

RET. JUDGE

Leslie Crocker Snyder

DEMOCRAT FOR DISTRICT ATTORNEY

For Immediate Release

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**JUDGE LESLIE CROCKER SNYDER PLEDGES TOUGH
TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES**

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***Vehicular Crime Plan Protects Pedestrians with More Thorough Investigation,
Heavier Speeding Fines***

August 24, 2009 (New York, NY) – Judge Leslie Crocker Snyder today unveiled a comprehensive plan to address vehicular crime in Manhattan, in which she pledged to crack down on distracted and reckless driving by supporting new laws banning text messaging behind the wheel and prosecuting appropriate speeding cases with more serious charges. She also committed to thoroughly investigate all cases of negligent vehicular homicide, many of which go unprosecuted.

With the announcement, Judge Snyder promised safer roads for both pedestrians and drivers.

“The DA’s office has an admirable track record with the dedicated Vehicular Crimes Unit, especially in the prosecution of DWI cases,” Judge Snyder said. “My plan will expand upon this work to protect all Manhattan residents from the very real dangers of distracted and reckless driving, and ensure that justice is pursued and served whenever an accident does occur.”

Judge Snyder identified speeding as one of the leading causes of vehicular crime, citing the fact that 2,400 crashes in New York City are caused by reckless driving every year. Judge Snyder’s plan will address this and other issues in a number of ways. Specifically, it will:

- **Establish a Bureau Chief for the Vehicular Crimes Unit.** Following the example of the Bronx District Attorney and Brooklyn District Attorney, Judge Snyder will appoint a Bureau Chief to the Vehicular Crimes Unit, who will handle all vehicular crimes and bring together the specialized training and experience of the unit members to most effectively investigate and prosecute every vehicular crime.
- **Deter crime before it happens.** The most valuable weapon in the fight against vehicular crime will always be deterrence. The District Attorney’s Office must curb dangerous behavior before it becomes lethal by cracking down on distracted driving by demanding heavy fines and charging the most egregious speeders with reckless driving. Judge Snyder will also propose new laws that provide greater penalties for repeat offenders.
- **Assess criminally negligent homicide on a case-by-case basis.** When deterrence fails to prevent a vehicular crime, the District Attorney’s Office must do more to

ensure that justice is done. Far too often the DA's Office has been reluctant to prosecute negligent vehicular homicide cases, which are frequently difficult to prove. As District Attorney, Judge Snyder will ensure the DA's Office investigates and takes appropriate action, including prosecution, whenever there is a loss of life. With the help of a Bureau Chief in charge of vehicular crimes, each case will be examined individually and a determination will be made based on the facts of the case.

- **Move beyond the outdated "Rule of Two."** All too often, prosecutors rely on the "Rule of Two," which presumes that a driver must have committed two simultaneous traffic violations in order to be charged with criminally negligent homicide. The "Rule of Two" is outdated, no longer legally essential in many cases, and does not adequately reflect the complexity of vehicular crimes. The Bureau Chief and his/her staff will have the experience and expertise necessary to assess the unique facts surrounding each incident and decide which cases should be prosecuted.
- **Improve investigation of accidents involving fatalities.** The Bureau Chief will have prosecutors on call to respond to the scene of any automobile accident in which someone is killed to conduct an investigation independently of the NYPD. When dealing with vehicular crimes and criminally negligent homicide, it is essential that the District Attorney's Office obtain every piece of evidence possible to ensure the proper investigation and prosecution of each case, because traffic accidents often include a number of uniquely technical and circumstantial factors that must be considered in their entirety.
- **Partner with legislators.** As District Attorney, Judge Snyder will proactively partner with lawmakers to establish effective prohibitions against driving distractions such as text messaging, and to develop new laws that provide greater penalties for repeat offenders.
- **Conduct a public awareness campaign.** Judge Snyder will work with the NYPD to raise public awareness of the dangers of speeding and distracted driving. This public awareness campaign will be similar to other campaigns warning against drunk driving and encouraging the use of seat belts.

Judge Leslie Crocker Snyder is a nationally recognized leader in the criminal justice system, having spent 35 years serving New Yorkers as a prosecutor, judge and devoted public servant.

As a prosecutor, Judge Snyder founded and led the nation's first Sex Crimes Prosecution Bureau and co-authored New York's Rape Shield Law. As a judge, she presided over the highest-level drug, gang, white-collar and corporate fraud cases.

Judge Snyder is a progressive leader who fought to reform the Rockefeller Drug Laws for more than a decade and has always supported alternatives to incarceration for non-violent, first time offenders by promoting programs that provide education and job training. In 2007, Judge Snyder and her husband volunteered in post-Katrina New Orleans for 6 months, she in the criminal justice system and he at a free medical clinic.

If elected, Judge Snyder would be the first female District Attorney in the history of Manhattan. As District Attorney, she will be a progressive, innovative leader and a fighter for social justice.

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