdered with guns every year.

"We cannot ignore that reality. We cannot accept that defeat. This cuts to the core of who we are as a country. We must continue fighting for gun policies that protect innocent Americans no matter what the politics are, and we will.

"As we find new ways to crack down on crime of every kind – from forming a new Domestic Violence Rapid Response Team here on Staten Island with District Attorney Dan Donovan, to mining financial data to stop those who engage in mortgage fraud – we'll also expand our efforts battling a threat that, as we saw all too clearly in 2010, remains very much with us: the threat of terrorism.

"The NYPD is building the most comprehensive counter-terrorism system in the world, and now, as we prepare to open the World Trade Center site to the public for the first time in a decade, we'll take the next step.

"Last year, we signed an agreement with the Port Authority that gave the NYPD a lead role in the security of the World Trade Center complex. This year, we will begin staffing the World Trade Center Command within the NYPD's Counter-Terrorism Bureau. By September 11, 2011 more than 100 NYPD personnel will be securing the area as thousands of visitors return to the site for the first time in 10 years.

"The transformation taking place at the World Trade Center site is a powerful reminder of our city's determination not only to remember, but to rebuild and renew.

"And as I close, I think it's a reminder we also feel here in the St. George. It's that feeling of energy and optimism that has always defined our City.

"Just six weeks before this theatre opened in 1929, Wall Street had crashed – and the Depression lay ahead. And yet through it all this theater survived. It survived a world war. It survived competition from new technology like television. It even survived years of mismanagement and abandonment. And because people came together, strong, united, and determined – a family, the business community, City government. Now this place not only survives, it thrives. Today, tomorrow, and forever.

"And that, I truly believe, is the State of our City. Strong. United. Determined. And ready to meet any challenge. Today, tomorrow, and forever. Thank you very much."

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