

Testimony of Mario Bruno
Assistant Commissioner, New York City Department of Environmental Protection
before the
New York City Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor
concerning

Preconsidered Intro. ___ – In relation to the provision of health benefits to the family of
Aron J. Thomas
250 Broadway, 16th Floor
February 25, 2014, 10 am

Good morning, Chairman Miller and Members. I am Mario Bruno, Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs in the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). I appreciate the opportunity to testify here today in favor of the passage of this Preconsidered Introduction regarding the provision of health benefits to the family of Aron J. Thomas.

This bill would amend the Administrative Code to provide health care benefits to the surviving spouse and children of employees of the Bureau of Water Supply of DEP who died on or after February 2, 2014 and before February 4, 2014 as a natural and proximate result of an accident or injury sustained while in the performance of duty.

This bill was drafted to address the type of tragic incident that can befall City employees—this one resulting in the untimely death of Aron Thomas, who was slain at his desk at DEP's Kingston offices by a fellow employee.

Mr. Thomas was 33 years old and resided in Olivebridge, N.Y. He had been a DEP employee for almost nine years working as a watershed maintainer, whose job was to monitor the roads and woods near reservoirs to protect the purity of our drinking water. Mr. Thomas was a 2002 graduate of the State University of New York at Cobleskill, and he and his wife, the former Susan Ruff, have a son not quite two years old and a daughter born six weeks before this tragic incident. He was a dedicated volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician in his home town. In fact, he was such a good EMT that he delivered his baby daughter in the parking lot outside the local hospital. There wasn't enough time to make it inside.

He was also an avid outdoorsman. He was recently licensed as a certified outdoor guide by the state and previously worked for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as a ranger. He was pursuing a future in law enforcement, possibly as a game warden or environmental officer. He was also very proud of his Native American heritage.

This Preconsidered Introduction recognizes the sacrifice made by this employee and helps ease the financial burden of his young family by providing them with survivor health benefits. It also shows the City's appreciation for the years of dedicated service that Mr. Thomas gave to DEP as a watershed maintainer. And it recognizes the ultimate sacrifice he made by giving his life in service to the City.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in favor of this piece of legislation that is of tremendous significance to our agency and its employees.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Res. No.

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/25/2019

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARIO BRUNO

Address: 5917 JUNCTION BLVD, FLUSHING

I represent: DEP ↗

Address: _____

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