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More Policing Comes At A Price

The 1,300 new officers Mayor Bill de Blasio will add to the NYPD come with hidden costs.

By Greg David

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There's a cost to adding more police officers.

Two months ago, Mayor Bill de Blasio unexpectedly decided to add almost 1,300 police officers and 415 civilian employees to the NYPD and assured everyone the city could easily afford it. After all, the new officers get paid only about \$49,000.

But as the costs become clearer, the question of whether the new cops will bust the budget becomes more problematic. Welcome to the world of pay and benefits for city workers.

The official line is that the additions will add \$170 million to the current budget (fiscal 2016) and less in each of the next three years because the new officers will allow a reduction in overtime costs. Other mayors have made similar promises of overtime savings—promises that are almost never fulfilled.

The more important legerdemain involves the convenient fact that the city has to project costs for only four years. The [Citizens Budget Commission](#) did the math through 2022—an important calculation because these new cops will receive a substantial pay hike when they hit the five-year mark. That, in turns, boosts the cost of their fringe benefits and the payroll taxes the city must shell out on their salaries. The cost of their pensions also begins to bite at that time.

As you can see, the job is pretty lucrative for officers in year five, when salaries top \$90,000, but costly for the city, with annual per-cop expenses approaching \$150,000.

The cost of each new cop

	2016	2022
Salary	\$48,111	\$92,753
Fringes	\$15,189	\$22,976
Pension	\$0	\$14,264
Taxes	\$3,855	\$15,112
Total	\$67,155	\$145,105

Source: Citizens Budget Commission



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In all, the watchdog group says, the last-minute budget decision will add at least \$211 million in fiscal 2022. In fact, that number will be higher because eventually the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association and the city will agree on a new contract that raises pay. The recently signed deal for firefighters hikes their starting salary to \$76,670 a year in July 2017.

The de Blasio administration has also agreed to sweeten disability benefits for firefighters, setting a precedent that's sure to be extended to the police.

Here's why this is important. Last year, Mr. de Blasio talked a lot about progressive policies but pushed through a very conservative budget. With the strong economy now boosting tax revenues substantially, he has decided there's lots of money to spend.

It's quite a bet on the economy and one worth more scrutiny.