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Police Officer Angel F. Poggi Jr., who lost an eye to a bomb while on duty, at City Hall with City Councilman Howard Golden, head of panel on state legislation.

CITY ACTS TO KEEP POLICEMAN ON JOB

Bill Seeks to Block Layoff
of Injured Rookie Officer

By EDWARD RANZAL

Racing against time, the City Council unanimously passed a measure yesterday to block the layoff of a 22-year-old probationary police officer who lost his right eye and received other injuries in an East Harlem bomb explosion on Dec. 11.

The officer, Angel F. Poggi Jr., is slated to be among 300 officers to be laid off on Feb. 14. If Mr. Poggi is laid off, his medical expenses, now being paid by the city, would end. In its message to Albany, the Council urged the Legislature to enact a bill now pending there.

Although prompted by Mr. Poggi's injuries, the Albany legislation would exempt any civil servant from dismissal for up to one year if he was hospitalized because of injuries sustained in the performance of his duties and judged medically unfit to return to work. The bill, which needs the Council's home-rule message before it can be passed, would become effective when signed by Governor Carey.

Deputy Police Commissioner Luis M. Neco told the Council's State Legislation Committee, headed by Howard Golden, that if Mr. Poggi was discharged he would be liable for medical expenses estimated at \$5,000 and \$10,000. This, he added, did not take into consideration the cost of plastic surgery.

Mr. Neco said the Police Department was behind the bill because "the department feels it has a moral obligation to see that this officer gets all the services he is entitled to as if he were continued on the force."

Later, a spokesman for Police Commissioner Michael J. Codd said that the Commissioner had "every intention of retaining the services of Officer Poggi."

Within minutes after the Council acted, Deputy Mayor Stanley M. Friedman, message in hand, raced for a plane to Albany.

Earlier, he told Mr. Golden's committee that Mayor Beame had pushed the Albany bill and suggested the home-rule message because "although we are in a fiscal crisis, he felt compassion for a human being was more essential than dollars."

In a brief appearance before the committee, Mr. Poggi, with a white bandage over his right eye, explained that he had been injured on the second day of his field tour when a bomb exploded when he opened the front door of a tenement.

"I was working with my partner, Detective Ray Flynn," Mr. Poggi explained. "We have a few runs before this happened — a psycho run, a family dispute and a burglary. Then we got a call of trouble in a building. My partner went to the basement and I opened the front door. I was in the hospital two and a half weeks."