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Statement from NYC Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito on Allegations Against Paterson Administration

As a woman, I am extremely concerned by the reports of possible misconduct of State officials and disturbed by the allegation that public servants in positions of power would attempt to use their influence to deter a victim of domestic violence from pressing charges.

The domestic violence advocacy community, and particularly the courageous survivors of abuse have fought long and hard, over many years and encountering much resistance, to have authorities be more responsive and sensitive to incidents of domestic violence. It takes great courage and strength for survivors to seek assistance and help from a system that historically has not taken their claims seriously.

The set of circumstances outlined in today's *New York Times* article will only serve to discourage those who find themselves in similar circumstances to seek help, fearing reprisal and intimidation by the very authorities that are supposed to exist to protect them. The chilling account given by this woman and her attorney, if determined to be true, serves as an example of what countless women in abusive relationships suffer everyday in New York State and throughout our nation and world.

I welcome Governor Paterson's call for Attorney General Andrew M. Cuomo to conduct an immediate investigation into these very serious allegations. All investigations in this matter must be thorough and transparent, and ensure that the public gets clear answers about the role played by each of the parties involved, including the Governor himself. But calling for an investigation is not enough. Police Superintendent Harry J. Corbett's admission that the officers' intervention in the case was not out of the ordinary, despite the fact that the State Police has no jurisdiction whatsoever into such matters, is troubling and raises greater concerns. As such, the Governor should immediately request his resignation.

With the rash of high profile domestic violence cases in recent times, it is critical that we handle each of these incidents with great seriousness, particularly those involving government officials. The Paterson administration in all of its actions going forward must send a message that domestic violence on the part of any individual will simply not be tolerated.