

NEW BEDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

February 24, 2010

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EVEN THOUGH HE WAS BEING PAID TO STAY HOME, YOU COULDN'T PAY HIM TO STAY AWAY

Every police officer in the country has heard someone say *at least once*, “You couldn’t pay me to do your job”. While most men and women in law enforcement disagree with this sentiment and consider policing as more like a vocation to which they have been called rather than an occupation, the New Bedford Police Department is proud to have reinstated a police officer who epitomizes commitment to the police profession.

Officer Julio Rivera, 42, was reinstated today after having been retired since March of 2005 due to a heart attack. Police officers who suffer heart attacks are eligible to retire on a service-connected injury after being approved by a state medical advisory panel under a state statute referred to as the *Heart Bill*. The *Heart Bill* recognizes that the stress inherent in policing is inexorably linked to heart attacks, hypertension and heart disease and therefore provides for a medical disability retirement for those officers who suffer from them. Although several officers have retired over the years due to service-connected injuries, none have ever retired from New Bedford under the *Heart Bill* and later returned to active duty. As testimony to his dedication to the community and his determination, Officer Rivera lobbied his personal physician as well as the state’s medical advisory panel to clear him to return to active duty even though he could have just as easily stayed at home and collected his disability pension. While it is true that officers who have been retired related to a medical disability are typically unable to return to duty, Officer Rivera’s perseverance overcame these odds.

First hired in 1989 as a police cadet, Officer Julio Rivera, a New Bedford native, then became a Parking Supervisor before being selected to attend the police academy in 1992. After being sworn in as a police officer, Officer Rivera worked as a uniformed patrol officer, a community police officer, a DARE officer, a background investigator, and a juvenile crimes and sexual assault detective before he was forced to retire due to a heart attack in 2004. During his tenure, Officer Rivera was twice recognized for his meritorious service as a police officer.

Moving forward, Officer Rivera will continue in-service training before returning to the streets in the uniform patrol division in the days that follow. The New Bedford Police commends Officer Rivera for his initiative, congratulates him on his rehabilitation and welcomes his return to full duty.

