



Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

March 9, 2026

Testimony of Faiza Ali, Commissioner, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Before the New York City Council Committee on Immigration

Oversight Hearing – Sanctuary Protection for Immigrant Communities

Good morning. Thank you to Chair Encarnacion and members of the Committee on Immigration for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Faiza Ali, and I am the new Commissioner of the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, or MOIA.

By way of introduction, or reintroduction to some, I am the proud daughter of immigrants from Azad Kashmir, Pakistan. Growing up in an immigrant household – as a woman, as a Muslim, and as a brown New Yorker – shaped my understanding of what my role and responsibility is to the city I serve. It also shaped how I think about what government should be — and the responsibility it carries to serve all communities fairly and remain responsive to their voices.

For nearly 20 years, I have worked in community organizing and public service guided by a simple belief: that everyone in this city deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and that government can – at its best – meaningfully improve the lives of people, if it chooses to.

I see my role at MOIA a continuation of that work. But this moment requires more than words — it requires government that is coordinated, responsive, and willing to stand clearly on the side of immigrant New Yorkers. At MOIA, our focus is turning values into action: aligning city agencies to deliver services effectively, strengthening legal protections for immigrant New Yorkers, and ensuring that the city's sanctuary laws are real in people's daily lives. In a time of federal uncertainty, New York City must be a source of stability, dignity, and opportunity for the families who help power this city.

As Commissioner, I believe our responsibility is to listen to immigrant communities and ensure that their lived realities shape how government operates. We can build a city where all New Yorkers can lead safe and dignified lives. As federal immigration authorities continue to destabilize and sow fear in our communities, it is important that New York City reaffirms our status as a sanctuary city by living up to our values. That means reaffirming our sanctuary laws not just as policy, but as practice — ensuring that immigrant New Yorkers can live, work, access services, and participate in civic life without fear. All immigrants, regardless of status, are part of our city. It is our responsibility to ensure they can build lives of safety and opportunity here.

My testimony today will focus on the nature of New York City's sanctuary city laws, the need to ensure strict adherence to these laws during these times of chaos, and the programs MOIA operates to support our immigrant communities.

First, I want to reaffirm MOIA's fundamental mission to protect all immigrant New Yorkers. The data shows that by ensuring that all New Yorkers – regardless of immigration status – can access city services, we can advance public safety and well-being for all. Guided by our values and Charter mandate, MOIA continues to lead the city's efforts in support of this goal.

New York City does not control federal immigration policy, but we can choose whether we let fear guide our daily lives or focus on what we can do to keep New Yorkers safe.

Under Local Law 228, all city agencies and offices, including contractors and vendors, are prohibited from assisting in immigration enforcement or utilizing city resources for those purposes in most cases. MOIA reports on all requests from non-local law enforcement for assistance with

immigration enforcement every fiscal quarter, allowing both the public and the City Council to see how the City's sanctuary laws are working and to create an opportunity to address issues or answer questions as needed.

Under the leadership of Mayor Mamdani and the issuance of Executive Order 13, the city is committed to a review and strengthened implementation of the sanctuary laws, including Local Law 228. The executive order requires public safety audits, creates employee and public education requirements on existing local laws, and forms an Interagency Response Committee.

The public safety audit, which must be completed by early May, ensures that ACS, DOC, DOHMH, DOP, DSS, and NYPD are in compliance with the city's laws and require them to publish their policies and protocols publicly. These agencies are also responsible for training all employees, officers, contractors, and subcontractors.

The order also outlines several important roles for MOIA, including coordinating an education campaign about our laws for our colleagues at sister agencies and the public. We will also work alongside senior administration leadership on the Interagency Response Committee to provide guidance on preparing and responding to crises.

MOIA has already been expanding and sustaining important lines of communication and collaboration with our city colleagues. The Interagency Taskforce on Immigrant Affairs meets on a quarterly basis to ensure both ongoing instruction and communication regarding immigrants' rights issues across city agencies.

MOIA's communications campaign is also focused on informing our communities of their legal rights under local, state, and federal law, as well as encouraging New Yorkers to call our Legal Immigration Support Hotline for immigration help. The campaign is currently hosted in 4,000 digital LinkNYC screens across the city on a 24-hour cycle.

Since our last testimony to the City Council on sanctuary policies in January 2025, we created several new materials in 10 languages, and counting, to respond to some of the immigrant community's most-asked questions, including "Know Your Rights" information available in print and on our website. Our resources are available here for council and community members to take with them. In 2025, our External Affairs team also made more than 35,000 direct touch-points through resource fairs, Know Your Rights presentations, and canvassing. Over the past four years, resources on MOIA's website were downloaded over 142,000 times by nearly 79,000 users.

MOIA is also continuing to work closely with non-profits to inform immigrant communities of their rights and the availability of city services. Immigrant Rights Workshops include information about our sanctuary laws, rights and protections for immigrant New Yorkers under the New York City Human Rights Law, and how individuals can report violations of their rights. The presentations have also served as additional entry points for community organizations and their clients to connect to free and quality immigration legal services.

In Fiscal Year 2025, this program delivered 455 presentations that reached nearly 10,000 people, continuing our critical role in outreach to immigrant communities. While we cannot control the

actions of the federal government, we can and should be proactive in our policies and programs to ensure that fear of enforcement does not prevent workers from showing up to their jobs, children from attending school, or families from accessing health care and engaging with their broader community.

MOIA has also created the necessary legal infrastructure during this time of greatly increased need. Last summer, we launched MOIA's Immigration Legal Support Centers, supported by more than \$18 million in investments over three years to support up to 25 community-rooted organizations providing culturally and linguistically responsive immigration legal assistance. The network currently consists of 35 centers across the five boroughs.

This model was created to leverage the expertise and experience of nonprofits and community-based organizations that are already embedded in the city's immigrant communities. This initiative provides community members with a variety of legal and non-legal navigation and support services and maintains close outreach and referral partnerships with local schools, hospitals, libraries, houses of worship, and other local partners, meeting New Yorkers where they are. Since the program's July 2025 launch, the centers have conducted approximately 7,500 comprehensive legal screenings, supporting immigrants on a variety of legal needs.

All MOIA Centers' program providers have free access to select online trainings and webinars to a nationwide legal technical assistance program through Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC). The MOIA Legal Technical Mentorship program provides dedicated support to the LSC network. And in Fiscal Year 2026, the Immigrant Justice Corps, or IJC, is offering additional legal technical support for LSCs.

Having access to multiple legal technical assistance programs and resources is important for immigration legal professionals to maintain their professional ethical duties, train, and support the professional growth of their staff and volunteers, and to advance informed decision-making on advocacy and program operations. Providers are also connected to trainings and resources that allow them to respond appropriately to federal policy changes.

Another critical resource available to our immigrant communities is the MOIA Immigration Legal Support Hotline, which is also operated by Catholic Charities Community Services and helps New Yorkers explore their options to access comprehensive immigration legal screenings. In calendar year 2025, the Hotline received more than 26,000 calls. At the start of 2026, the Hotline expanded its service hours to include an additional three hours on Monday and Wednesday from 9:00 AM–8:00 PM. New Yorkers can also call the hotline and be connected to services on the last Saturday of each month from 9:00 AM–5:00 PM.

Finally, during this distressing year, MOIA has made substantial use of the Rapid Response Legal Collaborative, or RRLC, which has provided legal assistance to immigrant New Yorkers who are detained or at imminent risk of detention or deportation. Considering the current need, MOIA has since increased our investment in rapid response legal efforts by \$2 million this fiscal year. Additionally, MOIA is collaborating with New York City Public School's Project Open Arms to implement a dedicated referral pathway and Know Your Rights training for New York City students and their immediate family members who may be eligible for the Rapid Response

Legal Collaborative's services.

Turning to the legislation before this Committee, MOIA supports Introduction 55, and we look forward to working with the Council to refine the bill language to reflect the changes recently announced by Mayor Mamdani.

While we have made much progress in the last year, we recognize that there is still much more to do to protect and support our diverse immigrant communities. MOIA stands ready to partner with the City Council, advocates, community organizations, and others to deepen our collaboration and collective impact in the months, and years to come. We're proud that New York City invests more in immigration legal services than any other city in the country, and we will continue to explore ways to expand and improve these critical services for our immigrant communities.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

TESTIMONY

TO: NYC Council Committee on Immigration
FROM: Eduardo Antonetti, Internationals Network for Public Schools
DATE: March 9, 2026
RE: Oversight - Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

Esteemed Chair Encarnación and Members of the Committee on Immigration,

My name is Dr. Eduardo Antonetti, and I am the Senior Director of Advancement for Internationals Network. Internationals Network is an education nonprofit organization with more than 20 years of success in supporting immigrant and refugee students in New York City public schools (and based on 40 successful years of NYC International high schools). There are 17 International schools in New York City, and we have supported an additional 20 schools with their newcomer population since 2024.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on sanctuary protections for immigrant communities. I speak to you today as an educator and want to focus our attention on our immigrant students, their families, and our school communities.

We see firsthand that current federal immigration policies are fueling fear, trauma, and instability for immigrant and refugee students across our partner schools.

- Many students are afraid to attend school because they and their families are afraid of being detained, separated from loved ones or deported.
- Many families have been forced to move between shelters and have had their lives disrupted.
- Teachers and school social workers report that students who make it to school often break down in tears, unable to concentrate, and focus on learning, putting their graduation and future plans at risk.
- This crisis is devastating to the mental health and well-being of our school leaders and educators who are trying so hard to protect and care for their students.

We commend the members of this Committee, our partners at the NYC Department of Education and Project Open Arms for establishing policies and procedures and for providing training and resources to our schools so they know how to meet the needs of our immigrant students. But it's still not enough. The level of awareness and readiness across the system is uneven and the legal and emotional support demands of our students and families far exceed the supply.

It is imperative to ensure that all school leaders are provided clearer guidance on ICE enforcement around schools, and that schools and the NYCPS plan actively for safe passage for students to and from schools and on trips and more explicit guidance on shelter in place in case of ICE activity at dismissal time, keeping in mind the complexity of co-locations..

Please count on Internationals Network to be your partner and to support your efforts to connect with, protect and empower immigrant students, families and communities and the schools that serve them.

Thank you,

Eduardo Antonetti, Ed.D.

Senior Director of Advancement
Internationals Network for Public Schools, Inc.
Email: eduardo.antonetti@internationalsnetwork.org



Empowering Multilingual Learners to Thrive

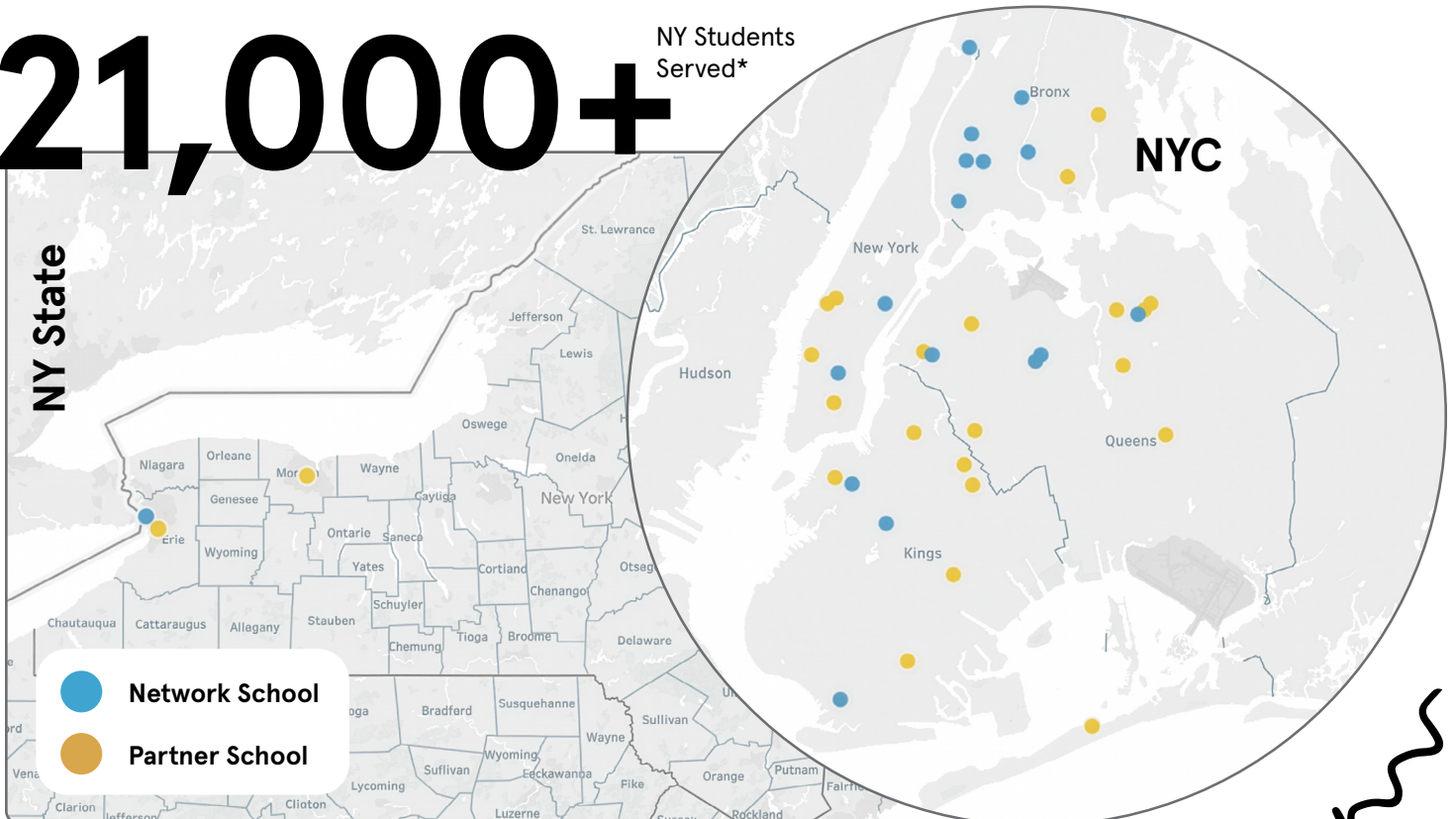
For decades, Internationals Network has partnered with schools, communities, and districts to build equitable, high-quality environments for multilingual learners in New York and across the U.S. Since 1985, our network schools have served more than 35,000 multilingual learner students. Current federal immigration policies are fueling fear, trauma, and instability for immigrant and refugee students.

The Challenges Students Are Facing

- A recent national survey found that schools are reporting increased fear and anxiety among immigrant students and their families as a result of major immigration arrest campaigns. Of those that cited fear and anxiety, 75% said it is interfering with student learning.
- Principals are facing situations where students and families have urgent needs that are very diverse and complex, and that require immediate individualized resources and supports. Most schools are not equipped to address the multitude of needs.
- Students are struggling to focus, risking graduation and future plans. Trauma and instability directly affect attendance and learning. (APA, 2025)

21,000+

NY Students Served*



*Estimated number of students served in Internationals Network Schools and Partner Schools since 2023.



Internationals Network’s Response

We develop strong partnerships with New York State and City leaders, educators, community-based organizations, and other nonprofit partners to keep students safe and supported and provide a high quality education that all students deserve.

We provide on-going professional learning opportunities, coaching, workshops, and resources to district and school leaders so they are better equipped to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of multilingual learners at this moment.

We are responding to an unprecedented number of urgent requests from school leaders by facilitating partnerships and coordinating tailored support to meet the unique needs of students and families.

We are closely monitoring incidents so we can help schools and partner organizations adapt and respond appropriately.

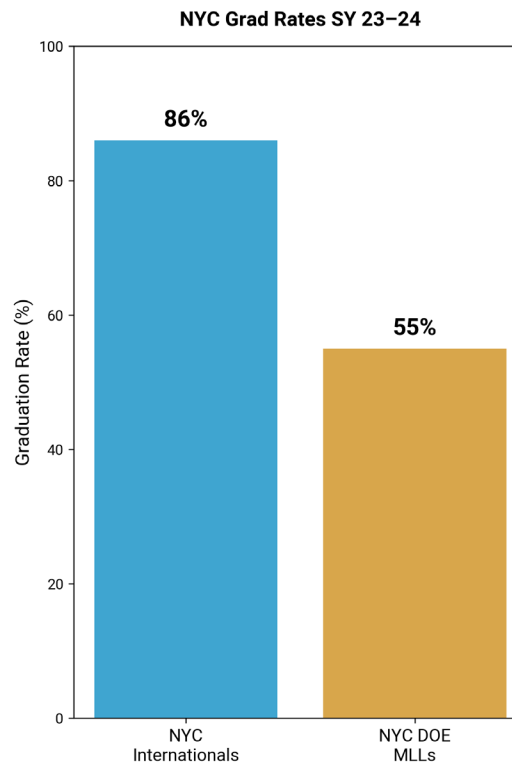
“My parents did not really worry much about my fear of going to school and knowing that I didn’t know the language because the school welcomed me with open arms. You are basically in your second home at an International high school.”
— Internationals Network Student

About Internationals Network

Internationals Network partners with schools, districts, and communities to provide high-quality education and support for multilingual learners across New York and the U.S.

Our Impact in 2025 in NY State & NYC

- 21,000+ students served in 40+ schools
- 87% of graduates applied to college
- 100+ alumni working in our network schools
- Provided 4,600+ hours of Professional Development to educators



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info@internationalsnetwork.org



Visit our website: internationalsnetwork.org



Testimony from the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP) on the NYC Trust Act

March 9, 2026

Leslie Allen, Director of Legal Services

Good afternoon, Chair Avilés and City Council. My name is Leslie Allen, and I am the Director of Legal Services at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP). I want to express my gratitude for your ongoing support of our work with leading LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected survivors of violence. AVP has long been at the forefront of New York City's fight against hate and oppression, offering critical support to the LGBTQ+ survivors of violence. Our legal services focus is on immigration, and we offer our voice on behalf of queer immigrant survivors.

We thank the Mayor and Council for standing up to protect to our immigrant communities. For too long, city agencies—especially the NYPD—have colluded with ICE enforcement behind the scenes despite the city's sanctuary policies.

AVP runs a 24-hour crisis hotline for queer survivors of violence. We hear stories of how the fear of ICE is preventing domestic violence victims from seeking government resource to enable leaving their abusers, of how it's keeping sex workers who are being exploited from stepping forward, and how it's keeping LGBTQ survivors of violence from pursuing their winnable immigration cases because they rightfully see the potential for any governmental system, any government support, to be a hidden trap.

The coming months and years will likely see new waves of ICE activity in New York. Many of our clients are deeply terrified and see themselves as lacking protection. But they do have rights. Rebuilding trust will be a long process, but that journey starts with simple steps. By creating better signage and a private right of action immigrants can learn to trust New York City as a place where justice is still possible while nationally respect to due process is corroding.

AVP is brining these threatened communities into engagement with the city government and social services. Recently, we've begun to outreach in Jackson Heights and Corona as part of a grant from the Mayor's Office of Nightlife, trying to reach queer immigrants at their places of work. We're also collaborating with trans-specific health clinics to reach



survivors where they already receive support. The passage of the NYC Trust Act is a tangible, meaningful step that we can highlight to empower our fearful clients to access services needed to improve the condition of their lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.



The Arab American
Association of
New York

Testimony of the Arab American Association of New York

New York City Hall
Committee on Immigration Hearing
March 9, 2026

My name is Maryam Shuaib, and I am the Coalition Organizer at the Arab American Association of New York. Since 2001, we have been committed to ensuring the protection of immigrant rights. I want to highlight the importance of Int-0055-2026, which asks the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to create signage that clearly distinguishes between public and private spaces— including the rights community members are entitled to in both spaces— throughout the city.

Recent raids highlight a total lack of accountability as federal agencies continue to act with impunity across New York City's streets, indiscriminately abducting and aimlessly arresting as many "immigrant seeming" individuals as possible. Our streets have morphed into an unpredictable battleground for our community members with no accountability in sight.

This must be stopped now. Installing conspicuously clear signage in **multiple languages** serves as the absolute bare minimum for ICE and other federal agencies to be held accountable while also making our most vulnerable community members aware that they will be protected in private and public spaces.

For many years, we have worked with the City of New York to provide resources to community members across the city. There is a mutual understanding of the urgency of protecting immigrant rights. Int-0055-2026 leaves no room for interpretation on the logistics of a detainment. While this bill ensures that targeted communities are made aware of their inalienable rights in a given interaction with federal agencies, it also puts federal agencies' impunity on full display if they choose to neglect those rights.

It is vital that the City of New York take the necessary steps to protect its residents from unlawful attacks by ICE and other federal agencies by codifying measures that prevent collusion between federal immigration authorities and New York City's institutions and representatives. We strongly urge you to support Int-0055-2026, which will endorse citywide efforts to hold federal and local institutions accountable to the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to New York's immigrant communities.



**Arab American Family
Support Center**

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Tel: (718) 643-8000 | Fax: (718) 797-0410
Web: aafscny.org

Serving all five boroughs of NYC

**TESTIMONY OF THE ARAB AMERICAN FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER
BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION
March 9, 2026**

Good afternoon, Chair Encarnacion and members of the Committee on Immigration. My name is Randy Ali, and I am the Executive Director of the Arab-American Family Support Center, known as AAFSC.

AAFSC serves roughly 20,000 people each year across New York City. Over 70 percent of our clients were born outside the United States, and many come from historically underserved communities. Our work centers on families: stabilizing them through challenging times; supporting them to maintain stability; and uplifting them to thrive.

I am an Arab-American child of immigrants. I grew up in New York City. I am also an attorney. Since I started in this position in September, I've witnessed our staff, many of whom are also immigrants, respond to a surge in fear, need for basic assistance, and mental health challenges in the communities we serve.

This growing need comes from inhumane federal immigration policies, hostile anti-immigrant rhetoric, cuts to public benefits, rising food and housing insecurity, and a spike in anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant hate. Our communities are increasingly being targeted. We see this in incidents like the recent attack on young Muslim women in Bay Ridge.

Fear in our communities is profound. Mixed-status families are increasingly choosing to self-deport rather than risk detention or separation by ICE, tearing families apart - even those in the middle of the family reunification process. We have seen a sharp decline in community members applying for naturalization. This year, we did not host our annual citizenship celebration - usually a joyous occasion - because so few members of our community took the exam. Some were afraid to take the test, and others had their scheduled tests paused due to new restrictions.

AAFSC is a MOIA-established Legal Support Center. We create safe and supportive spaces and are a trusted resource for immigrants in a new city. We work with families who are experiencing language barriers, cultural differences, and mistrust of systems that have historically targeted them. That's why it's so important for community-based organizations that immigrant New Yorkers trust -- like AAFSC and our partners here -- share Know Your Rights information.

For families traumatized by conflict in their home countries and concerned about growing conflict in the Middle East, seeking legal help can feel like an additional threat to safety. Families also face rising application fees, long wait times for check-ins and court hearings, and widespread misinformation about legal rights - creating even greater fear and instability.

As a result, community-based legal service centers like AAFSC are overstretched, with demand far exceeding available resources.

City support is critical to our work. We are grateful to Council Member Avilés for sponsoring the NYC Know Your Rights Act and to Council Member Krishnan for sponsoring legislation to help protect immigrant communities.

Our community needs to know their rights, and to know their city is protecting them. This legislation will empower them to make the right legal decisions to protect their families.

Equally critical is ensuring continued support and funding for community-based organizations like AAFSC to meet growing needs and continue to be on the frontlines helping immigrant New Yorkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of this important legislation.

Randy Ali



Asian American Federation

**Testimony to the New York City Council
Committee on Immigration**

March 9, 2026

Introduction

Thank you, Chair Elsie Encarnación, and members of the Committee on Immigration for holding this hearing and for providing us with the opportunity to testify. My name is Nat Moghe, Advocacy Coordinator at the Asian American Federation (AAF), where we proudly represent the collective voice of more than 70 member organizations serving 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers. I'm honored to testify alongside our partners of the Rapid Immigration Support and Empowerment (RISE) Network – a network of nearly 20 Asian-led and Asian-serving organizations providing immigration case management and legal services support to New Yorkers.

Current Immigration Legal Landscape for Asian New Yorkers

The current presidential administration has brought drastic policy changes at the federal, state, and local levels. Policy changes impacting our Asian communities in New York City include H.R. 1. This piece of legislation delivers tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans while boosting the detention budget of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) by 308%, raising the risk of sudden arrests, workplace raids, and family separations – even for long-time residents. Over \$75 billion will be allocated to ICE through 2029, which will have severe consequences for Asian American New Yorkers' safety, stability, and dignity.

In New York State, 24% of unauthorized immigrants are from Asia, and one in seven undocumented immigrants nationwide is Asian. Arrests of immigrants from Asian countries, including China, Bangladesh, Nepal, and India, have increased significantly compared to last year. According to a new analysis by THE CITY, which examined federal records from the Deportation Data Project, there has been a 1,044% rise in arrests of Chinese immigrants and a 1,000% increase in arrests of Bangladeshi immigrants from 2024 to 2025.¹ ICE's brute and indiscriminate tactics have shattered families, instilled fear, and prevented New Yorkers from accessing essential services, such as law enforcement, public benefits, healthcare, and education. From long-term residents who have not adjusted their status, refugees, asylum seekers, individuals with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), special visas, and immigrant families, regardless of when they arrived in the U.S., our communities are on high alert.

New York City's sanctuary laws specifically prohibit cooperation on civil immigration enforcement, except for limited exceptions. However, in our current political climate, where the lines of enforcement are blurred, we've seen instances where those protections are completely ignored. For instance, in September of 2025, a NYC corrections officer shared real-time information with federal immigration officers about the release of a man detained at Rikers Island in violation of New York City's sanctuary law, leading to the person's arrest by ICE

¹ Chu, H., & Hogan, G. (2025, July 14). NYC Immigration Arrests Just Shot Through the Roof, New Data Shows. THE CITY - NYC News. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/07/14/ice-migrant-arrests-trump-administration-deportations-data/>



Asian American Federation

officers.² The Department of Investigation found that jail employees received no training on the rules against prohibiting them from providing federal authorities with information about immigrants. While New York City law prohibits local government cooperation with immigration enforcement, federal agents have broad authority to make arrests, and local officials are struggling to determine how to stop them. In late October of 2025, ICE conducted a militarized raid on Canal Street in Chinatown, arresting nine immigrant vendors and five protestors. The NYPD was made aware of the raid in advance, despite being directed to not engage or assist with ICE enforcement. On November 29th, the NYPD helped ICE agents push citizens out of the way while arresting more than a dozen protestors.³ Raids are expected to escalate throughout this year, creating fear within our communities and the city. With the threat of militarized violence in our city and the lack of protection and training from NYPD officers, immigrant New Yorkers' rights continue to be violated, and individuals with lawful immigration status continue to be detained without due process.

We applaud the Mamdani administration's signing and implementation of Executive Order 13, which expands the Department of Investigation's oversight of sanctuary law compliance and strengthens collaboration with the City Council to enhance protections and accountability. This includes the prohibition on ICE agents entering city property without a judicial warrant, ordering agencies to audit their interactions with federal immigration authorities, and establishing a new interagency response committee for major enforcement actions. As immigrant New Yorkers face heightened threats, we must work together to ensure that local and state agencies do not divert resources to advance the federal deportation agenda or share sensitive information with federal immigration authorities, including by developing solutions such as the creation of multilingual signage that clearly outlines immigrants' constitutional rights. At the same time, our city must invest in community-based organizations (CBOs) on the front lines that are protecting, informing, and providing critical services to those who are targeted or wrongfully detained.

The RISE Network's Immigration Services and Advocacy

This year, AAF will continue to advocate for resources to equip our RISE Network to respond quickly and effectively to the immigration challenges facing vulnerable Asian New Yorkers. Doing the on-the-ground work takes an enormous amount of effort from our CBOs, who are immensely trusted within our communities. Our CBOs are especially vital during these unprecedented times as successful immigration services require deep community involvement and linguistic competency. However, these CBOs are often not integrated into mainstream systems and processes, leaving Asian American communities isolated from the information and services they need to navigate the impact of policy changes.

Earlier last year, AAF surveyed our member organizations to see which immigrant communities they serve, what gaps exist, and what their needs are in terms of providing immigration-related services. Only 5.6% of our member organizations said they had capacity to take on additional immigration related cases, while the majority reported being under-resourced to meet the growing demand. Support from external immigration services was also bleak as our CBOs

² Hogan, G. (2025, September 25). Rikers Officer Shared Info With ICE in Sanctuary Violation, Probe Finds. THE CITY - NYC News. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/09/25/correction-investigation-sanctuary-city-violation/>

³ Hogan, G., Kroles, A., & Honan, K. (2025, November 29). NYPD Arrest More Than a Dozen Protesting Homeland Security Agents in Tense Confrontation. THE CITY - NYC News. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/11/29/nypd-ice-homeland-security-canal/>



Asian American Federation

reported that the mainstream organizations they would normally refer clients to were stretched thin and either had long wait lists or were not accepting clients due to strained capacity.

Funding Asian leading and serving CBOs directly is an effective way to provide immediate immigration support to the Asian community. Past funding for AAF's rapid response program in 2016-2020 allowed AAF and our network to serve 8,090 Asian New Yorkers with services ranging from intakes to consultations; representation on various cases; assistance with citizenship, green card, DACA, family petition, and U/T visa applications; case management to access immigration legal services; and Know Your Rights trainings. AAF's network of CBOs provided this wide range of services throughout New York City to the Arab, Cambodian, Chinese, Bangladeshi, Filipino, Indian, Indo-Caribbean, Japanese, Korean, Nepali, Pakistani, and Vietnamese communities in over 12 languages.

Asian CBOs facing funding cuts and political threats are already spread thin, doing our best with limited resources to share information, calm anxieties, and provide help in multiple languages. We are incredibly grateful for the FY 26 City Council funding provided to AAF and our RISE Network partners to support in-language, culturally competent immigration legal services and case management. However, while Asian non-citizens make up nearly 30% of New York City's non-citizen population,⁴ our network of Asian CBOs only received 3.9% of the additional \$50 million City Council invested in immigration legal services funding this year. We applaud the record-breaking investment in legal services funding and urge the City Council to increase its investment in Asian CBOs in FY 27 to address these gaps and meet the needs of immigrants who are under threat.

Recommendations

We thank the Committee on Immigration for its continued support and leadership in protecting immigrant New Yorkers. We make the following recommendations to the City Council and urge support for the following to prioritize constitutional and legal protections for immigrants:

- **We support Int 0055-2026- Alexa Avilés-** the creation of multilingual signs that clearly outline immigrants' constitutional rights.
- **We support Introduction 261 (Krishnan):** A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to prohibiting the city of New York from contracting with entities engaged in immigration enforcement
- **Protect and expand funding for the following initiative:** Legal Services for AAPI Communities; Legal Services for Day Laborers & Domestic Workers; and the Immigration Legal Services for Survivors of Violence and Gender Based Harm.
- **Expand investment in language-accessible legal services** to include and prioritize case management as our CBOs act as a critical bridge, providing wrap-around case management when making referrals to legal services.
- **Continue supporting AAF's coordination of an immigration rapid response network** to connect immigrants and their families with critical legal services, case management, community education, and accurate resources to address a rise in misinformation, isolation, and fear.
 - Work with the RISE Network – made up of nearly 20 Asian-led and -serving organizations providing immigration case management and legal services – to

⁴ AAF's internal analysis of 2023 ACS PUMS data.



Asian American Federation

establish clear lines of communication so our CBOs have an established, regular opportunity to share how immigration enforcement is impacting the AAPI community.

- **Prioritize supporting small- and mid-sized CBOs serving emerging immigrant communities.**
 - Our CBOs are trusted partners with deep relationships with vulnerable community members who are less likely to interact with mainstream organizations and government systems in this current environment. Under current structures, these CBOs are not integrated into the planning process, leaving Asian American communities isolated from the information and services they need to navigate the impact of policy changes.
- **Prioritize addressing contracting issues that pose barriers for CBOs to promptly receive funding to deliver crucial services.**
 - We ask that City Council continue holding the Mayoral administration accountable for streamlining the contracting and procurement process of culturally-competent safety net programs to ensure CBOs receive funding promptly to deliver crucial services.

Conclusion

We thank the Committee on Immigration for its continued support and leadership in protecting immigrant New Yorkers. Thank you for allowing us to testify and we look forward to working with you to make sure our immigrant communities get the support they deserve. If you have any questions, I can be contacted at nat.moghe@aafederation.org.



Testimony of

Brittany Brown
Supervisor, Collateral Consequences Unit
New York County Defender Services

Before the

City Council Committee on Immigration

Oversight - Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

March 9, 2026

Thank you to the Committee on Immigration for holding this public hearing on sanctuary protections for immigrant communities. My name is Brittany Brown and I am the Supervising Attorney of the Collateral Consequences Unit at New York County Defender Services (NYCDS). NYCDS is an indigent defense office that every year represents tens of thousands of New Yorkers in Manhattan's Criminal, Family, and Supreme Courts. Our organization includes attorneys who specialize in immigration matters, and advise our clients on any immigration consequences stemming from criminal legal system-involvement, including deportation. They also assist our non-citizen clients with other immigration issues, such as representing them in immigration court and accompanying them to ICE check-ins. Consequently, we frequently represent clients who may have collateral immigration consequences due to their interaction with the criminal legal system.

We, therefore, thank you Chair Encarnación for holding today's hearing and to all of the Council Members that seek to bring more transparency regarding compliance with sanctuary city laws.

I. Background:

New York City adopted sanctuary laws to ensure that city agencies do not participate in federal immigration enforcement. Only a few days ago, the Council held an oversight hearing regarding how city agencies, particularly the Department of Correction (DOC) and the New York City

Police Department (NYPD), have violated our city's detainer laws.¹ Advocates have long raised concerns that city agencies, particularly DOC and the NYPD, have engaged in practices that circumvent or undermine our sanctuary city safeguards. Our organization has previously raised these concerns before the Council and the Board of Correction, including testimony describing how our client was unlawfully transferred from DOC custody to ICE custody after information was shared between the two agencies during the previous Adams administration.² This client's experience demonstrated how even limited communication between local agencies and federal immigration authorities can trigger devastating consequences for immigrant New Yorkers.

These concerns are particularly urgent because in this moment the federal government is dramatically escalating immigration enforcement.³ Across the country we have seen the Trump administration implement increasingly aggressive immigration enforcement actions that terrorize communities and undermine public trust. Most recently we saw this in Minnesota, where a sweeping federal immigration crackdown resulted in widespread fear, mass arrests, and the tragic deaths of civilians.⁴ These events sent shockwaves through communities across the country and demonstrated how rapidly aggressive immigration enforcement can escalate into violence and tragedy. As these events unfolded, we all watched closely, including immigrants in New York. The specter of similar enforcement tactics reaching our city currently looms over all of us. We now live under the real fear that similar tactics could occur here, and that local agencies could contribute to those harms through unlawful communication or cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

To be clear, we are already seeing the devastating consequences of federal immigration enforcement in New York State. ICE agents recently entered a Columbia University residence after falsely posing as NYPD officers and claiming that they were searching for a missing child.⁵ In reality, they were seeking a student for deportation and abducted her from her residence without a judicial warrant.⁶ This was not an isolated incident. Only one day before, a nearly blind

¹Ali Bauman, *NYC Council holds hearing on NYPD and other agencies compliance with sanctuary laws*, CBS (March 5, 2026) at <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-city-council-hearing-sanctuary-city-laws/>.

²Courtney Gross, *Public defenders accuse city correction department of illegal ICE coordination*, NY1 (Jan. 15, 2026) available at <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2026/01/15/public-defenders-accuse-city-correction-department-of-illegal-ice-coordination>.

³Rashawn Ray and Gabriel R. Sanchez, *ICE expansion has outpaced accountability. What are the remedies?*, Brookings Institute (Jan. 26, 2026) available at <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ice-expansion-has-outpaced-accountability-what-are-the-remedies/>; Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, *New report details ICE expanding and increasingly unaccountable detention system*, American Immigration Council (Jan. 23, 2026) available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/ice-expanding-detention-system/>.

⁴Ilse Ramirez, *6 deaths in ICE custody and 2 fatal shootings: a horrific start to 2026*, American Immigration Council (Feb. 11, 2026) available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/ice-deaths-shootings-2026/>.

⁵Jake Offehartz, *ICE agents said to have posed as police, a tactic some fear could erode trust in real cops*, AP Feb. 27, 2026) available at <https://apnews.com/article/nypd-columbia-university-immigration-c9b0cd212ab3bad901aadb3d87a55149>

⁶*Id.*

refugee who spoke very little English, was taken into US Custom and Border Patrol (CBP) custody after being released from a county jail in Buffalo.⁷ CBP released the man but instead of making sure he was safely back home, they dropped him off alone at a coffee shop miles from safety without notifying his family or legal counsel.⁸ Days later, he was found outside, frozen to death.⁹

This unspeakable tragedy was completely preventable, as CBP deliberately decided to drop a vulnerable man in freezing conditions miles away from home, with no regard for his life or safety. CBP was only able to obtain custody of him because the county jail informed them of his release.¹⁰ If the county jail did not share information with federal immigration authorities, he would still be alive. That is why harm from city agencies sharing information with federal immigration authorities is not abstract. In this environment, even limited information sharing or cooperation between local agencies and federal immigration agencies can have devastating consequences. New York City's sanctuary protections were designed to prevent local government from contributing to these harms, and we cannot let them fail.

New York City's sanctuary laws are essential to maintaining trust among community members and ensuring the safety of all New Yorkers. As our city government enters a new chapter, it is imperative that the City Council act swiftly to ensure that our city's commitment to welcoming and protecting immigrants is ironclad. Our local laws must provide clear, unambiguous prohibitions against colluding with immigration authorities, and must also include real disincentives for violating those laws.

When immigrant New Yorkers live in fear of interacting with local government, it makes all of us less safe. The perception that police, city service providers, or other municipal employees are working with ICE discourages people with uncertain status or those immigrant family members from reaching out in an emergency, participating in investigations, and engaging with the court process – a reality that has ripple effects throughout our system of government and society. This is exactly why our city's sanctuary laws have persisted for decades and transcended partisan lines. When strong local policies are in place that clearly protect against localities communicating and colluding with ICE, domestic violence and other crimes are more likely to be reported.

⁷ Ana Faguy, *Blind refugee found dead in New York after being released by immigration authorities*, BBC (Feb. 27, 2026) available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cq57j559eq4o>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Jon Shleton, *US: Blind refugee found dead after release from custody*, DW (Feb. 26, 2026) available at <https://www.dw.com/en/us-blind-refugee-found-dead-after-release-from-cbp-custody/a-76136879>.

II. The Council must pass legislation ending the communication loopholes between DOC and ICE:

Our sanctuary city laws were created to limit cooperation between local agencies and federal immigration enforcement, particularly when no judicial warrant exists. However, DOC has adopted an interpretation of the City's detainer laws that allow DOC staff to communicate with immigration authorities even when no warrant has been issued. DOC argues that they are allowed to communicate a person's release date, incarceration status, and court appearance dates without a judicial warrant to ICE. We believe their interpretation of Admin. Code § 9-131 is flagrantly illegal under provision (b). Moreover, DOC denies delaying the release of our clients so that ICE can more easily detain them upon release, but in our experience we have noticed blatant delays in our client's release that are otherwise unexplainable.

DOC has also adopted a policy interpreting Admin. Code § 9-131 to treat the instant arrest as a qualifying conviction that allows communication with ICE. We do not believe that interpretation is consistent with the text of the law, which refers to individuals who have been convicted within the previous five years of certain offenses, clearly indicating prior convictions rather than the arrest that brought a person into custody.

We believe these actions are illegal and clearly inconsistent with both the purpose and the plain intent of our laws. DOC's actions demonstrate how agencies can exploit ambiguous language to circumvent the City's legal safeguards. We cannot trust DOC to address their own violations as the communications obtained through a public records request unequivocally showed extreme anti-immigrant sentiments within DOC as email communications to ICE from DOC used the hashtag #teamsendthemback. That is why we are calling on the Council to enact legislation clarifying that DOC personnel may not communicate with immigration authorities regarding individuals in custody except in the narrow circumstances explicitly permitted by law. Clear statutory language will ensure that the City's sanctuary protections are implemented as intended and will prevent agencies from relying on interpretations that undermine those protections.

We do want to commend the current Mayor for the issuance of Executive Order 13, which establishes new audit requirements on numerous agencies including the DOC and creates an interagency response committee to review compliance with the City's sanctuary laws.¹¹ Oversight mechanisms are critical to ensure that city agencies are held accountable for adhering to the law. The new audit requirements under Executive Order 13 will allow for broader and more in depth investigation of our agencies.¹²

¹¹ New York City Mayoral Executive Order No. 13 (Feb. 6, 2026) available at <https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2026/02/executive-order-13>.

¹² *Id.*

While we applaud the new audit requirements under Executive Order 13, meaningful oversight will depend on whether all forms of communication with ICE are captured and reviewed. That is why we were concerned to hear that DOC staff do not have agency email addresses. If DOC staff are communicating with ICE through channels not documented or easily auditable (such as phone calls, text messages or other informal means) there is a serious risk that violations of law may go undetected. At a minimum, we must ensure that all communications between DOC personnel and federal immigration agencies go through official, documented channels that can be reviewed for compliance.

We are grateful that the new administration is willing to take the necessary steps to ensure our city agencies comply with our laws, especially since the previous administration refused to do so.¹³ We welcome these new oversight efforts and hope that they ensure that agencies like DOC and the NYPD will align their practices with our sanctuary laws. Legislative action from the Council will further reinforce that expectation and ensure that the law is implemented consistently and correctly.

That is why we urge the Council to enact legislation that would close the communication loopholes that currently exist between DOC and ICE.

III. The Council must pass the [New York City Trust Act \(Int. 0209-2026\)](#)

We urge the Council to support and pass the New York City Trust Act (Int. 0209-2026), which would strengthen accountability when city agencies violate our sanctuary laws. Under this legislation, when an individual's rights are violated due to local cooperation with federal immigration authorities, they could sue the City for damages. Meaning when agencies unlawfully honor federal detainers or share information with immigration authorities, individuals will have legal recourse. This private right of action is critical because as we have already seen, city agencies such as the NYPD and DOC, have violated these laws, resulting in grave harm to immigrant communities. Allowing individuals to have a private right of action against such illegal behavior could also incentivize the agency to start acting in better faith, for they may be more likely to provide more information as to what is happening due to the fear of a possible future lawsuit. Otherwise, there is no reason for DOC, or any other city agency, to adhere to a law if there are no true repercussions for noncompliance.

For this reason, we urge the passage of the New York City Trust Act (Int. 0209-2026), which would create a private right of action so that people wronged by violations of our already existing laws can seek justice in courts. This bill would make sure that city agencies can be held

¹³ To the contrary, the previous Adams' administration tried to allow ICE officers on Rikers Island. See New York City Mayoral Executive Order Executive Order No. 50 (April 6, 2025) available at <https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2025/04/executive-order-50>.

accountable when violations occur, helping ensure compliance with existing laws, and allowing immigrants to feel safer during their legal proceedings.

IV. Conclusion

We thank the Council for holding an important oversight hearing and for the continued attention to ensure that city agencies comply with our sanctuary laws. Without meaningful transparency and accountability from our city agencies, it is impossible to know the full extent of these illegal practices or how many similar violations of our sanctuary laws have already occurred and are occurring. For this reason we are calling on the Council to pass stronger safeguards. The Council must act to ensure that city agencies comply with the law by passing legislation that closes the communication loopholes between DOC and ICE and by passing the New York City Trust Act (Int. 0209-2026), which would provide a private right of action for individuals harmed by violations of our law.

If you have any questions about my testimony, please email policy@nycds.org.



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BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York City Council

Committee on Immigration

Oversight Hearing on Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

March 9, 2026

My name is Sophie Dalsimer and I am an Associate Director of the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). BDS is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. We want to thank the Committee on Immigration and Chair Elsie Encarnacion for the opportunity to testify today about the importance of robust sanctuary protections in our city.

For 30 years, BDS has worked, in and out of court, to protect and uphold the rights of individuals and to change laws and systems that perpetuate injustice and inequality. After 29 years of serving Brooklyn, we expanded our criminal defense services to Queens. We represent over 40,000 people each year who are accused of a crime, facing the removal of their children, or deportation. Our staff consists of attorneys, social workers, investigators, paralegals and administrative staff who are experts in their individual fields. BDS also provides a wide range of additional services for our clients, including civil legal advocacy, assistance with the educational needs of our clients or their children, housing and benefits advocacy, as well as immigration advice and representation.

Since 2009, BDS has counseled thousands of clients in immigration matters, including deportation defense, affirmative applications, advisals and immigration consequence consultations in the criminal court system. Our *Padilla* team attorneys are criminal-immigration specialists who provide support and expertise on thousands of cases, including advocacy regarding enforcement of New York City's detainer law, individualized immigration screenings, and legal consultations. Since 2013, BDS has provided removal defense services through the

New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP), New York’s first-in-the-nation assigned counsel program for detained New Yorkers facing deportation. BDS also regularly litigates immigration cases in U.S. federal courts, including habeas petitions seeking release from unlawful detention and petitions for review before U.S. circuit courts.

BDS works at the intersection of the criminal legal and family court systems and the immigration legal system. We witness everyday how interactions with these systems expose immigrant New Yorkers to unequal treatment as they often lead to double punishment because of the negative immigration consequences they often carry even after the local matters are resolved. Even minor offenses, often the result of biased policing, can lead to mandatory incarceration in Department of Homeland Security (DHS) detention facilities, or permanent separation from family and exclusion from this country because of the entanglement of the criminal or family legal systems and our federal immigration laws.

State of Immigration Enforcement in New York City

For over a decade, the New York City Council has demonstrated leadership and support for immigrant New Yorkers through the funding of the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP). NYIFUP—which has become a model of access to justice and inspired replication across the country—provides high-quality, client-centered direct representation to low-income detained New Yorkers facing deportation. As deportation defense advocates, we know that New York City’s sanctuary laws are an essential tool to protect immigrant New Yorkers and their families from the increasingly cruel and severe harms that result from an arrest by ICE. Immigration enforcement has always been devastating, but the harms faced by our noncitizen neighbors trapped in the detention and deportation dragnet today are more extreme than in recent history.

The gravity of the situation for immigrants in New York City is almost beyond comprehension. Immigrant New Yorkers are at significant risk of being separated from their families, communities, and jobs, and detained in detention centers across the country that cause rapid physical and mental health deterioration. Our neighbors are being snatched off the street by masked, plainclothes Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents or are being detained at the very courthouses they are visiting to abide by the legal process of the immigration system. The increase of federal agents in NYC not only creates fear in New Yorkers regardless of immigration status, but also increases the likelihood of violent arrests and unlawful immigration detention. The city must take immediate steps to protect the rights of immigrant New Yorkers, expand immigration legal services, and ensure all New Yorkers know their rights.

In our practice, we see that ICE officers regularly deploy ruses to stop and detain New Yorkers on the street or forcibly gain entry into private spaces. Once stopped, many people are subjected to violent, aggressive and verbally abusive arrests often leaving them injured, and in some cases, permanently disabled. After arrest, ICE is rapidly transferring many New Yorkers to detention facilities across the country that are far from their families and access to counsel. Notably, this tactic undermines NYIFUP’s ability to represent every detained New Yorker if they are transferred before we learn about them or if we are not able to access them once we do. Many of

the detention facilities have inconsistent and unreliable communication systems that further impede our representation.

Lack of access is just the beginning of the horrors that immigrant New Yorkers face in ICE detention. We frequently hear our clients report conditions that include freezing cold temperatures, blinding bright lights on at all hours, rotten food, unhygienic spaces, and consistent deprivation of medical care, leading many of our clients to face deteriorating physical and mental health conditions.

In the past, many of our clients were eligible for release on bond while they fought their cases but now the government is keeping most people detained without the possibility of bond, prolonging detention for months and even years unless and until we are able to secure release through complex federal court litigation.

When immigrant New Yorkers do manage to have their day in court, they must also contend with the federal administration's many new strategies to curtail due process in removal proceedings by preventing people fleeing persecution from applying for asylum, limiting the ability to appeal court case denials and firing immigration judges whose records are deemed too immigrant friendly.

Even when we win protection from deportation, ICE is keeping some of our clients detained while they seek to deport them to a so-called "third country" where our clients have never been before, hold no status or ties, and could face dangerous or torturous conditions. News reports reveal that many people renditioned to third countries are eventually repatriated to their countries of origin where they have already demonstrated they will experience persecution or torture.¹

Concerns highlighted in DOI Reports

Two recent Department of Investigation (DOI) reports² highlighted deeply concerning incidents in which New York City's sanctuary laws were violated by Department of Correction (DOC) and New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers. The reports also warned there may be additional instances of local collusion with federal immigration authorities that were not detected, as well as broader systemic problems, including unclear agency policies, insufficient training of agency staff, and failures in tracking and documenting interactions with federal immigration authorities that create an ongoing risk of improper cooperation. These reports should serve as a warning that city agencies are unable to uniformly comply with sanctuary laws

¹ American Immigration Council, *What are Third-Country Removals? Understanding their Use in U.S. Immigration Policy*, Dec. 5, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/what-are-third-country-removals-factsheet/>; Sarah Stillman, "Disappeared to a Foreign Prison," *The New Yorker*, Nov. 24, 2025, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/12/01/disappeared-to-a-foreign-prison>.

² NYC DOI, *DOI Investigation into DOC Correction Intelligence Bureau Investigator Assisting Federal Agents with Immigration Enforcement*, Sept. 2025, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2025/38DOC.Release.Rpt.09.25.2025.pdf>;
NYC DOI, *DOI Investigation into the NYPD's Compliance with Local Laws Restricting City Assistance with Immigration Enforcement*, Dec. 2025, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2025/49NYPD.SancLawsRelease.Rpt.12.03.2025.pdf>

that have been in place for a decade and that there is a clear need for increased guidance, training, and tightened data privacy.

This risk is particularly acute given the broader federal information-sharing systems already in place. Even where New York City limits direct cooperation with immigration enforcement, local law enforcement activity is already embedded in federal data systems. When a person is arrested, their fingerprints are automatically transmitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and, through interoperable databases, shared with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This automatic data-sharing occurs nationwide and can trigger immigration enforcement, including home raids, the issuance of detainers, or the initiation of removal proceedings, regardless of how the underlying local case is ultimately resolved.³

In other words, routine contact with the criminal legal system—such as an arrest—can place individuals into the federal immigration enforcement pipeline, even in jurisdictions with strong sanctuary laws. In this context, any additional local data-sharing, surveillance, or failure to comply with sanctuary protections compounds the risk and increases the likelihood that New Yorkers will be exposed to immigration enforcement.

Address Critical Gaps in the Detainer Law

The New York City Council continues to be a leader in ensuring the protection of all New Yorkers. In October 2014, the Council passed groundbreaking legislation (detainer discretions laws) that removed ICE from Rikers Island and prevented the New York City Department of Corrections (DOC), the New York City Police Department (NYPD), and the Department of Probation (DOP) from unlawfully detaining non-citizens without a judicial warrant.

These detainer discretion laws were intended to prevent non-citizens detained in DOC and NYPD custody from being transferred to immigration detention. However, given the intransigence of ICE’s aggressive apprehension and detention policies, and the agency’s enforcement priorities, years later, it is evident that our criminal legal system continues to cause non-citizens to be apprehended by ICE, as the vast majority of New York City residents detained by ICE have had contact with the criminal legal system. This is especially concerning given that more noncitizens in ICE custody are now subject to mandatory detention under the federal government’s interpretation of 8 U.S.C. § 1225(b)⁴ and the enactment of the Laken Riley Act.⁵

³ National Immigration Law Center, *How ICE Uses Databases and Information Sharing to Deport Immigrants* (Jan. 25, 2018) <https://www.nilc.org/articles/how-ice-uses-databases-and-information-sharing-to-deport-immigrants/>

⁴ “Interim Guidance Regarding Detention Authority for Applicants for Admission,” Available at <https://www.aila.org/library/ice-memo-interim-guidance-regarding-detention-authority-for-applications-for-admission> (claiming all persons present in the United States without having been admitted shall now be subject to mandatory detention provision under § 1225(b)(2)(A) regardless of when or where a person is apprehended and affects those who have resided in the United States for months or years); *Matter of Yajure Hurtado*, 29 I&N Dec. at 229 (Sept. 5, 2025); see also *Maldonado Bautista v. Santacruz*, No. 5:25-CV-01873, ECF No. 87 at 3 (C.D. Cal.) (asserting the agencies are disregarding the district court’s “declaratory judgment requiring bond hearings for the class”).

⁵ H.R.7511 - 118th Congress (2023-2024): Laken Riley Act

During an oversight hearing before the New York City Council in February 2023, DOC testified that it interprets the 2014 detainer discretion laws to contain a loophole which allows DOC to notify the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) of an individual’s release based on a finding of “dangerousness,” as established by a recent criminal conviction for one of the enumerated offenses, or inclusion on the FBI’s terrorist watch list.⁶ Unlike a request to detain an individual beyond the time they would otherwise be released to allow for ICE transfer, which can be honored by DOC only when there is both a finding of dangerousness *and* a judicial warrant, notification alone, under DOC’s interpretation, does not require a judicial warrant. Once ICE is notified of the person’s impending release, ICE can and does go to the DOC facility and take custody of the person directly from DOC.

We understand that DOC believes this interpretation of the law allows it to effectively facilitate the transfer of such individuals to ICE custody and that DOC does not need to be provided with a judicial warrant in these instances. We disagree with this interpretation. More importantly, the intention behind these laws, however, was to ensure that New York City upheld the due process rights of its residents to protect them from the abusive overreach of federal civil immigration enforcement without judicial oversight. The city should not be denying New Yorkers this protection because of a criminal conviction. This protection takes on renewed urgency at a time when ICE seeks to detain more people in jail-like conditions while affording them less due process, and is actively seeking to deport people to third countries they have never been to.

The City Council should make clear that city agencies cannot communicate with ICE about an individual for the purposes of civil immigration enforcement without the presentation of a judicial warrant. The city cannot adequately protect New Yorkers, or uphold the detainer discretion laws, without upholding the requirement that ICE present a judicial warrant in interactions with City agencies about an individual for the purpose of civil immigration enforcement.

The enactment of the Safer Sanctuary Act (Intro 1412) in January amended existing detainer laws by clarifying previously ambiguous language. These revisions were designed to prevent inconsistent interpretations of the statute and to strengthen protections against the use of local government resources in federal deportation proceedings.

In addition to tightening NYC’s sanctuary laws, city agency staff will benefit from additional training on how to ensure compliance with the laws. In our experience with DOC, for example, officers will frequently not accept bail or not release someone who has posted bail if there is an ICE hold on that person in custody. This misinformation can deter families from posting bail, unnecessarily prolong detention, and increase the risk of immigration enforcement. When this has come up for our office, we have found that the DOC staff are not intentionally trying to violate the law but rather do not understand the law and would benefit from in depth training to ensure compliance.

⁶ New York City Council Hearing “Oversight - New York City’s Detainer Laws,” Committee on Immigration Jointly with the Committee on Criminal Justice, February 15, 2023 10:00 AM, meeting video available at <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1078800&GUID=54D0B5D1-9B0B-4A5D-B7C3F6E67806FBC5&Options=info%7C&Search=#>

This Council should also augment New York City’s detainer discretion laws - those harmed by violations of the law must have the ability to hold the government accountable. This needs to include the ability to enforce the law if or when it is not followed. Intro 209-2026 creates a private right of action for individuals who experience harm as the result of a violation of the detainer discretion laws.

Implement Executive Order 13 to Ensure Compliance with Sanctuary City Laws

Executive Order 13 is intended to ensure that New York City’s sanctuary laws are meaningfully implemented across all agencies by requiring clear guidance, training, and accountability when city employees interact with federal immigration authorities. However, the continued reporting of violations and the findings of oversight bodies make clear that these protections are not being consistently realized in practice.

A central concern is the persistent lack of understanding among city workers about what sanctuary laws require and what conduct is prohibited. Frontline staff are often placed in situations involving federal immigration authorities without clear direction. This confusion is not incidental—it is the result of agencies failing to provide adequate guidance, training, and internal protocols to ensure compliance.

Our experience representing New Yorkers reflects these gaps in implementation. As described above, we have encountered repeated situations in which Department of Correction staff unlawfully refuse to release individuals after bail is paid based on the mistaken belief that the existence of an ICE detainer requires continued detention, even where the individual is clearly protected under the city’s detainer laws. Families are also frequently given incorrect information about the effect of ICE detainers. They are often told that bail cannot be posted, or that release will not occur, because of an “ICE hold.” As a matter of law, an ICE detainer alone does not provide a valid basis for continued detention once a person has met the conditions of release. This misinformation can deter families from posting bail, unnecessarily prolong detention, and increase the risk of immigration enforcement.

These implementation failures are compounded by deficiencies in oversight and reporting. City law requires agencies to document and report interactions with federal immigration authorities, including under the detainer laws, yet it remains unclear whether all agencies are consistently complying with these requirements. Incomplete or inconsistent reporting undermines transparency and limits the City Council’s ability to conduct meaningful oversight.

These concerns are further reinforced by public reporting. Media outlets, including Gothamist, Politico, the Associated Press, and The City, have documented multiple incidents in which city employees may have acted inconsistently with the city’s sanctuary laws. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that, despite the existence of Executive Order 13, gaps in implementation, training, and accountability persist across agencies.

Surveillance and Database Concerns

New York City’s sanctuary laws are intended to limit local involvement in federal immigration enforcement. However, the city’s extensive data collection and surveillance systems create parallel pathways through which sensitive information can be accessed, shared, or misused in ways that undermine those protections.

City agencies routinely collect and maintain large amounts of personal data through everyday operations, including benefits records, housing information through NYCHA, and law enforcement databases. At the same time, policing technologies—such as license plate readers, transit surveillance, and other monitoring tools—generate detailed records about New Yorkers’ movements, associations, and activities. These systems often contain inaccurate, incomplete, or unverified information, yet they can have significant consequences when accessed or relied upon by law enforcement or federal authorities.

When local agencies share sensitive information about individuals with ICE, such as immigration status, it can lead to the unjust targeting of vulnerable populations.

This Council should enact new and strengthen any existing policies that keep communities’ personal data private. By doing so, New York City can ensure that immigrant communities are not subject to unlawful surveillance or data-sharing practices. For example:

- minimize, as much as possible, the amount of data that is collected and stored by city agencies;
- avoid the retention, transmission, or storing of sensitive data such as immigration status;
- enact transparent policies on data sharing with federal agencies.

New York City’s sanctuary laws are intended to prevent local systems from being used to facilitate federal immigration enforcement. To uphold sanctuary protections, the city must address not only direct and limited cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, but also the underlying data systems that enable it.

Pass the NYC Trust Act (Int. 209-2026)

Brooklyn Defender Services supports the passage of the NYC Trust Act (Int. 209-2026), which would strengthen the enforceability of New York City’s existing detainer protections. As described earlier in our testimony, ICE has been able to rely on communication practices at DOC, information-sharing within Probation, and shifts in executive policy to facilitate civil immigration arrests despite the framework the Council established in 2014. Int. 209 responds to these concerns by creating a private right of action, allowing individuals to seek judicial review when city agencies engage in cooperation or communication with ICE that violates municipal law. This mechanism reinforces the requirement that city agencies adhere to the statutory limits on civil immigration enforcement, regardless of internal interpretations or external pressure.

By establishing a means of accountability, Int. 209 helps ensure that the protections set out by the Council are meaningful and that agencies cannot rely on informal communication channels

or executive directives to circumvent the judicial-warrant standard. We support its passage and view it as an important step in ensuring that city systems do not serve as conduits for civil immigration enforcement.

Conclusion

All New Yorkers benefit when our diverse communities can thrive. As this Council has always noted, immigrants, regardless of their status, are the backbone of our city, our culture and our economy. New York City has long made efforts to reassure our communities that the city welcomes and protects all New Yorkers, including its immigrant communities. We applaud our City Council's leadership in forging city policies and laws that center the protection of all New Yorkers. However, immigrant communities continue to face an enormous threat in an era of increased surveillance and immigration enforcement. The city can and should do more to ensure that residents are not unnecessarily targeted for detention or deportation because of some action or failure to act by the city.

The City Council has played a critical role in safeguarding New York City's immigrant community and established itself as a national leader in the creation and ongoing support of the NYIFUP program. We thank the New York City Council for its continued support of low-income immigrant New Yorkers. This support and the need for our services is more acute than ever. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Anya Mukarji-Connolly, Managing Director, Policy & Advocacy at amukarjiconnolly@bds.org.



Testimony

New York City Council Committee on Immigration

Hearing on: Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

Monday, March 9, 2026

Submitted by Director of the Day Laborers Program, Lucia Goyen

Immigrant and Refugee Services

Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York

Good afternoon, Council Chair Encarnacion and members of the New York City Council Committee on Immigration. I am Lucia Goyen, Director of the Day Laborers Program at Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York (CCCS). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding the work of Catholic Charities with immigrants and refugees in New York City.

INTRODUCTION

Catholic Charities is proud of our long tradition of welcoming New York's immigrants and refugees. Our services have a tremendous impact on immigrant communities across New York City. The scope and diversity of our services is exceptional.

- Catholic Charities is a leading provider of high-quality immigration legal services to adults and children. Each year, Catholic Charities provides legal representation, consultations, and individualized pro se assistance to more than 7,500 documented and undocumented immigrants, many of whom are in removal proceedings in immigration court. Catholic Charities represents more than 2,500 adults, unaccompanied children, and families in immigration cases.
- Catholic Charities operates two immigration legal information hotlines, including New York City's MOIA Immigration Legal Support Hotline and the New York State Office for New Americans (ONA) Hotline, which combined serve more than 35,000 people annually. In response to the current atmosphere of fear and heightened enforcement, Catholic Charities Community Services (CCCS), in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) recently expanded the hours of the Hotline to one Saturday



per month and two evenings each week to ensure that more immigrants can safely access trusted legal information outside traditional business hours. We have also worked with MOIA to expand services for rapid response calls and have partnered with the City Council to expand operations and outreach through ASLAN funding. Additionally, in partnership with ONA, we have recently expanded the hours of the ONA Hotline to Saturdays, Sundays, and weekday mornings. These expansions are to ensure broader access, recognizing that some immigrants prefer to access reliable legal information and referrals outside of traditional business hours. The hotline expansions are a critical response to widespread fear and misinformation and help restore trust in systems meant to protect New Yorkers.

- Catholic Charities' Day Laborer programs focus on job safety for day laborers, trainings, employment support and wage theft protection advocacy for more than 2,000 day laborers and their families each year. Our Bronx-based office is in Mott Haven (District 8.)
- Catholic Charities provides English language instruction at all learning levels as well as citizenship preparation to more than 1,000 learners per year.
- Catholic Charities is one of the five official refugee resettlement providers serving New York City. Catholic Charities welcomes and integrates as many as 2,300 asylees, humanitarian migrants, trafficking survivors and refugees per year – providing intensive case management, workforce development, education and health services.

OUR WORK AND NEEDS TODAY

Our work across many different communities and service areas for immigrants gives us a deep understanding of the current challenges and needs of those we serve. Immigrants in New York City face mounting challenges on multiple fronts. Fear and uncertainty have spread across the City as aggressive and punitive immigration enforcement actions destabilize daily life. The increasing use of detention and deportation result in loss of liberty, loss of livelihood, family separation, lack of access to adequate medical care, spiritual and emotional distress, and, often, deportation to an unsafe location to face possible torture or persecution. Watching the federal government detain, assault, and even kill our neighbors has increased distrust of government services among the diverse New York immigrant communities we serve, despite the City's strong sanctuary laws.

For good reason, many immigrants and their families are frightened to leave their homes, complete their daily routines, and utilize City services that New Yorkers rely upon and are



entitled to. While working with immigrant communities, Catholic Charities staff often notice that fear of interacting with government authorities can prevent families from sending children to school, accessing healthcare, seeking mental health support, and even calling 911 to report crimes or for emergency assistance. Without access to essential services, immigrant New Yorkers are more vulnerable to violence, hunger, homelessness, illness and other threats that City services are designed to address.

We have heard directly from healthcare professionals about the consequences of this fear. An emergency room doctor at Elmhurst Hospital Center recently relayed the story of a man who had been violently attacked and stabbed. Out of fear of being questioned about his immigration status, he waited three days before seeking medical care for his wounds. By the time he arrived at the hospital, his condition had worsened significantly. The physician expressed dismay that fear of immigration enforcement is now preventing individuals from seeking emergency medical treatment—even in life-threatening situations. This story is not isolated; it reflects a broader and dangerous chilling effect on access to healthcare.

Many of the day laborers we serve have withdrawn or are unwilling to bring forward their wage theft claims and worker rights violations for fear of retribution by employers. When employers are allowed to violate worker rights with impunity, all workers suffer. We have also heard from fearful employers who are afraid to offer work even to immigrants with valid work permits, due to fear of loss of status, immigration enforcement, and confusion about who has a right to work.

Additionally, we have seen a reduction in enrollment for critical safety trainings for workers on construction sites due to fear. This leaves workers vulnerable to serious injuries and even death. In our regular visits to the *paradas* (stops where day laborers wait for work), we have seen workers nervously hiding between cars to avoid being seen by immigration enforcement. We have seen wild fluctuations in the number of workers at these locations, and many have no alternative places in which to find work, which causes them and their families to worry about what they will eat that day. We have also heard reports of workers given fake job prospects and when they arrive at the location, they are arrested by immigration enforcement.

Immigrants are also expressing fear to come in seeking legal assistance during our clinics, as they fear apprehension. We have been able to serve many people remotely to assuage this fear. Many clients are also extremely hesitant to go to Immigration Court to continue their cases, for fear of apprehension. We have all seen immigrants diligently following the legal process as well as elected officials and family members systematically arrested and detained at 26 Federal Plaza.

New York City's sanctuary protections are not designed to completely prevent federal



immigration enforcement in NYC. However, they are critical to engendering trust in City services, officials, and local law enforcement. These policies can help prevent the breakdown of service provision systems, criminal justice, community safe-keeping, education, and medical treatment. Preventing federal immigration enforcement officers from entering NYC buildings and property without proper cause means that immigrants can feel safe taking their children to school and attending appointments with City providers. Preventing City agencies from sharing personal data and information with federal immigration enforcement means that all New Yorkers can feel safer relying upon City-based supports for their mental, physical, and spiritual health and access to essential resources. Prohibiting collaboration between local law enforcement and ICE in most circumstances allows the local criminal justice system to function autonomously, uphold due process and the rule of law, and keep New Yorkers safe. When immigrant families feel safe coming forward when victimized, or if they witness a crime, our communities are safer overall. For these reasons, and many more, CCCS firmly supports the sanctuary city protections in NYC and the establishment of clear and public communications about their scope. These protections are critical to the wellbeing of our immigrant neighbors and New York City communities.

We are grateful to New York City for being a leader in providing protections for all New Yorkers through robust laws and policies, and ensuring all New Yorkers can access services and contribute fully to their communities and the economic life of the City.

We urge the City Council to:

- **Maintain, communicate, and enforce present Sanctuary City protections for immigrants and hold officials to account.**
- **Ensure there is adequate training for all staff at the various NYC agencies and buildings to understand what the laws are and what to do if ICE comes to the door.**
- **Pass Int 0055-2026, which would require signage to be developed and posted at City agencies to clearly describe legal protections and inform individuals of the rights they may invoke when interacting with federal immigration authorities.**

Please consider Catholic Charities as a resource and partner as we navigate these challenges together.



New York City Council Committee on Immigration Hearing

Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

Testimony of Juan Diaz

Policy Manager

Jdiaz@childrensdefense.org

March 9, 2026

Children’s Defense Fund – New York (CDF-NY) thanks Chair Encarnacion and members of the New York City Council Committee on Immigration for holding today’s oversight hearing on Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities.

About the Children’s Defense Fund

Children’s Defense Fund (CDF) is the only national, multi-issue advocacy organization working at the intersection of child well-being and racial justice by wielding the moral authority of programmatic proximity and community organizing to inform public policy. CDF serves and advocates for the largest, most diverse generation in America: the 74 million children and youth under the age of 18 and 30 million young adults under the age of 25, with particular attention to those living in poverty and communities of color. We partner with policymakers, aligned organizations, and funders to serve children, youth, and young adults. As the New York State office of the Children’s Defense Fund, we focus our statewide movement-building and policy work on economic mobility, health equity, child welfare, youth justice, and racial justice/immigrant rights.

Background of Immigrant Families in New York City

New York City is home to 3.1 million immigrants, which represents nearly 38 percent of the population.¹ Moreover, over half of New York City 1.7 million children have at least one immigrant parent.² Immigrant and mixed-status families’ contributions are essential to the city’s socio-economic fabric. These families are experiencing fear and uncertainty due to the evolving federal enforcement and eligibility modifications to access essential programs and services. Partner organizations from across the city have shared today that immigrant and mixed-status families are missing essential services that their children qualify for and are entitled.

Call to Action

Throughout New York City’s history, immigrants have been welcomed and supported. As such, we urge the City Council to work with the mayor to provide legal assistance and funding support for programs and services that uplift immigrant and mixed status families.

CDF-NY would like to highlight recommendations that have broad support from advocacy partners:

- We are grateful for the \$55 million allocation for legal immigration assistance in last year’s executive budget. However, the urgent need for immigration legal assistance calls for a significant increase.

¹ See: “Data Briefing: A Portrait of Immigrant New Yorkers”. Center for Migration Studies. November 14, 2025. [Data Briefing: New York City Immigrants](#)

² See: “Who Are New York City’s Children”. Citizen’s Committee for Children on New York. [1.-Who-are-NYC-Children.pdf](#)

- Ensure the immigrant families have access to universal free or affordable childcare and that the childcare workforce which has a large immigrant presence, its compensated accordingly.
- We call on the City Council to work with the Mayor’s Office to continue investing in [Open Arms](#), a program that supports newly arrived asylum-seeking families.
- Support the expansion of CityFHEPS housing vouchers, which will help reduce the shelter population and improve housing insecurity, especially among children.
- Invest in housing assistance services by increasing funding for Homebase. This homelessness prevention program assists mixed-status families throughout the city with rental assistance, housing voucher services, and referrals to supporting programs. The funding for this program has been flat for several years.

Additionally, CDF-NY supports:

- [Introduction 55](#) (Avilés): A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to signage describing certain constitutional and legal protections.
- [Introduction 261](#) (Krishnan): A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to prohibiting the city of New York from contracting with entities engaged in immigration enforcement

It is also imperative for The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), to foster collaboration across city agencies, to ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, language and cultural backgrounds, have access to essential services and an opportunity to thrive.

Lastly, as the New York State Legislature is currently discussing the FY 2027 budget, we ask the City Council Immigration Committee to support the following legislation that would provide a pathway to fulfill their full potential to millions of New York City children and youth:

- [Access to Representation Act](#), A270 (Cruz), which ensures a right to counsel for all immigrants facing deportation in New York and provides stable funding for immigration legal services.
- [New York for All](#), S2235A (Gounardes) / A3506 (Reyes). New York for All would limit state and local government agencies from conducting immigration enforcement and colluding with Federal immigration enforcement agencies.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and look forward to collaborating to improve the overall well-being of New York’s children and youth.



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*Empowering young people
through legal repre-
sentation and support.*

Good morning. I would like to express my gratitude to the Committee on Immigration for holding this important meeting and for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

I am Katia Skoko, and I am a Youth Guardian Paralegal at The Children's Law Center ("CLC"), a non-profit law firm that has represented over 185,000 children in child protective proceedings in the Family Courts and the Integrated Domestic Violence Parts of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, since 1997. Through our work in the courtroom and the community, we empower young people, reduce the harms of family dissolution and court involvement, and promote well-being and equity. We strive to provide children and young people with a space within legal proceedings where they can have a voice and meaningfully participate in decisions that have a profound impact on their lives.

I appear before you today to say that CLC supports the decision to sign both Introduction No. 55 (Int. 55) and Introduction No. 261 (Int. 261), in relation to developing multilingual signage that clearly describes constitutional and legal protections for immigrants, as well as prohibiting the City of New York from contracting with entities engaged in immigration enforcement. Our opinions are based on experience in representing New York City's children and youth under the age of 21 who are seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status ("SIJS") in the United States.

As you are probably aware, the SIJS designation was created to provide an avenue to obtain lawful immigration status for certain undocumented children in foster care or guardianship situations, where one or both of a child's parents are unable to provide for that child's care or protection. For children and youth who have experienced what no child or young person should, SIJS is a lifeline, an opportunity to live in a safe and supportive environment they should have always had. A youth in New York City who wishes to apply for immigration relief from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service ("USCIS") via this route, and their guardian, first must seek preliminary determinations from the Family Court. In other words, obtaining an order from the Family Court is the crucial and necessary first step toward achieving lawful immigration status in this country.

The increase in court arrests is causing erosion of trust in institutions that are meant to protect immigrants. During preparation for hearings, our clients' guardians are reluctant to go into courts and complete the necessary procedures, such as criminal background checks and fingerprinting, out of fear that they will encounter ICE agents waiting for them at the court. This causes unnecessary delays in processes that should be children and young people's pathways to

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long-awaited safety and justice. Promoting awareness of constitutional rights and how to respond in encounters with immigration officers, including through adopting Int. 55, can help reduce the widespread fear and misinformation that is negatively impacting SIJS processes for children and youth. We urge the Council to ensure that all signage is age-sensitive and accessible to children and youth with disabilities.

Passing Int. 261 can send a strong message that the increase in immigration enforcement is not an opportunity for financial gain, but an opportunity for NYC to defend its status as a sanctuary city.

If NYC is to be a sanctuary city, we must do everything we can to protect the immigrant communities here. One way to do that is by ensuring access to free legal resources for become documented in the United States. To accomplish that, with generous funding from the New York City's Immigration Council, CLC launched a dedicated Youth Guardianship Project. We now have a specialized team consisting of one full-time attorney and two paralegals, supplemented by two additional attorneys providing part-time support to meet demand. In less than six months, the attorneys have represented more than 140 children and young people in Family Court with a 100% approval rate.

Without guardianship approvals, these 140 children and young people would have remained in unstable and precarious circumstances, facing the constant stress of undocumented status, limited access to education and healthcare, and heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuse at home or in the workplace. Guardianship approvals, followed by applications for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), allow these young people to begin building futures in which they can safely learn, work, and pursue their dreams under the care of a trusted guardian.

One of those young people is Mina, a minor from Ghana (name has been changed). When her father passed away, her mother re-married a man who started abusing Mina. He would beat both Mina and her mother, he threatened to marry Mina off to an older man and forced her to undergo a painful procedure called Female Genital Mutilation, leaving Mina with scars for life. With no one to protect her, at only 17, Mina escaped the hostile home environment and undertook a perilous journey to New York City in search of safety.

Today, her life looks very different. She is enrolled in school, receives medical and psychological support, and is under the care of a trusted guardian who supports her emotionally and financially. He offers her guidance and resources as she rebuilds her confidence. Mina dreams of finishing school and hopes to contribute back to the city that gave her a new home.

Every day, CLC represents young people who, despite profound trauma, show extraordinary resilience and a deep commitment to building meaningful futures in New York City. If given the opportunity, these young people can fulfill their dreams of becoming artists, engineers, doctors, chefs, and responsible New Yorkers. Continued investment from the City Council and legal support from CLC are essential to help them reach that point.

For every child and young person we represent, CLC provides high-quality, holistic SIJS legal services. This includes fact-gathering, in-depth interviews with youth and guardians, drafting and filing all required court documents, preparing clients for hearings, and ensuring they feel informed, supported, and empowered throughout the process. When needed, our social workers provide therapeutic support to help clients process trauma and connect families to essential resources such as food, clothing, and medical care.

We are aware that determination for funding extensions is not made by this administrative body, but we ask this body to advocate for immigrant children and youth and promote the importance of accessible legal representation in maintaining a vibrant, welcoming community in New York City. We hope that we can rely on your continued support in funding this work at a critical time.

While CLC has expanded capacity in our Brooklyn and Queens offices to accept SIJS and guardianship cases, SIJS applications continue to rise citywide. CLC is deeply grateful for the City Council's continued commitment to protecting immigrant children and ensuring they have access to the legal representation they deserve.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Council's decision-making on important matters and to highlight CLC's advocacy with and for immigrant children and youth.

Common Cause New York

Oral Testimony before the New York City Council
Committee on Immigration
March 9, 2026

Good morning, Chair Encarnación and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Samantha Sanchez, and I serve as the Policy Manager at Common Cause New York. Common Cause is a nonpartisan watchdog organization dedicated to strengthening democracy, protecting constitutional rights, and ensuring government accountability.

We appreciate the Council for holding this oversight hearing and for considering Introduction 55 and Introduction 261 at a time when immigrant communities in New York City are facing heightened fear and uncertainty due to increased federal immigration enforcement activities.

New York City's sanctuary laws exist for a fundamental reason: local government should serve its residents, not function as an extension of federal immigration enforcement. When residents fear that accessing services, entering government buildings, or interacting with city agencies could expose them to immigration enforcement, trust in government deteriorates. That erosion of trust discourages people from seeking services, reporting crimes, or engaging with public institutions, ultimately undermining public safety and effective governance.

Introduction 55 is an important measure for transparency and accountability. By requiring signage explaining constitutional protections, this legislation helps clarify the legal boundaries governing access to city facilities.

Ensuring that city residents understand their rights is critical. Without proper legal authorization, such as a judicial warrant, federal immigration authorities do not have the authority to enter city facilities. Clear signage can help prevent unlawful entry and ensure that both city employees and members of the public understand their rights.

Importantly, the need for this clarity is not hypothetical. Recent investigations have documented incidents in which city employees allowed federal immigration officers into shelters or shared information with federal authorities without verifying proper legal authorization. These incidents demonstrate that passing sanctuary laws alone is not enough. City agencies must be properly trained and held accountable for implementing them. We believe that Intro 55 is an important first step to protecting City properties from federal incursion. We note that cities like San Francisco and Denver have adopted measures which bar federal enforcement from any city property.

Introduction 261 addresses another important gap. A city that has committed itself to sanctuary protections should not use taxpayer dollars to contract with entities engaged in immigration enforcement activities. Public procurement decisions should align with the City's legal commitments and policy priorities. Aligning contracting practices with sanctuary policies strengthens the credibility of these protections and ensures that public funds are not used in ways that undermine the City's own laws.

Legislation alone won't solve these challenges. Effective sanctuary protections require clear agency protocols, proper training for city employees, and strong oversight for compliance.

New York City has been a leader in protecting immigrant communities, but real leadership goes beyond laws; it demands effective implementation. Sanctuary protections must be clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and backed by robust accountability to ensure New Yorkers trust their government to protect their rights.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Common Cause New York

Written Testimony before the New York City Council
Committee on Immigration

March 9, 2026

Re: Oversight Hearing: Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

Chair Encarnación and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on sanctuary protections for immigrant communities. My name is Samantha Sanchez, and I serve as the Policy Manager at Common Cause New York. Our organization is a nonpartisan watchdog dedicated to strengthening democracy, protecting constitutional rights, and ensuring government accountability. We appreciate the chance to address the proposed legislation, Introductions 55 and 261.

Sanctuary protections are fundamentally about trust in government. When residents fear that accessing public services or entering government buildings could expose them to immigration enforcement, trust in local institutions erodes. This erosion of trust can discourage individuals from reporting crimes, seeking services, or participating in civic life, ultimately undermining public safety and effective governance. Given the expansion of federal immigration enforcement and the heightened uncertainty facing immigrant communities, maintaining clear and consistent sanctuary protections is essential.

Introduction 55 - Signage on Constitutional Protections

Common Cause New York supports Introduction 55, which would require the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to develop signage explaining key legal protections and identifying examples of non-public areas on city property. As highlighted in Committee Report 3926, this legislation promotes transparency and clarity regarding individuals' rights when interacting with federal immigration authorities. We see Intro 55 as an important first step in informing members of the public of their rights when confronted with aggressive and often lawless federal agents. Intro. 55 takes a cautious approach, relying upon the distinction between public and non-public areas of city property. Clear signage identifying these boundaries can help prevent unlawful entry into restricted spaces and ensure that both city employees and residents understand their rights and obligations.

Furthermore, the need for greater clarity and guidance is supported by recent investigations into potential violations of the City's sanctuary policies. These investigations have documented incidents in which city employees allowed federal immigration officers into non-public areas of shelters or shared information with federal authorities without verifying proper legal authorization. These findings underscore the importance of ensuring that city staff receive clear guidance and training regarding the City's sanctuary laws and that agencies are held accountable when those protections are violated.

While signage is an important step, effective implementation will require additional measures, including:

- Mandatory training for city employees on sanctuary laws and their interactions with federal immigration authorities
- Clear operational protocols for responding to requests from federal immigration agencies
- Compliance monitoring and reporting to ensure that agencies consistently implement these protections.

We strongly encourage the City Council to take further action by following the example set by cities like San Francisco¹ and Denver², which have recently established “ICE Free Zones.” These policies prohibit Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from operating on city property, protecting access to public services, and preventing disruptions to city operations. New York City has clear authority to control access to its own facilities and should exercise that authority to safeguard its residents.

Introduction 261: Contracting Restrictions On Any City Property

Common Cause New York supports Introduction 261, which would prohibit the City from entering into contracts with entities involved in immigration enforcement activities. Committee Report 3926 highlights that public procurement policies should align with the City’s legal commitments and policy priorities. Allowing the City to contract with organizations engaged in immigration enforcement could undermine sanctuary protections and create inconsistencies between the City’s laws and its spending decisions.

Aligning procurement practices with sanctuary policies enhances the credibility and integrity of these protections and ensures that public funds are not used in ways that undermine the City’s own laws. To further improve this legislation, the Council may want to consider:

- **Transparency Requirements:** Establishing how agencies evaluate compliance with the contracting restrictions.
- **Clear Definitions:** Defining terms to prevent indirect contracting arrangements that could bypass the law.
- **Oversight Reporting:** Implementing mechanisms to ensure consistent enforcement across agencies.

The Importance of Implementation and Oversight

1

<https://abc7news.com/post/ice-free-zones-san-francisco-supervisors-vote-prohibit-federal-immigration-enforcement-city-property/18649321/>

2

[https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/local-politics/denver-mayor-executive-order-ban-ice-city-property/73-3318f468-16b2-4f1e-8b6b-678c60b2efc0?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook_9NEWS_\(KUSA\)](https://www.9news.com/article/news/local/local-politics/denver-mayor-executive-order-ban-ice-city-property/73-3318f468-16b2-4f1e-8b6b-678c60b2efc0?utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook_9NEWS_(KUSA))

New York City has enacted numerous laws aimed at protecting immigrant communities and limiting cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. However, documented gaps in implementation, such as improper information sharing and unauthorized access to non-public city facilities, demonstrate that merely passing laws is insufficient. Effective sanctuary protections require consistent training, clear guidance, and strong oversight to ensure compliance with these policies.

Conclusion

New York City has long been a national leader in protecting immigrant communities. Introduction 55 and Introduction 261 are significant steps toward fortifying sanctuary protections by enhancing transparency, clarifying constitutional rights, and ensuring that city procurement policies align with sanctuary laws. However, these protections will be effective only if they are consistently implemented and supported by robust oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Sanctuary protections cannot exist only on paper. They must be clearly communicated, consistently executed, and rigorously enforced across city agencies so that New Yorkers can trust that their government is upholding the law and protecting the rights of all residents.

Respectfully submitted,
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Council of Peoples Organization

To: Committee on Immigration (the “Committee”), New York City Council (the “Council”)

From: Council of Peoples Organization (“COPO”)

Re: Int 0055-2026 (“Signage describing certain constitutional and legal protections.”) and Int 0261-2026 (“Prohibiting the city of New York from contracting with entities engaged in immigration enforcement.”) — Written submission of testimony to the Committee, an abridged version of which is being presented orally to the Committee on March 9, 2026, by Ramin Seddiq, Esq., Staff Attorney at COPO.

Date: March 9, 2026

Madam Chair, members of the Committee, good morning.

My name is Ramin Seddiq. I am a Staff Attorney at Council of Peoples Organization, also known by the acronym COPO.

I appear today on behalf of COPO, which is a non-profit organization that serves low-income immigrant families, older adults, youth, and others across New York City and endows them to reach their full potential as productive and healthy members of the community. Established in 2002, COPO serves 65,000 families and 300,000 individuals annually in New York City by providing free mental health services, older adult services, an emergency food pantry, immigration legal services, a halal “Meals on Wheels” program, and more. COPO’s CEO and founder, Mohammad Razvi, is a tireless, dedicated, and intrepid leader and advocate for immigrant and minority rights. COPO operates under the simple yet potent principle of “people helping people.”

As a preliminary matter, I’d like to express my gratitude and appreciation to our partners from the Rapid Immigration Support and Empowerment (RISE) Network—a network of nearly twenty Asian-led and Asian-serving organizations providing immigration case management and legal services support to New Yorkers.

Madam Chair, COPO supports Int 0055-2026 (“Introduction 55”) for the following reasons:

First, the bill enhances constitutional awareness and serves a critical due process function. Signage that explicitly and clearly lists Fourth Amendment rights empowers individuals to understand when a judicial warrant is required before federal agents may access non-public spaces. Under the Fifth Amendment, all persons, regardless of status, have the right to remain silent. Providing this information in plain language would ensure that “due process” is a reality rather than an abstract concept.

Second, the bill contributes to operational transparency. By mandating the development and posting of standardized signage identifying "nonpublic areas" of city property, the bill provides clear boundaries for both the public and city staff, reducing the risk of accidental or coerced unauthorized cooperation with federal enforcement, and ensuring that the "sanctuary" protections already codified in New York City law are not just theoretical, but are known and accessible to those they protect.

Third, the bill promotes administrative consistency and combats misinformation. In a period of heightened enforcement and shifting federal policies, official city-sanctioned signage would provide reliable guidance to New Yorkers, ensure messaging consistency, and reduce community fear that prevents access to essential services. Furthermore, the bill builds on existing "Know Your Rights" frameworks, such as the Workers' Bill of Rights,¹ ensuring that constitutional protections are as visible as labor protections in the public square.

Fourth, the bill delivers language justice. By requiring translations into "designated citywide languages" and "temporary languages," the bill ensures that New York's diverse immigrant population—many of whom are most vulnerable to exploitation and the current alarming trends—can benefit from the signage protocol.

Fifth and finally, Introduction 55 is a common-sense measure that requires no new substantive legal powers. It simply ensures that the laws this Council has already passed are effectively communicated, transforming the Administrative Code from a mere letter into a shield for New Yorkers. Stated differently, by developing and posting clear, multilingual signage, Introduction 55 bridges the gap between complex legal code and the public's need for immediate, actionable information during interactions with federal authorities.

Madam Chair, COPO also supports Introduction 0261-2026 ("Introduction 261") and does so for the following reasons:

First, as a "market participant," New York City has the legal right to decide which entities it will—and will not—conduct business with. This bill does not regulate federal immigration law; rather, it dictates the use of the City's own proprietary resources.

Second, the Council has the authority to ensure that municipal assets, personnel, and services are used in a manner consistent with the City's values and the welfare of its residents, rather than subsidizing federal enforcement actions that may run counter to those values and interests.

Third, engaging with immigration enforcement in the manner prohibited by Introduction 261 may create a "chilling effect" that erodes public trust and deters immigrant New Yorkers from accessing essential City services, reporting crimes, or cooperating with local law enforcement.

¹ Local Law 161 of 2023 requires employers in New York City to give their employees information about their rights at work. See: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dca/workers/worker-rights.page>

We at COPO have witnessed firsthand the terror² instilled in the hearts of our neighbors, friends, and fellow New Yorkers as a result of the recent aggressive, destabilizing, and unnerving immigration enforcement tactics and policies. Introductions 55 and 261 build upon New York City's established “sanctuary” policies, values, and traditions by reducing the informational asymmetry between New Yorkers and immigration enforcement agencies, and by addressing the financial and contractual side of inter-agency cooperation. We urge the Committee to recommend, and the Council to pass, Introductions 55 and 261. Thank you.

Ramin Seddiq, Esq.
Staff Attorney
Council of Peoples Organization (COPO)
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² COPO’s executive office reports that the organization has “already seen a twenty percent drop in in-person attendance, including families who once relied on our Friday food pantry. This drop does not reflect a decrease in need—rather, it reflects the growing fear many families feel simply trying to access support. In many cases, families now send a friend, neighbor, or relative to pick up food on their behalf because they are too afraid to come themselves. Despite these challenges, COPO remains committed to ensuring that immigrant families can access the services and support they need to live with safety, dignity, and stability.”



Date: March 9, 2026
From: Betty Kolod, MD, MPH, Member of Health Justice for New York
To: NYC City Council - Committee on Immigration
Subject: In support of Intros Intros 55 and 261, with amendments

Good morning, I'm Dr. Betty Kolod, a primary care physician in East Harlem and member of HJ4NY. I am speaking in support of Intro 261.

To protect the safety and privacy of patients and staff in health care facilities, the city must cancel—and never initiate—contracts with immigration enforcement entities. I am particularly troubled that New York City Health and Hospitals contracts with Palantir, known to be heavily involved in federal immigration enforcement.

My patient Carmen has liver cancer. Her devoted son takes her to her chemotherapy and to palliative care visits for the searing pain in her abdomen. Her son recently discovered that Carmen does not have legal status, a fact that I was unaware of because all low income persons over 65 are eligible for Medicaid in NY regardless of immigration status, and readily receive care at academic medical centers that younger, often uninsured immigrants cannot. Now that this understanding has emerged, Carmen has been missing appointments, is less open about discussing her symptoms, and decided not to pursue a cure to her cancer. She is likely fearful of showing up for care not knowing whether her protected health information, including immigration status, will be unlawfully shared with federal agencies directly or via private entities.

Intro 261 could be made stronger. Public health care facilities like Health and Hospitals and its Gotham affiliates, should be named explicitly. The bill language should also be explicit that the city shall not procure goods or services from contracted entities engaged in immigration enforcement. Language should be added that existing contracts will be reviewed and, if in violation of this Intro, cancelled at the earliest opportunity allowed by the contract terms and that all existing contracts will be reviewed prior to renewal for violations of this Intro, in which case they should not be renewed. Additional legislation should require public institutions to create clear policies and procedures for interactions with federal immigration agents in healthcare facilities.

We hope that the passage of Intro 261 will be one step in protecting health workers and patients, from unlawful actions by federal immigration enforcement. Thank you.

*Betty Kolod, MD, MPH
Member of Health Justice for New York
Board Chair, Physicians for a National Health Program-NY Metro Chapter*



**HEALTH JUSTICE
FOR NEW YORK**

Date: March 9, 2026
From: Jasmeet Sandhu, MD,
Member of Health Justice for New York
Doctors Council Union
To: NYC City Council - Committee on Immigration
Subject: In support of Intros 55 and 261, with amendments

For Intro 55, we believe signage is important, public health care facilities should be explicitly included, and existing worker and tenant rights signage should be expanded so that the information is widely distributed in public and private settings.

Our members work in health care facilities across the city, including public hospitals that have had federal immigration agents on the premises. These events, including detained people brought in by agents who injured them, have sown fear among patients and staff because we still lack clear policies and procedures in our facilities, and the signage and information to communicate these policies and procedures. We support Intro 55, including across all public health care facilities.

At Elmhurst hospital, our facility is proud of our diverse staff, many who are immigrants. Elmhurst is also an academic hospital, whose trainees including medical students on visas. Members are asking me what areas require a warrant for agents to enter? What is a valid warrant? It is vital for us to make sure our staff and patients know what areas are public vs private, protecting our sick patients and their privacy. Members have voiced clear signage would avoid confusion and prepare staff to follow the appropriate protocol for that designated area.

The presence of ICE agents in our facilities does impact on the care we can provide. Patients are delaying care, ending up in critical condition because they are worried that they may encounter an agent. Family members are too afraid to visit a sick loved one for the same reason. HJ4NY has developed comprehensive guidelines for healthcare facilities, we urge the committee to review them. We also believe companion legislation is necessary to create more specific policies and procedures that are reflected in signage.

Jasmeet Sandhu, MD
Health Justice for NY
Doctors Council



Date: March 9, 2026
From: Shelley English, MA, MA, LMHC
Member of Health Justice for New York
To: NYC City Council - Committee on Immigration
Subject: In support of Intros 55 and 261, with amendments

My name is Shelley English. I am here with other members of Health Justice for New York in support of intros 55 and 261 with amendments. I am the daughter of an immigrant. I'm a former city employee and I currently serve as a New York State Licensed Mental Health Counselor.

A doctor in France and a doctor in Italy in the early 1940s prevented the Gestapo from arresting and deporting my grandmother and mother to their deaths. Because of these two doctors, I am here today helping neighbors and patients I care for and care about in the city I call home. I am honored to be surrounded by today's healers and to speak on behalf of Health Justice for New York.

Immigrants and refugees in New York City and our nation are a vital and irreplaceable part of our history, our communities, and our economy. Immigrants create economic opportunity for those of us born within and outside the United States. Immigrants pay more in taxes than received in services, including health care. Immigrants are essential workers, from building construction to food delivery to child care. Immigrants are a cornerstone of health workers, including doctors, nurses, hospital aides, home care attendants, and facility maintenance workers. Under the guise of immigration enforcement, more and more people are being lawlessly snatched off the street by anonymous armed bullies in masks, and brought injured to our emergency departments. Our family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors are increasingly fearful as patients or workers traveling to or spending time at health care facilities. As a trauma specialist who conducts psychological evaluations for immigrants seeking asylum, I am an eyewitness to the fear and anxiety of patients afraid that ICE agents might show up at any time, anywhere, to handcuff them and take them away to deportation centers.

We urge that federal immigration enforcement agents and agencies stay out of all health care facilities, except for limited access in narrow circumstances with verified legal documents. All patients and health workers deserve privacy and safety in health care, including physical and mental safety and data protections. When federal immigration agents are present in health care facilities, they interfere with the privacy, safety and care for all patients and staff.

Shelley English, MA, MA, LMHC
Member of Health Justice for New York



HEALTH JUSTICE FOR NEW YORK

Date: March 9, 2026
From: Steven B. Auerbach, MD, MPH, FAAP
Capt/06 | Senior Medical Epidemiologist, U.S. Public Health Service (retired)
Co-lead, Immigration Working Group, Health Justice for NY
To: NYC City Council - Committee on Immigration
Subject: In support of Intros Intros 55 and 261, with amendments

We are healthcare workers speaking for the over 1000 members of the Health Justice for New York coalition in support of Intros 55 and 261, with a few strongly urged amendments. Health Justice for New York has grown out of multiple organizations including the New York Doctors Coalition founded in 2016. We are an informal collective of health workers and advocates providing expertise drawn from our lived experience in solidarity with social justice movements.

There are several ways to make Intro 55 stronger:

- In section c, public health care facilities, namely Health and Hospitals and its Gotham affiliates, should be named explicitly as the department of education is named.
- In section d, outreach and education should be more widely disbursed, particularly in public libraries.
- Intro 55 can and should go further to include privately-owned entities to more fully protect health workers whether their employer is public or private and patients regardless of where they live.
- New York City departments of consumer worker and protection, commission on human rights, and the mayor's office of immigrant affairs should be directed to update the Workers' Bill of Rights to include rights of workers when interacting with federal immigration enforcement, including at health care facilities.
- New York City department of housing preservation and development should be directed to update required tenant signage to include rights of tenants when interacting with federal immigration enforcement.
- City agencies, including those previously named, small business services, and others involved in business and housing, should expand their technical assistance packages to include this information.

We urge this committee, alongside other appropriate city council committees and mayoral offices and agencies, working on immigrant and refugee protection, to continue actively engaging with health workers and advocates. This includes public entities such as Health and Hospitals and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, as well as private community health centers and voluntary hospitals and their affiliated facilities, and the numerous health worker labor and professional organizations, such as 1199, New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA), Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR) and the Doctors Council. Many of our colleagues are aligned and seeking legislative support to guide the institutions where we work or receive care. We ask that you bring all such stakeholders to the table, with the objective of keeping patients and staff safe from unlawful immigration enforcement.



Testimony: Esther Limb, Esq., Director of Immigration Practice Group
Hearing: New York City Council Committee on Immigration
Date: March 9, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the implementation of New York City's sanctuary local laws, the critical role of immigrant legal services, and the importance of ensuring that immigrant New Yorkers can safely access city services and courts. I am Esther Limb, the Director of the Immigration Practice at Her Justice, a nonprofit organization that has advocated with and for women and gender minorities living in poverty in New York City for more than 30 years. In 2025, Her Justice provided a range of legal help to more than 4,000 women and their children in our practice areas of family, matrimonial, and immigration law. Among the clients served, 92% are women of color and 85% are survivors of domestic violence. Three-fourths of our clients were born outside the U.S., coming from 103 countries across the world.

Her Justice provides direct representation and skilled advocacy in an arena that often fails to adequately serve the legal needs of the marginalized. In this moment of volatile change, as in ordinary times, legal services are essential services. Every day, our staff attorneys provide women with information about the legal remedies available to them and work with clients to weigh their options, develop strategies, and decide on the course that is right for them and their children. We are grateful for this committee's commitment to recognizing civil legal services are essential in New York. We hope this testimony underscores the **critical importance of civil legal services for immigrant women living in poverty in New York and for all New Yorkers**, and highlights the partnership we seek with the City to ensure immigrants have access to them.

Her Justice supports legislative efforts that strengthen the City's sanctuary framework and ensure that immigrant survivors can safely access services and protections. The following bills would further reinforce the City's commitment to protecting immigrant communities and supporting survivors of violence.

- **Int. 0055-2026 (Avilés) - Developing signage that describes certain constitutional and legal protections.** Clear communication of legal protections is essential to ensuring that New York City's sanctuary policies function as intended for immigrant communities. Introduction 55 would require the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), in consultation with the New York City Law Department, to develop plain-language, multilingual signage describing key legal protections under city law and outlining the rights individuals may invoke when interacting with federal immigration authorities. For immigrant survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence—who often must interact with courts, Family Justice Centers, social services agencies, and law enforcement to obtain safety and stability—clear information about their rights can reduce fear, counter misinformation, and help ensure they can safely access the services and legal protections they need.
- **Int. 0261-2026 (Krishnan) - Prohibiting the city of New York from contracting with immigration entities.** Introduction 261 would prohibit New York City from entering into contracts with entities engaged in immigration enforcement activities that penalize a person's presence in, entry into, or reentry into the United States. Maintaining clear boundaries between city services and federal immigration enforcement is critical for immigrant survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, whose abusers often weaponize immigration status as a tool of coercion and control. By reinforcing the integrity of the City's sanctuary framework, this



legislation would help ensure that survivors feel safe seeking help from city agencies, reporting abuse, and accessing the legal protections and services necessary to rebuild their lives.

I. Civil Legal Services are Critical for Immigrant Survivors of Violence

For 30 years, Her Justice has been committed to providing critical free legal services to undocumented immigrant women living in poverty. Her Justice recognizes that the demand for legal representation in New York far exceeds the capacity of legal services available. Through our unique pro bono first model, Her Justice pairs thousands of well-trained and resourced pro bono attorneys from the City's premiere law firms with women who have urgent legal needs. This pro bono first model helps fill the "civil justice gap" – the distance between the number of Americans who need civil legal assistance and the far few who receive it due to cost barriers and limited legal service resources. By ensuring that more women have lawyers by their side, we help make their voices heard and we begin to break down systemic barriers to accessing justice.

Our immigration practice provides free legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence, sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and other forms of gender-based violence as they seek to stabilize their immigration status in the United States. Last year our attorneys provided legal information, advice, and representation on 2,058 immigration matters, securing legal status for 802 clients and their children.

Yet most New York Family Court litigants are unrepresented, with the patchwork right-to-counsel laws providing this resource in only limited case types. They spend immeasurable hours, days and years moving through complicated litigations. From our years of experience representing women in the civil justice system, we know that the burden of economic instability due to stalled support or custody proceedings too often falls on people like our clients. This burden is even more onerous for our undocumented immigrant clients who are often disadvantaged waiting years for the historically under-funded immigration system to review their applications for legal status and employment authorization documentation (or work permits) which are critical for families' stability.

The City's Crucial Investment in Immigration Legal Services

New York City has demonstrated strong leadership in protecting immigrant survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence through its sanctuary policies and investments in legal services. **The Council's Immigrant Opportunities Initiative and the Immigration Legal Services for Survivors of Violence and Gender-Based Harm Initiative, are instrumental in ensuring that immigrant survivors can stabilize their status and rebuild their lives.** For survivors whose abusers exploit their immigration status as a means of coercion and control, access to specialized immigration legal services can be life-changing. Through this initiative, survivors can pursue immigration relief such as VAWA self-petitions, U visas, and T visas while also addressing family court and safety-related legal needs. Securing lawful status or work authorization allows survivors to obtain employment, secure housing, pursue custody and child support, and rebuild economic independence. Continued investment in this initiative strengthens both individual safety and the City's broader sanctuary framework by ensuring that immigrant survivors can meaningfully participate in legal processes and access the protections available to them under the law.



II. Sanctuary Protections Help Immigrant Survivors of Violence Access Legal Services and Relief

Her Justice policy and system reform approach

We believe that our client-centered services must also be paired with policy work to advance systemic reform while meeting individual needs, this is achieved through independent efforts and partnerships with peer organizations and coalitions. Our policy work is informed by the lived experiences of our clients, women and gender minorities living in poverty, whose livelihoods and well-being are often shaped by the civil justice system. Yet this system often remains invisible to those outside of it, making it all the more essential to elevate the need for reforms in this area for all who depend on it. Through this framework, we work to break down systemic barriers embedded in the civil justice system that reinforce and exacerbate economic, gender, and racial inequities.

Access to the Courts

In recent years, heightened immigration enforcement and increased U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity have created significant concern within immigrant communities. Many of our clients express uncertainty and fear about attending court proceedings, interacting with government offices, or accessing public services. For survivors of gender-based violence, these concerns can be especially pronounced. Survivors may worry that seeking help could expose them or their family members to immigration consequences, even when they are eligible for protections such as U visas, T visas, or VAWA relief. These fears can make it more difficult for survivors to safely engage with the systems designed to protect them, including the Family Courts, law enforcement, and other city agencies. Ensuring that immigrant survivors understand their rights and feel safe accessing these institutions is essential to advancing both survivor safety and public trust. New York City's sanctuary local laws and investments play a critical role in ensuring that immigrant survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence can safely seek help.

Work Authorization as a Pathway to Safety

We pair our legal services for undocumented survivors of gender-based violence with research and policy advocacy. Through our direct services work, we know that the ability to work legally in the U.S. with an employment authorization document makes a significant difference in the quality of life, safety, and stability of our clients and their children. In 2023, we released our policy research report, [*Stories from Immigrant Survivors of Gender-Based Violence: the Impact of Work Authorization*](#). The report is the culmination of a multi-year qualitative research project; we interviewed our immigrant clients about how delays in work authorization impacted their lives. The report presents findings about the benefits of legal work permits in terms of our clients' economic independence and freedom from abuse, housing stability, mental health and well-being. The research illustrates the strong connection between our clients having legal work authorization and their likelihood of seeking help from other systems, including the Family Courts and the civil justice system and law enforcement. The report also contains recommendations for reform, including enhancing and investing in immigration legal services. Her Justice measured the **impact of our legal services** in Fiscal Year 2025 and found that with \$6.8 million in funding from state and local government, donations, and private foundations, the immigration clients served will see increased wages resulting in a benefit of \$8.6 million— proving civil legal services matter.



III. Her Justice Is Expanding Outreach and Legal Education for Immigrant Survivors

Her Justice is actively responding to the current climate of heightened immigration enforcement and rapidly evolving federal immigration policies by expanding our outreach and education efforts to ensure that immigrant survivors understand their rights and know where they can safely seek help. Our staff regularly conduct “Know Your Rights” presentations and trainings for community-based organizations across New York City, providing survivors and frontline service providers with information about federal immigration protections, as well as the rights afforded to immigrant New Yorkers under the City’s sanctuary policies. These presentations are an important tool for countering misinformation and empowering survivors to access legal and social services without fear.

At the same time, our immigration attorneys are closely monitoring changes in federal immigration policy and enforcement practices to ensure that we can provide accurate, timely guidance to our clients and pro bono partners. Immigration law is complex and constantly evolving, particularly for humanitarian protections such as VAWA self-petitions, U visas, and T visas, which are critical pathways for survivors of abuse and trafficking. Our team tracks policy developments, consults with national immigration advocacy networks, and adapts our legal strategies to protect our clients’ safety and stability. Through this work, Her Justice seeks not only to provide direct legal assistance, but also to ensure that immigrant survivors and the organizations that support them have the information and tools necessary to navigate an increasingly complex and uncertain immigration landscape. By combining expert legal representation with proactive outreach and education, we help ensure survivors of violence can access justice and safety in New York City.

Thank you again for the opportunity to highlight Her Justice’s longstanding commitment to ensuring that immigrant survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence can safely access the legal protections and services they need. Through our pro bono first model, immigration legal services, and research-driven policy and advocacy efforts, we work to help survivors stabilize their status, secure safety for themselves and their families, and rebuild their lives. We thank the City Council for its continued leadership and investment in protecting immigrant communities, including through sanctuary policies and legal services for survivors. We look forward to continued collaboration and partnership with the Council, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, and community partners to strengthen access to justice and ensure that immigrant survivors across New York City can live free from violence and fear.

Respectfully,
Esther Limb Esq.
Immigration Practice Director
Her Justice
100 Broadway, 10th floor
New York, NY 10005

Thank you, Chair Elsie Encarnación, and members of the Committee on Immigration for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Stephanie Kuang, Deputy Director of the Social Services Division at Homecrest Community Services. Homecrest provides community-based social services to low-income, limited-English-proficient, AAPI older adults, families, and immigrants across four centers in Southern Brooklyn.

Today we are testifying alongside our partners at the Asian American Federation, specifically the Rapid Immigration Support and Empowerment (RISE) Network, a coalition of nearly 20 Asian-led and Asian-serving organizations that provide immigration and legal support to New Yorkers.

At Homecrest, we provide hands-on immigration case management. Our staff help immigrant clients complete green card renewal and naturalization applications, gather supporting documents, provide language support, follow up throughout the application process, and connect them with trusted legal partners when needed. For many limited-English-proficient older adults, this kind of support in overcoming administrative barriers can mean the difference between missing critical deadlines and successfully moving forward in the immigration process, maintaining their status, and building greater stability for themselves and their families. We also conduct multilingual outreach and tabling, including Know Your Rights education, to help community members understand their rights and protections in situations involving immigration enforcement and stay informed about changing immigration policies.

We thank the Committee on Immigration for its continued leadership in protecting immigrant New Yorkers. To sustain and strengthen this work, we recommend that the City Council:

1) First, expand investment in language-accessible legal services that include case management.

2) Second, ensure that local and state agencies fully comply with sanctuary laws.

We also support Introduction 55-2026, sponsored by Council Member Alexa Avilés, to require multilingual signs clearly outlining immigrants' constitutional rights.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with the Council to ensure that immigrant New Yorkers receive the protections and support they deserve.

TESTIMONIAL LETTER TO THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

Hon. Alexa Avilés, Chair

March 9, 2026

Thank you to Chair Avilés and the Committee on Immigration for the opportunity to provide this testimonial letter. On behalf of Immigrant Justice Corps, my name is Lauren Migliaccio. Thank you for continuing to uphold the city's longstanding tradition of welcoming and supporting our fellow immigrants- from those who have called our city home for many years to newcomers who, for unimaginable reasons, recently journeyed in search of peace and shelter in our neighborhoods.

Immigrant Justice Corps supports the New York City Council's proposed amendment to the New York City Administrative Code, in relation to signage describing certain constitutional and legal protections.

Immigrant Justice Corps (hereinafter "IJC") is the country's first and only legal fellowship program dedicated exclusively to meeting the need for high-quality legal assistance for immigrants fighting deportation and seeking a path to lawful status and citizenship. IJC's goal is for legal representation to lift immigrants out of poverty, by helping them understand their rights, attain lawful status and access to secure jobs, quality health care and life-changing educational opportunities. Inspired by the Katzmann Study Group on Immigrant Representation, IJC galvanizes the country's most talented law school and college graduates, places them with premier legal services providers and community-based organizations nationwide, leverages the latest technologies, offers in-depth and ongoing access to substantive as well as professional wellness

trainings, and fosters a culture of creative thinking that produces new strategies to reduce the justice gap for immigrant families, ensuring that immigration status is no longer a barrier to social and economic opportunity.

Now, in our twelfth year, IJC has trained and placed over 500 Fellows in support of our mission to increase both the quantity and quality of immigration legal services. While we are headquartered in New York City, our collective experience is national in scope, with fellows placed at immigration legal service providers in more than 30 states, and the District of Columbia. IJC is deeply committed to serving immigrant New Yorkers as we have forty-five IJC Alumni serving as staff attorneys and legal supervisors and over forty of our current Fellows placed with immigration legal service providers in New York City.

I. The pervasive violation of civil rights and liberties by Federal law enforcement is harming New Yorkers

Over the last year, we have seen deeply troubling trends in militarized federal civil immigration enforcement in cities and states across the United States. These incidents include the arrests and detention of United States citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, valid visa holders, and lawful asylum seekers. Masked agents have unleashed chemical irritants on bystanders and non-violent protestors during raids and other enforcement operations.¹ ICE officers have shot and killed United States citizens and immigrants alike, including Keith Porter Jr., Renee Nicole Good, Alex Pretti, Isaias Sanchez Barboza, and Ruben Ray Martinez.² The U.S. Supreme Court has given its blessing to racial profiling in the name of immigration enforcement.³ This systemic violence

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2026/01/20/us/protestors-tear-gas-pepper-balls>; <https://www.amny.com/news/ice-raid-brooklyn-pepper-sprayed-02242026/>

² <https://theweek.com/politics/ice-deaths-shootings-trump-second-term-cbp-dhs>

³ See, *Vasquez Perdomo v. Noem* (2025); see also <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/supreme-courts-decision-racial-profiling-immigration-raids/>

against immigrants and the communities who embrace them has created a noticeable chilling effect in community engagement.⁴ People are afraid to drop their children off to school, to go to the grocery store; to take a train to work. They are less likely to report crimes or seek access to needed city services. The ripple effects of this fear have far reaching impacts on the safety and security of all New Yorkers.

In the face of these unfortunate realities, New York City must ensure that New Yorkers are aware of the rights and protections provided to them by City Law.

II. Importance of awareness of legal protections and rights for all New Yorkers

New York City has always been cognizant of the needs of its vibrant but vulnerable immigrant population. Over the past decade, the Council has enacted a comprehensive statutory scheme regulating when and how City agencies may interact with federal immigration enforcement. These include, among others:

- Administrative Code § 4-210 (limitations on cooperation with civil immigration detainers and enforcement requests);
- Administrative Code § 10-178 (restrictions on the disclosure of immigration status information and protections for individuals accessing City services);
- Administrative Code § 21-977 (protections related to access to nonpublic areas of City property); and
- Administrative Code § 23-1202 (additional limitations on City resources and cooperation in immigration enforcement contexts).

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/07/opinion/queens-raids-immigration.html>

Taken together, these provisions operationalize New York City’s long-standing policy that local government resources should not be used to facilitate federal civil immigration enforcement except in narrow, legally defined circumstances, and that all residents, regardless of immigration status, must be able to access municipal services, attend school, seek medical care, and report crimes without fear of immigration consequences.

Yet the work of IJC Fellows on the ground makes clear that many immigrants—and City employees—are not fully aware of these legal protections.⁵ Fellows routinely hear from community members who are unsure of their rights when encountering federal immigration authorities and frontline workers who want clearer guidance on how to respond appropriately if federal agents appear at City facilities.

This legislation addresses that gap in a thoughtful and practical way. Signage is a simple but powerful tool that can reduce confusion, prevent unlawful entry into nonpublic areas, and provide reassurance to immigrant New Yorkers that the City stands by its laws. Posting this information in multiple languages is especially important in a city where nearly half of residents speak a language other than English at home. Plain-language explanations ensure that legal rights are understandable not just to attorneys, but to families navigating complex and often intimidating situations. Importantly, this bill also supports City workers. Clear signage and standardized language will help ensure consistency across agencies and reduce the burden on frontline staff to interpret complicated legal provisions in high-pressure situations. It will help prevent misunderstandings, protect City agencies from liability, and reinforce compliance with existing law.

⁵ Any fellow statements to include here?

At a time when immigrant communities face heightened fear and misinformation, the City must be proactive in affirming its legal framework. Transparency builds trust. When immigrant New Yorkers know their rights, they are more likely to seek health care, enroll their children in school, cooperate with law enforcement, and participate fully in civic life. That strengthens public safety and the well-being of our entire city. This bill ensures that existing protections are visible, understood, and implemented consistently. It operationalizes the Council's past work and reinforces New York City's longstanding commitment to being a welcoming city for immigrants.

III. Suggestions for Implementation

To strengthen implementation and accountability, the legislation would benefit from explicit compliance and reporting requirements. While the bill mandates the development and posting of multilingual signage, it does not currently include mechanisms to verify consistent execution across agencies. Requiring MOIA to submit periodic compliance reports to City Council, and authorizing audits or oversight where signage is missing or outdated, would help ensure that the amendment's protections are realized uniformly in practice rather than unevenly applied across city facilities.

The effectiveness of the signage mandate would also be enhanced by pairing public-facing materials with mandatory staff training. Signage alone cannot prevent rights violations if the city employees lack clarity on how to respond to federal immigration authorities or misunderstand the limits of permissible cooperation. Requiring MOIA in consultation with the Law Department, to develop standardized training for staff in covered facilities would reinforce the legal protections described on the signage and reduce the risk of inconsistent or unlawful agency conduct.

Finally, the legislation could be strengthened by expanding outreach and ensuring legal accuracy over time. Explicit authorization for MOIA to partner with trusted community-based

organizations would extend the reach of “Know your rights” information to immigrants who may avoid government buildings altogether. Additionally, requiring timely updates to signage following material changes in immigration law or enforcement policy would preserve the accuracy and credibility of the information provided, ensuring that the law remains responsive to evolving federal and local conditions

Notwithstanding our suggestions for further strengthening the amendment, we urge the Council to enact this bill and continue leading with clarity, transparency, and courage.

IV. Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this important issue and we greatly appreciate the City Council’s efforts to protect our immigrant communities. We welcome any questions from the panel.



**Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (KCS)
 Testimony to the New York City Council
 Committee on Immigration
 March 9, 2026**

Good morning, Chair Encarnación, and members of the Committee on Immigration. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

My name is Joyce Wong, the Immigration Program Coordinator at the Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY (KCS). Since 1973, KCS has served as a vital resource for immigrant New Yorkers, providing culturally and linguistically tailored services in public health, mental health, education, workforce development, and immigration legal services. We are also proud members of the RISE Network, a coalition of nearly 20 Asian-led organizations serving our city’s immigrant community.

Through our Immigration and Legal Services Department, we see firsthand how language barriers and misinformation dictate whether community members feel safe accessing public services:

- Many of our Asian American community members, particularly seniors, are hesitant to enter city buildings because they cannot distinguish between public and restricted areas
- In a time of heightened national enforcement, providing clear information regarding constitutional rights is not just helpful; it is a necessity for public safety.

To address these challenges, KCS supports the following measures:

- **Intro 055:** Provides essential transparency regarding the City's legal landscape. This bill establishes clear protocols that reduce the risk of unintended interactions with immigration enforcement.
- **Intro 261:** Ensures that public trust is the foundation of strengthening city-community relations. This bill maintains a clear boundary between city operations and immigration enforcement, allowing the City to manage its local programs without outside interference.

HEADQUARTERS
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In closing, KCS and the RISE Network are vital to the City's service network. Our cultural and language expertise ensures that public resources reach our communities effectively. We look forward to continuing this essential work together.

Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to protecting our immigrant communities.

HEADQUARTERS
(ADC | EDUCATION |
HR | IMMIGRATION |
PHRC | WF Develop.)

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Good morning. Thank you to the chair and the committee for holding this hearing. My name is Charles Brown. I am the Director of the Immigration Legal Program at LSSNY Social Services of New York (LSSNY), and I am here to testify in support of Introduction 55.

LSSNY's work has been focused on strengthening families and communities throughout New York City for more than 125 years. As part of that mission, the Immigration Legal Program at LSSNY has provided high quality legal services to immigrant New Yorkers for more than 25 years. LSSNY's Immigration Legal Program serves a diverse client base throughout the City with a focus on humanitarian relief, including assisting New Yorkers seeking asylum and special immigrant juvenile status.

In our experience, federal immigration law can be complicated. When you add the intersection of local, state, and federal laws – it can be nearly impossible to understand what is legal when it comes to immigration enforcement. Confusion about the law is then a breeding ground for disinformation and misinformation, amplified through social media both unintentionally and intentionally. As a result, community members, immigrants and otherwise, often lack accurate, clear, and current information about the state of the law. This misinformation can both create fear – where immigrants fear accessing city services – and can embolden questionable or illegal immigration enforcement tactics – such as through the use of administrative rather than judicial warrants.

Introduction 55 aims to remedy this information gap by providing clear signage, in multiple languages and age-appropriate, throughout the City, informing the community about key rights around immigration enforcement, city property, and city resources. Community visiting buildings with signage and those working in those same buildings stand to benefit from this clear information, helping to slow the spread of misinformation. The signage will help ensure that New Yorkers understand the law, the first step in empowering someone to assert their rights. The requirements that information be age-appropriate and available at City schools is especially crucial at this time of increased enforcement against immigrant youth.

For these reasons, LSSNY Social Services of New York supports Introduction 55 and its aim. Meanwhile, we urge the City Council to provide sustained investment in the organizations on the ground serving our immigrant families, friends, and neighbors -such as through the ASLAN initiative, which pairs high quality pro se legal services with community education and empowerment, and through the ICARE coalition, where legal service organizations, such as LSSNY, are expanding access to legal representation for immigrant children and youth facing deportation in New York City.

Thank you again for your time.

Good afternoon Chair Encarnacion and members of the Immigration Committee.

My name is Husein Yatabarry, and I am the Executive Director of Muslim Community Network.

I am here today in strong support of Int. No. 55 and Int. No. 261.

We are in a moment of deep fear and uncertainty for immigrant communities across New York City. Families are trying to understand what their rights are, what city spaces remain safe, and what to do if they encounter federal immigration authorities. In this climate, the Council has a responsibility not only to affirm protections on paper, but to make those protections visible, understandable, and real in the places where New Yorkers live, learn, and seek help.

At Muslim Community Network, we do not speak about this issue from a distance. We speak from direct experience working with immigrant New Yorkers every day. Our annual report makes clear that immigrant rights education is one of MCN's core areas of expertise. In FY25, our Community Education Program engaged more than 920 participants across immigrant rights collaboratives and immigrant rights workshops, serving communities in more than 25 languages and ensuring cultural and linguistic accessibility. This work exists for one reason: to make sure immigrant New Yorkers are informed, prepared, and able to assert their rights.

That is why Int. No. 55 matters. Clear, plain-language, multilingual signage about legal protections on city property can make the difference between confusion and confidence. It matters for a parent entering a school, a resident in a shelter, or a family seeking services in a city building. In today's environment, confusion becomes vulnerability. Visibility, clarity, and language access become protection. And that signage is not only for the public. It is also a daily reminder to every city employee walking into work that they have a role in upholding the dignity and rights of immigrant New Yorkers.

And that is also why Int. No. 261 is so important. If the city is serious about being a place of safety and trust, it cannot at the same time contract with entities engaged in immigration enforcement. Those two things cannot coexist. New Yorkers cannot be told that city spaces are safe while the city maintains relationships that help legitimize or support the very machinery creating fear in our communities.

This is especially urgent at a time when DHS and ICE have increasingly operated in ways that blur the lines between federal enforcement and trusted public presence. When people see enforcement agents cloaked in the appearance of ordinary government authority, trust erodes even further. We cannot allow that kind of fear and confusion to follow people onto city property. If immigrant New Yorkers do not feel safe walking into schools, shelters, or public buildings, then access to city services is undermined at its core.

Int. No. 55 tells immigrant New Yorkers that they have rights here. Int. No. 261 helps ensure the city is not undermining that message through its own relationships and contracts. Together, these bills move us closer to a city where dignity, safety, and trust are not conditional.

MCN urges the Council to pass both bills.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



WRITTEN TESTIMONY
BY THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY LAW COMMITTEE
HEARING OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION
MARCH 11, 2026
OVERSIGHT: SANCTUARY PROTECTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

The Immigration and Nationality Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association respectfully submits the following written testimony regarding New York City’s sanctuary laws and the City’s continued compliance with them.

The Immigration and Nationality Law Committee addresses a wide range of issues related to immigration law and policy. Our members include legal services providers, private practitioners, academics, advocates, and government attorneys.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF SANCTUARY POLICIES FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY TRUST

New York City’s sanctuary laws are foundational to ensuring public safety, protecting constitutional rights, and maintaining trust between immigrant communities and government institutions. These policies limit the City’s participation in federal civil immigration enforcement while allowing local law enforcement to focus on local public safety priorities. Sanctuary policies also ensure that immigrant New Yorkers can access essential city services—such as healthcare, schools, housing assistance, and the courts—without fear that their information will be used for immigration enforcement purposes.

For over three decades, mayors with diverse political ideologies have upheld New York City’s sanctuary city status, ensuring all residents, regardless of status, have access to services without fear of deportation. Since 1989, New York City mayors Ed Koch, David Dinkins, Rudolph Giuliani, and Bill de Blasio have upheld the City’s sanctuary city status.¹ New York City’s

¹ See The Office of the Mayor, “Executive Order No. 124: City Policy Concerning Aliens,” The City of New York, Aug. 7, 1989, available at https://www.nyc.gov/html/records/pdf/executive_orders/1989EO124.PDF; see also Arya Sundaram, “NY’s ‘sanctuary city’ protections for immigrants are at an inflection point,” Gothamist, Dec. 23, 2024, available at <https://gothamist.com/news/nys-sanctuary-city-protections-for-immigrants-are-at-an-inflection-point> (All websites last accessed on March 10, 2026).

About the Association

The mission of the New York City Bar Association, which was founded in 1870 and has over 20,000 members, is to equip and mobilize a diverse legal profession to practice with excellence, promote reform of the law, and uphold the rule of law and access to justice in support of a fair society and the public interest in our community, our nation, and throughout the world.

sanctuary protections² enable all New Yorkers, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, to feel safe in accessing city services, including accessing medical care, taking their children to school, and reporting crimes to the police and cooperating in law enforcement investigations, all without fear that city officials or municipal workers will turn them over to immigration enforcement agents.³ When immigrant communities fear that contact with local authorities may result in detention or deportation, they are less likely to report crimes or cooperate with police, making communities less safe.

Studies have long shown that sanctuary jurisdictions perform better than comparable non-sanctuary jurisdictions across a range of social and economic indicators.⁴ Immigrants play a crucial part in the City’s economic framework. Sanctuary cities like New York outperform non-sanctuary counterparts in socioeconomic metrics, highlighting the value of inclusive policies.⁵

The Immigration Committee welcomes Mayor Mamdani’s recent executive order reaffirming the City’s commitment to being a sanctuary for all New Yorkers⁶ The Mayor and his team also launched a citywide “Know Your Rights” push, distributing nearly 32,000 flyers and booklets in 10 languages.⁷

II. SANCTUARY LAWS AND THE CITY’S DETAINER POLICIES

² The New York City sanctuary laws include:

NYC Administrative Code § 10-178: City resources may not be used for immigration enforcement.

NYC Administrative Code § 4-210: Non-City personnel (such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “ICE”) may not enter non-public spaces of City-owned or City-leased property, such as City-contracted shelters and asylum seeker centers, without a judicial warrant.

NYC Administrative Code § 23-1202: City employees, contractors, and subcontractors may not share identifying information with immigration officials, except in limited circumstances.

NYC Administrative Code §§ 9-131, 9-205, 14-154: exceptions to the City’s detainer laws if an individual has been convicted within the last 5 years of a violent or serious crime and immigration enforcement has presented a judicial warrant.

³ Gwynne Hogan, Rachel Holliday Smith and Rachel Kahn, “What Is a Sanctuary City and What Does That Mean for NYC Under Trump?” The City, Nov. 15, 2024, available at <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/11/15/sanctuary-city-laws-arrests-trump-deportations/>.

⁴ Center for American Progress, “The Effects of Sanctuary Policies on Crime and the Economy,” Jan. 26, 2017, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-effects-of-sanctuary-policies-on-crime-and-the-economy/>.

⁵ Immigr. & Nat’l Law Comm., N.Y.C. Bar Ass’n, *Mayor Eric Adams’s Threats to New York as a Sanctuary City* (Mar. 12, 2025), <https://www.nycbar.org/press-releases/mayor-eric-adamss-threats-to-new-york-as-a-sanctuary-city/>

⁶ Executive Order 13, “Protecting New Yorkers from Abusive Immigration Enforcement,” available at <https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2026/02/executive-order-13> ; <https://www.nycic.org/2026/02/mamdami-executive-order-on-sanctuary-policies-advances-public-safety-for-all-nyers/>

⁷ NYLAG, *New York Legal Assistance Group Applauds Mamdani Executive Order Reaffirming NYC Sanctuary Protections*, Feb. 6, 2026, available at <https://nylag.org/new-york-legal-assistance-group-applauds-mamdani-executive-order-reaffirming-nyc-sanctuary-protections/>

New York City’s sanctuary framework is closely tied to the City’s detainer laws, which limit the circumstances under which local law enforcement agencies may cooperate with federal immigration enforcement.

Since 2014, New York City law has generally prohibited the Department of Correction and the New York Police Department from honoring immigration detainer requests unless federal authorities present a judicial warrant and the individual has been convicted of certain serious offenses.

The Immigration Committee has long expressed concern about local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. In prior testimony before the City Council regarding New York City’s detainer laws, the Immigration Committee warned of the devastating consequences that arise when local government agencies assist federal immigration enforcement.⁸

Just last year, the Immigration Committee also expressed deep concern when former mayor Eric Adams threatened the City’s sanctuary status.⁹ Ultimately, his move to let ICE into Rikers Islands was deemed illegal by a New York state court.¹⁰

Immigration detainers are requests issued by federal immigration authorities asking local law enforcement agencies to hold individuals in custody beyond their scheduled release date so that federal authorities may assume custody. These requests are often accompanied only by administrative warrants signed by immigration officers—not judicial warrants issued by a court.

Detaining individuals based solely on such requests raises serious constitutional concerns because administrative immigration warrants do not provide the judicial determination of probable cause required for lawful detention.

For this reason, the Immigration Committee has previously supported legislative efforts to further limit communication and cooperation between city agencies—including the Department of Correction and the NYPD—and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Ensuring that the City adheres to these principles is essential to protecting due process rights and preventing unconstitutional detention.

III. ENSURING STRONG COMPLIANCE WITH SANCTUARY LAWS

While New York City has enacted strong sanctuary protections, those protections are only meaningful if they are consistently implemented across all city agencies and contractors.

⁸ City Bar, Testimony before the City Council on New York City’s Detainer Laws, Feb. 16, 2023, available at <https://www.nycbar.org/reports/testimony-before-the-city-council-on-new-york-citys-detainer-laws/?back=1>

⁹ City Bar, Mayor Eric Adams’s Threats to New York as a Sanctuary City, March 12, 2025, available at https://www.nycbar.org/press-releases/mayor-eric-adamss-threats-to-new-york-as-a-sanctuary-city/?back=1&ref=media#_ftn2

¹⁰ Luis Ferré-Sadurní, NYTimes, Adams Administration Move to Let ICE Into Rikers Is Illegal, Judge Rules, Sept. 8, 2025, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/08/nyregion/judge-adams-ice-rikers.html>

Recent reports indicating that federal immigration authorities have gained access to city facilities without judicial warrants highlight the need for clear guidance, training, and oversight to ensure that sanctuary laws are properly followed.¹¹

City employees and contractors must understand when federal immigration officers may enter city facilities, what documentation must be presented, and how to respond to requests for information or cooperation. Without clear and consistent training, frontline workers may be placed in difficult situations that risk violating city law or undermining community trust.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING SANCTUARY COMPLIANCE

To ensure that New York City remains a strong sanctuary jurisdiction and that existing protections are fully implemented, we respectfully recommend that the City Council consider the following measures:

a. Strengthen training and guidance for city employees.

All city employees and contractors who interact with immigrant communities should receive clear, mandatory training on sanctuary laws and the limits of cooperation with federal immigration authorities. Such training should include guidance on handling requests from immigration enforcement officials, responding to detainers, and protecting sensitive information.

b. Improve oversight and accountability mechanisms.

The City should establish clear reporting and auditing procedures to ensure that city agencies comply with sanctuary laws. Independent oversight entities should regularly review agency practices and investigate potential violations.

c. Protect sensitive locations and city property.

City agencies must ensure that immigration enforcement actions do not occur in sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals, shelters, courts, and places of worship without a judicial warrant. Maintaining these protections is essential to ensuring that immigrant New Yorkers can safely access essential services.

d. Clarify policies regarding access to city facilities and data.

The City should adopt clear rules governing when and how federal immigration authorities may access city facilities or information. Agencies should require judicial warrants before providing access to non-public spaces or confidential information. The City should analyze

¹¹ The City of New York Department of Investigation, DOI EXAMINED FIVE INCIDENTS AND IDENTIFIED ONE WHERE AN NYPD OFFICER VIOLATED LAWS THAT LIMIT ASSISTANCE WITH CIVIL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT; DOI FOUND THAT THE NYPD'S POLICIES COMPLY WITH THE LAW AND ISSUED SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT, WHICH THE NYPD HAS ACCEPTED, Dec. 3, 2025, available at <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2025/49NYPD.SancLawsRelease.Rpt.12.03.2025.pdf>

potential law enforcement loopholes, limits on how much data the City keeps in the first place, and how to hold individual city workers accountable for their role in sharing data improperly.

e. Expand community education and outreach.

Many immigrant New Yorkers remain uncertain about their rights under sanctuary laws. The City should invest in community outreach and public education campaigns to ensure that residents understand their rights and feel safe accessing city services.

V. CONCLUSION

Reaffirming the City’s sanctuary status is essential to protecting immigrant communities and New York City as a whole. Maintaining and strengthening these protections is essential not only for safeguarding constitutional rights but also for preserving public safety and community trust.

The Immigration and Nationality Law Committee appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony and welcomes continued collaboration with the City Council to ensure that New York City remains a place where the rights and dignity of all residents are respected.

Immigration and Nationality Law Committee
Dorian Rojas, Co-Chair
Ludivine Van der Heyden, Co-Chair

Contact

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Testimony of Rachel Jordan, Safe Passage Project
NYC Council Committee on Immigration
March 9, 2026



Good morning and thank you to Chair Encarnacion and the other members of the Immigration Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Rachel Jordan, and I am the Managing Attorney for Partnerships and Advocacy at Safe Passage Project, a non-profit legal services organization that provides free representation to immigrant children facing deportation. We currently serve over 1,600 children and young people who live in the five boroughs of New York City and on Long Island.

Safe Passage Project works closely with partner organizations through the ICARE Coalition, with the goal of providing quality legal representation to as many unaccompanied minors as possible. Once we accept a client, we commit to their case until we achieve the best possible outcome for them, usually a green card. Our clients' cases take 3-7 years due to delays in visa availability and court backlogs. We receive funding from the City Council through the UMFI, SIJS Initiative, School-Based Immigrant Rapid Response, Speaker's Initiative, and DoVE.

We welcome all efforts by the City of New York to strengthen, clarify, and communicate its sanctuary policies to better protect and reassure noncitizen New Yorkers. As service providers for immigrant youth, we are acutely aware of the rising fear our clients and their families have been coping with because of the constant threats from the federal government to their safety, security, and due process rights. This fear affects all immigrants regardless of their legal status, and it has a corrosive effect on the trust that these communities place in New York City institutions charged with ensuring the safety, health, and enrichment of all New Yorkers.

The case of two of our clients, a young mother and her 7-year-old daughter, both with approved Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), provides a poignant example. The mother had always ensured that her daughter had excellent attendance at her elementary school. Then, in January 2025, she became so terrified by the federal administration's anti-immigrant rhetoric that she kept her daughter home from school for a week, fearing rumored ICE arrests. A memo from the school to parents clearly informing them of the sanctuary status of NYC schools finally convinced her that it was safe for her daughter to return to school.



Another Safe Passage Project client, a young woman with a pending green card application, approved SIJS, and Temporary Protected Status, said that she was so afraid that any interaction with law enforcement could lead to an arrest by ICE that she hesitated to call the police, despite suffering repeated acts of domestic violence at the hands of her partner, until a neighbor finally called the NYPD on her behalf after a particularly violent incident.

A similar fear that law enforcement would collude with ICE kept another young high school client of ours from contacting the NYPD after he received numerous threatening texts from a classmate, despite his school guidance counselor advising him to seek a school safety transfer and to file a police report about the threats. The client said that he feared his undocumented family members could be at risk from ICE if he were to report the threats to the NYPD.

It is truly heartbreaking to see our young clients, so many of whom escaped government persecution and gang-based violence in their home countries, re-living the same trauma that they have fled from—right here in the U.S.

The more that the City can do to ensure that immigrant New Yorkers are safe from sudden and potentially violent ICE arrests in the City's public spaces, the more those New Yorkers will be able to avail themselves of the services that promote the safety, health, and education of their children. Accessible, clear signage, translated into multiple languages, plainly laying out individuals' rights in the event of an ICE encounter on City property, is a step in the right direction. These signs offer more than just information; they provide a tangible tool of empowerment that can de-escalate high-stress interactions and safeguard due process rights. It is equally important to strengthen policies that prevent collusion and information-sharing between the NYPD and ICE/Customs and Border Protection, and to continuously communicate those policies to immigrant communities.



Increased Funding for Children’s Legal Services

The best way for the City Council to ensure that immigrant children and their caretakers feel safe and welcome in this city of immigrants is to increase funding for immigrant children’s legal services at this frightening time. The federal administration’s daily attacks have taken a severe toll, and together with the systemic stripping of due process rights in Immigration Court and the increase in brutal ICE enforcement tactics over the past year, Safe Passage Project’s dedicated team of attorneys and social workers are working harder than ever to prevent the unjust incarceration and deportation of our clients, many of whom are already well on their way toward lawful permanent residence. Every week, these challenges increase, requiring our staff to dedicate more time and resources to ensure the best outcome in each case.

We request that the City Council continue to support our work on behalf of immigrant youth by increasing our funding to meet the needs of this historic moment.

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South Asian Council for Social Services

Testimony to the New York City Council

Committee on Immigration

South Asian Council for Social Services

March 9, 2026

Thank you, Chair Elsie Encarnación, and other members of the Committee on Immigration for holding this hearing and providing us with the opportunity to testify at this time when immigrant New Yorkers feel vulnerable. I am Mary Archana Fernandez, Director: Family Support Services at South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS) – a community- based organization located in Flushing, Queens. Today I am here to testify with partners from the Rapid Immigration Support and Empowerment (RISE) Network– a network of nearly 20 Asian-led and Asian-serving organizations that provide immigration case management and legal services support to New Yorkers.

SACSS is a non-profit community- based organization that works to empower immigrant communities through services in the areas of healthcare access and education, senior support services, food security, mental health services and connection to benefits. We also provide basic and advanced English and computer courses and a Summer Youth Program. All our services are free and provided by culturally competent staff that speak 20 languages.

In the last 25-years we have built a relationship of trust with our clients, by continuously adapting services during crises be it 9/11 or the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of our clients are immigrants with limited English proficiency, fixed incomes, often living in isolated communities and reluctant to access services due to language barriers. CBOs such as ours are places that immigrants trust and come to seek life affirming



services such as culturally palatable food pantry, connection to healthcare, SNAP benefits and even assistance with immigration related challenges.

We have been providing in-person legal services since 2021 through the CUNY Citizenship Now! initiative sponsored by NYC Council Member James F. Gennaro. Through this initiative we have been able to assist community members seeking a range of immigration and naturalization related services from renewing their green cards to FOIA requests. While CUNY provides the legal assistance our staff assists clients with translations arranging documents and looking for additional resources. However, in the past one-year, given federal level immigration policies, we have seen a rise in clients asking for help. Much of this includes reading and understanding correspondence received from USCIS. Our clients not only need the assistance of an immigration lawyer but they also need in-language support for doing things like opening a USCIS account, paying an online fee, document translation – activities that need a case manager they can trust.

SACSS' location in Queens and our linguistic capacity, 12 South Asian languages and Mandarin, Cantonese, Malay, Haka, Spanish, Quechua, and Tagalog – has seen us become a safe space for clients for immigration related case management assistance. To give you an example in September of 2025 when USCIS announced all new Asylees to pay \$100 fee – we saw numerous community members arrive for assistance with this. With guidance from the Asian American Federation and RISE resources we were able to help them in a timely manner. We also serve many mixed – immigration status families who are very fearful and reluctant to renew their SNAP benefits and health insurance – worried their information will be shared with USCIS or ICE. Many community members have also become preys to private attorneys giving incorrect information or rumours. Through educational workshops in multiple languages, we have been sharing resources developed by the RISE Network reassuring the community about their rights.

This year, we continue to advocate for resources to equip our RISE Network to respond quickly and effectively to the immigration challenges facing vulnerable Asian New Yorkers. SACSS, like other Asian serving CBOs, has experienced funding cuts and must constantly adapt with limited resources to share information, calm anxieties,



and provide help in multiple languages. We are incredibly grateful for the FY 26 City Council funding provided to our RISE Network partners to support in-language, culturally competent immigration legal services and case management. However, while Asian non-citizens make up nearly 30% of New York City's non-citizen population, our network of Asian CBOs only received 3.9% of the additional \$50 million City Council invested in immigration legal services funding this year. We applaud the record-breaking investment in legal services funding and urge the City Council to increase its investment in Asian CBOs in FY 27 to address these gaps and meet the needs of immigrants who are under threat.

We thank the Committee on Immigration for its continued support and leadership in protecting immigrant New Yorkers. Thank you for allowing us to testify, and we look forward to working with you to make sure our immigrant communities get the support they deserve.



To: New York City Council, Committee on Immigration
From: Pantea Nouri, Paralegal, The Door Legal Services Center
Paul Padilla Lopez, Legal Administrative Assistant, The Door Legal Services Center
Otto Heilmann, Paralegal, The Door Legal Services Center
Re: Oversight Hearing: Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

Date: March 9, 2026

I. Introduction

The Door is a comprehensive youth development organization that has been supporting vulnerable youth in New York City since 1972. Each year, we provide services to nearly 11,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 24, many of them immigrants.¹ These services include healthcare, education, supportive housing, food and nutrition, career development, arts and recreation, mental health counseling, and legal assistance—all under one roof. Serving as Manhattan’s designated daytime Runaway and Homeless Youth Drop-In Center, and the Bronx’s only 24-7 Drop-In Center, we also provide food, clothing, showers, laundry, and case management services to young people who are unhoused or experiencing housing instability. At The Door, we emphasize empowering and engaging the young people we serve, and we are committed to creating a safe, equitable, and inclusive space for young people and staff.

The Door’s Legal Services Center is an office of over 50 individuals, including attorneys, social workers, paralegals, and support staff. In the fiscal year 2025, we handled 2,538 immigration matters for young people. Our attorneys represent youth in removal proceedings before immigration courts, as well as those seeking to regularize their status through the filing of affirmative humanitarian applications.

II. Sanctuary Laws are Necessary to Protect Young People’s Right to Education

A common priority we see among the young people we represent is the drive to seek an education not available to them in their home countries. For many immigrants, education represents an accessible pathway to economic stability and an opportunity for young people to pursue their hopes and dreams, and to give back to the community. Increased clarity in regard to signage at NYC public schools would not only increase a sense of security among students, but it

¹ The Door, ‘About The Door’, https://www.door.org/about/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=22229511560&utm_content=732757343260&utm_network=g&utm_device=c&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22229511560&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7o_3jKuEkwMVyGRHAR3dCBBsEAAYASAEgIyevD_BwE. (last visited March 3, 2026).

would also be beneficial to the students' physical and mental wellbeing. This would allow students to focus on their education rather than the possibility of their lives being disrupted by reckless immigration law enforcement.

Unfortunately, The Door has witnessed the toll that the fear of going to school has taken on young people that we have encountered over the past few months. Many young people express a desire to go back to school and to attend college, not only for themselves, but for their loved ones and to become productive members of society. However, with the recent unlawful presence of ICE in certain sanctuary spaces, many students we work with have either dropped out of school or have chosen to miss classes out of fear that they will lose their second chance at a better life. According to the New York State Education Department, students with high rates of absences have the greatest risk of falling behind in school and dropping out.² Language-accessible signage about students' rights within this space would help alleviate this fear and allow students to learn in peace.

III. Sanctuary Laws Protect Young People's Right to Shelter

In New York City, the need for clear signage is also vital for young people accessing shelters and Runaway Homeless and Youth (RHY) services, funded by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). Many young people first access services through RHY Drop-In centers for immediate necessities—chief among them, food, showers, laundry, case management—and referrals to shelters.³ In the 2025 fiscal year, 26,651 youth were served by eight RHY Drop-In,⁴ illustrating the importance of the City's RHY services.

In addition to The Door's RHY Drop-In Centers, The Door also has a weekly legal clinic for runaway and homeless youth. Under the current Trump administration, The Door's RHY Clinic staff regularly observes how quickly misinformation and fear can govern decision-making among communities of vulnerable young people in NYC. Youth may avoid services altogether or withhold critical information because they are unsure what federal immigration authorities may lawfully do, what staff can lawfully allow, and what their rights are while accessing services. Given robust city-wide outreach, this bill will ensure that New Yorkers, including vulnerable immigrant youth, receive clear, multilingual notice of their legal rights and protections while on City property, which will provide vital information and show young people that they can safely access services.

² New York State Education Department, 'Chronic Absenteeism,' <https://www.nysed.gov/innovation-school-reform/chronic-absenteeism> (last visited March 3, 2026).

³ New York City Government, Department of Youth and Community Development, Borough-Based Drop-In Centers – DYCD, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/runaway-homeless-youth/borough-based-drop-in-centers.page> (last visited March 3, 2026).

⁴ New York City Government, Department of Youth and Community Development, [FY25_LL86_RHY_Demographics-and-Services_Report_Revised-12-2025.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/site/dycd/services/runaway-homeless-youth/borough-based-drop-in-centers.page) (last visited March 4, 2026)

We work with many Door members who are living in the NYC shelter system and who are working to stabilize their lives while pursuing immigration relief, such as Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, or SIJS. A safe residence for young immigrants remains crucial for them while seeking legal protection from threats to their lives or severe abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Although the City’s sanctuary laws bar city staffers from letting ICE officers enter private areas of city property (e.g., city-run shelters),⁵ the Gothamist has reported instances of shelter employees allowing ICE officers to enter shelters and sharing personal identifying information about shelter residents—⁶without verifying that the officers had a judicial warrant.⁷ The bill requires signage to “clearly identify examples of nonpublic areas of city property” and to list Fourth Amendment rights people may invoke when interacting with federal immigration authorities—precisely to reduce the reported incidents of staff confusion. In high-stress settings such as shelters, the sign functions as a default rule, a pause point, and a shared reference that may reduce uninformed consent and inconsistent staff responses.

Alongside the signage, the bill expressly requires New York City’s Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) to conduct city-wide outreach. The bill compels the MOIA to conduct outreach and distribute materials at “emergency shelters” and other high-traffic sites,⁸ which creates a realistic pathway to reach youth in the shelter ecosystem. Because the bill relies on posting, outreach, and reporting—not penalties—it will work best if the MOIA pairs the materials with a simple, standardized protocol for frontline staff, plus a QR-code or URL linking to translations and a warrant checklist so that the sign maintains readability. Thus, clear, multilingual signage and outreach efforts proposed by this bill would ensure that staff at shelters are informed of the city’s sanctuary protections and their role in implementing them, making sure that immigrant young people have a safe place to live.

IV. Sanctuary Laws Protect Young People’s Right to Seek Legal Status

Lastly, signage on the City’s sanctuary laws, particularly in New York’s family courts, stands to have a positive impact on young people’s ability to seek Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, or

⁵ NYC Administrative Code § 4-210, available at:

<https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/newyorkcity/latest/NYAdmin/0-0-0-2141> (last visited March 3, 2026).

⁶ Arya Sundaram, ‘ICE enters NYC shelters armed and without judicial warrants, reports show,’ Gothamist (Dec 15, 2025) <https://gothamist.com/news/ice-enters-nyc-shelters-armed-and-without-judicial-warrants-reports-show> (last visited March 3, 2026).

⁷ New York City Council, Committee on Immigration, Agenda, Introduction 0055-2026, Page 1, Lines 12-17, January 29, 2026, <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7861433&GUID=5D1F3401-2B72-4B3F-A514-8C4949AA50AF&Options=&Search=> (last visited March 3, 2026).

⁸ New York City Council, Committee on Immigration, Agenda, Introduction 0055-2026, Page 2, Lines 17-18, January 29, 2026, <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7861433&GUID=5D1F3401-2B72-4B3F-A514-8C4949AA50AF&Options=&Search=> (last visited March 3, 2026).

SIJS. This legal status applies to minors who have been abandoned, abused, or neglected by one or both of their parents, offering crucial legal protection to the young people who need it most.

To be granted SIJS, a young person needs to find a supportive adult willing to be their legal guardian. This can prove challenging, especially for youth who arrived in the United States as unaccompanied minors and do not have family members present. When a young person does find a relative, friend, or mentor willing to be their legal guardian, fear of the presence of immigration enforcement in family courts presents another barrier to obtaining legal status.

The guardian's immigration status does not bear on whether they can be appointed a legal guardian under New York law – an adult can go through the family court guardianship process even if they are undocumented. Additionally, the Protect Our Courts Act keeps ICE officers from making arrests in and around New York State Courts, including family courts, without a judicial warrant.⁹

However, our clients and their potential guardians often express fear of immigration enforcement in anticipation of their family court hearings. In one instance, a client's mother who was seeking to be appointed legal guardian of our client refused to attend an in-person family court hearing, which meant her daughter's family court proceedings would be dismissed and would ultimately prevent her daughter from filing for SIJS. The pressure on immigrant communities and families is immense. Young immigrants, their relatives and friends, are forced into an impossible situation, where pursuing legal status entails the risk of becoming dangerously visible to immigration authorities.

Clear, multilingual signage on the City's sanctuary laws, particularly in New York's family courts, would ensure that young people and their guardians will feel safer attending family court hearings as part of the SIJS process.

V. Conclusion

In the interest of protecting young people's right to access schools, shelters, and legal status, we urge that City Council adopt today's proposed bills and reaffirm New York as a sanctuary city.

Pantea Nouri
Paralegal
The Door's Legal Services Center

⁹ Protect Our Courts Act, 2019-2020 N.Y. Legis. Sess., S. 425-A/A. 2176-A (N.Y. 2020).

Paul Padilla Lopez
Legal Administrative Assistant
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Otto Heilmann
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The Door's Legal Services Center

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S
COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION**

**Oversight Hearing - Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities
Submitted on March 11, 2026**

My name is Deborah Lee, and I am the Attorney-in-Charge of the Immigration Law Unit at The Legal Aid Society (LAS). Thank you to the Committee on Immigration for the opportunity to submit testimony.

LAS is built on one simple but powerful belief: that no New Yorker should be denied the right to equal justice. We want to remain a beacon of hope for New Yorkers who feel neglected, regardless of who they are, where they come from, or how they identify. From our start nearly 150 years ago, our growth has mirrored that of the city we serve. Today, we are proud to be one of the largest and most influential social justice law firms in New York City and nation-wide. Our staff deliver justice in every borough, working tirelessly to defend our clients and dismantle the hidden, systemic barriers that can prevent them from thriving. As passionate advocates for individuals and families, LAS is an indispensable component of the legal, social, and economic fabric of our City.

In the past year, LAS served over 480,000 individuals and their families who benefitted from our holistic direct services through our Civil, Criminal, and Juvenile Rights Practices. Our work across these Practices together provides us with unique insights into the challenges facing marginalized communities in NYC and an unparalleled ability to effect change on a greater scale. Our Civil Practice works with low-income New Yorkers experiencing a broad range of civil legal issues that, without assistance, can escalate into situations with cascading effects that threaten their stability and keep families locked in cycles of poverty. Our specialized units cover the full spectrum of civil legal needs, including housing and homelessness; homeowner stabilization, family law and domestic violence; immigration; special education; health; community development; consumer issues; employment; government benefits and disability; taxes; and holistic services for vulnerable populations including the elderly, adults and children with disabilities, and people living with HIV/AIDS.

For almost 40 years, LAS has maintained a citywide Immigration Law Unit (ILU) within the Civil Practice. ILU, now comprised of nearly 100 staff, is a recognized leader in the delivery of free, comprehensive, and high caliber immigration legal services to low-income immigrants in New York City and surrounding counties. Staff represent immigrants before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), in Immigration Court removal proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), on appeals to the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), and in federal court on habeas corpus petitions and petitions for review. In addition to representing clients, staff conduct outreach clinics at community-based organizations throughout New York City, intake clients at immigration detention centers, and conduct trainings in various venues throughout the city. Over the most recent year, ILU assisted in nearly 8,600 individual legal matters benefiting over 21,100 New Yorkers citywide. In addition to providing direct legal services, ILU staff provide regular training to immigrant-serving advocates from community-based organizations, State and local agencies, and

Justice in Every Borough.

judicial and legislative staff. Partnerships with other non-profit organizations and coordination of a successful pro bono program with 53 participating law firms enable the ILU to maximize resources to meet the increasing demand for representation.

For decades, New York City sanctuary city laws have drawn a firm boundary between municipal agencies and federal civil immigration enforcement, so New Yorkers can work, study, seek services, and get help without fear. That separation is not charity; it is a core obligation of government and central to public safety.

That boundary is under clear attack now. Federal authorities have collapsed the distinction between civil and criminal processes,¹ expanded interagency information-sharing,² rescinded prior protected location guidance,³ increased courthouse arrests, and carried out unlawful entries into shelters and other sensitive locations without judicial warrants.⁴ These practices are not theoretical or limited to other cities. They are happening now, across New York City.⁵ Individuals are being detained at routine check-ins,⁶ at scheduled court hearings,⁷ and even while attempting to comply with government-mandated processes.⁸ Many are then quickly transferred out of state, cutting them off from counsel, family, and the protections this City has invested in.⁹

¹ See How ICE Went Rogue: A Brief Analysis of the Legal Authorities Governing ICE and CBP Operations, American Immigration Council (Feb. 11, 2026), available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/ice-cbp-legal-analysis/>.

² See Dan Gooding, Judge Says IRS Illegally Shared Taxpayer Data Nearly 43,000 Times With DHS, NEWSWEEK (Feb. 26, 2026), available at <https://www.newsweek.com/judge-says-irs-illegally-shared-taxpayer-data-dhs-11589124>; see also Ali Swenson, HHS Authorized to Resume Sharing Some Personal Medicaid Data With Deportation Officers, AP NEWS (Jan. 5, 2026), available at <https://apnews.com/article/medicaid-data-hhs-rfk-sharing-immigration-trump-30784ce01a403a16aca504980e4c7bc9>.

³ See Caleb Vitello, ICE Memorandum, Common Sense Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas (Jan. 31, 2025), available at <https://immpolicytracking.org/policies/dhs-rescinds-guidelines-for-enforcement-actions-in-or-near-protected-areas/>.

⁴ See Arya Sundaram & Ben Feuerherd, ICE's Alleged 'Ruse' in Columbia Student Arrest May Have Violated Law, GOTHAMIST (Feb. 28, 2026), available at <https://gothamist.com/news/ices-alleged-ruse-in-columbia-student-arrest-may-have-violated-law-attorneys-say>.

⁵ See generally Eileen Grench, As the U.S. Was Shut Down, ICE Arrests Continued Without Documentation, DOCUMENTED (Nov. 14, 2025), available at <https://documentedny.com/2025/11/14/ice-arrests-government-shutdown-trump/>.

⁶ See Gwynne Hogan, ICE Turns Required Check-Ins Into Arrest Dragnet in Lower Manhattan, THE CITY (June 2, 2025), available at <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/06/03/ice-arrest-drag-net-manhattan/>.

⁷ See Gwynne Hogan & Haidee Chu, NYC Is the Nation's Capital of Immigration Courthouse Arrests, THE CITY (Aug. 10, 2025), available at <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/08/11/26-federal-plaza-immigration-court-trump-arrests-data-analysis/>.

⁸ See Arya Sundaram, 'Sign of the Times': NY Asylum-Seekers Arrested at Routine Immigration Appointments, GOTHAMIST (Jan. 20, 2026), available at <https://gothamist.com/news/sign-of-the-times-ny-asylum-seekers-arrested-at-routine-immigration-appointments>.

⁹ See Council & RMIAN Sue ICE to Get Records About Transfers of People in ICE Custody, American Immigration Council (May 14, 2025), available at <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/litigation/council-and-rmian-sue-ice-get-records-about-transfers-people-ice-custody/>.

Detention is the pipeline to deportation. Once someone is detained, procedural protections diminish rapidly. There is no right to appointed counsel in immigration court. Bond is increasingly denied or noncitizens are being told by immigration authorities that they are not eligible for release.

Since January 2025, federal policy changes have fundamentally reshaped the practice of immigration law. Immigration litigation had long existed primarily within Immigration Courts—administrative tribunals staffed by judges who are employees of the U.S. Department of Justice. Under the current administration, these courts have become increasingly weaponized to advance enforcement goals. The Department of Justice’s recruitment¹⁰ of “deportation judges,” encouraging applicants to “become a deportation judge,” reflects a system designed to accelerate removals rather than ensure neutral adjudication. As a result, noncitizens can no longer rely on the immigration court system or the Board of Immigration Appeals for meaningful review. Many clients are detained before they have the opportunity to present a case at all, while others see their applications for protection dismissed in a perfunctory manner.

This deterioration has forced a dramatic realignment of immigration practice into the federal courts. The rise in unlawful detentions requires routine filing of habeas corpus petitions in federal district courts to secure clients’ release. Emergency litigation, constitutional challenges, and circuit court appeals—once exceptional—are now core components of representation. Comprehensive advocacy increasingly requires continuity across administrative hearings, district court litigation, and federal appellate practice.

These federal shifts make strict adherence to New York City’s sanctuary laws essential. When DOC, NYPD, or other city agencies share prohibited information or grant access without a judicial warrant, they do more than violate policy—they erode public trust, undermine their core missions, and funnel New Yorkers into a federal system that increasingly treats civil immigration matters as criminal threats.

City-level failures carry enormous consequences. Investigations¹¹ have documented improper information-sharing, unauthorized access to non-public areas, and inadequate training across agencies. DOC and NYPD have violated NYC law—violating Executive Order 41, Administrative Code §4-210 (restricting ICE access to nonpublic areas absent a judicial warrant), and Administrative Code §§14-154 and 9-131 (sharply limiting cooperation with detainees). These are not technical lapses. When agencies disclose information improperly or allow access without a judicial warrant, individuals are taken into custody, transferred out of state, denied counsel, and placed in a system designed to deport quickly.

¹⁰ See <https://join.justice.gov/>.

¹¹ See <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2025/38DOC.Release.Rpt.09.25.2025.pdf> and <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2025/49NYPD.SancLawsRelease.Rpt.12.03.2025.pdf>.

This is why the New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP)¹² is indispensable. Established in 2013 as the nation’s first public-defender program for detained immigrants, NYIFUP—a partnership of The Legal Aid Society, The Bronx Defenders, and Brooklyn Defender Services—provides universal, free representation so no detained New Yorker faces deportation alone simply because they cannot afford a lawyer.

Executive Order 13¹³ is a meaningful reaffirmation of these obligations. It restates the legal limits on cooperation, mandates audits, and emphasizes agency duties. But an executive order is not self-executing. Without rigorous implementation, training, oversight, and public education, the protections it articulates remain vulnerable.

To further protect all New Yorkers from ICE’s unlawful encroachments on our residents, New York City must also launch a broad, public-health-style rights-education campaign—with the scale and clarity of vaccination or emergency-preparedness outreach. Every city employee, small business, school, shelter, hospital, and community member must understand:

- when ICE needs a judicial warrant,
- what information cannot be shared,
- what rights individuals have during encounters with ICE,¹⁴
- how detention often leads directly to deportation, and
- how transfers sever access to counsel and family.¹⁵

Education is prevention. Rights-awareness is a legal protection.

Int. 261¹⁶ is essential to strengthening the City’s sanctuary framework. It would prohibit the City from contracting with any entity engaged in immigration enforcement, closing back-door pathways for indirect cooperation—whether through data-sharing, service provision, logistics, or third-party vendors. Sanctuary protections must be comprehensive to be effective.

Int. 55¹⁷ complements this by requiring multilingual signage in nonpublic City spaces explaining when a judicial warrant is required and what information city staff may lawfully share. It operationalizes Executive Order 41, Executive Order 13, and Administrative Code §4-210, ensuring that frontline staff and the public understand the limits of federal authority.

¹² See <https://legalaidnyc.org/get-help/immigration-deportation/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-new-york-immigrant-family-unity-project-nyifup/>.

¹³ <https://www.nyc.gov/mayors-office/news/2026/02/executive-order-13>.

¹⁴ See <https://legalaidnyc.org/get-help/immigration-deportation/what-you-need-to-know-about-ice-encounters/>.

¹⁵ See <https://legalaidnyc.org/get-help/immigration-deportation/what-you-need-to-know-about-ice-detention/>.

¹⁶ See <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5570516&GUID=4FA28788-ADAA-4D71-AE73-D9C3E27BB2B9&Options=&Search=>.

¹⁷ See <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6509414&GUID=0F4B1CBA-D538-4AFD-8EC3-4FF1DDDC4F27&Options=ID%7CText%7C&Search=Int+055>.

These measures should be paired with real-time transparency systems that notify affected personnel and oversight bodies - including the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and City Council - whenever federal authorities seek City access or data. Enforcement, training, public education, and transparency must work together to ensure the city's sanctuary commitments are realized in practice—not just on paper.

New York City has always been a sanctuary because we protect our own. We must remain one in practice. LAS urges the Council to adopt Int. 55 and Int. 261, enforce the City's sanctuary laws consistently, and invest in a comprehensive public-education campaign so that all New Yorkers—not just lawyers and advocates—understand their rights, their protections, and the real consequences of detention. What we do here reverberates far beyond our five boroughs. Our duty is clear: protect families, uphold due process, and ensure our agencies serve this city—not federal political agendas.

LAS welcomes the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Ali in her new role and the opportunity to further strengthen the City's commitment to protecting noncitizen New Yorkers. MOIA is an essential partner in ensuring that immigrant communities can access services, assert their rights, and live without fear. We look forward to a robust partnership with Mayor Mamdani's administration and ensure that this City's policies and practices reflect our shared responsibility to protect and support the immigrant families, workers, and students who make New York City stronger.

Finally, LAS would like to express its deep gratitude to City Council for its longstanding support for noncitizen New Yorkers and their loved ones. Programs such as NYIFUP, the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative, the Unaccompanied Minors and Families Initiative, and the Low Wage Worker Initiative make up our city's safety net and are testaments to this Council providing equal protection and access to justice to our noncitizen family members, loved ones, and neighbors. We encourage City Council to continue to lead the way in protecting our own.

Thank you again for your leadership.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Deborah Lee', is centered on the page.

Deborah Lee
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**Testimony of the New York Civil Liberties Union
to
The New York City Council Committee on Immigration
Regarding
Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities**

March 9, 2026

The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) respectfully submits the following testimony with regard to the New York City Council Committee on Immigration hearing concerning sanctuary protections for immigrant communities and related legislation.

I. Introduction.

The NYCLU advances civil rights and civil liberties so that all New Yorkers can live with dignity, liberty, justice, and equality. Founded in 1951 as the state affiliate of the national ACLU, we marshal an expert mix of litigation, policy advocacy, field organizing, and strategic communications. Informed by the insights of our communities and coalitions and powered by 90,000 member-donors, we work across complex issues to create more justice and liberty for more people.

Today's hearing comes at a critical moment for New York City and its immigrant communities. The unrelenting abuses wrought by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), locally and across the country, have created a climate of fear among immigrant communities and beyond. In indiscriminately arresting immigrants to meet quotas, illegally detaining U.S. citizens, and killing peaceful protesters and bystanders in broad daylight, ICE has revealed itself to be an agency willing to act lawlessly and outside the bounds of what can be considered a legitimate law enforcement entity. In a city that has always been a magnet for immigrants from all over the world, ICE's conduct threatens the very fabric of what New York City is, and underscores the need to maintain and strengthen our longstanding sanctuary laws and policies.

At the same time, New York City is experiencing a hopeful moment. Our city is transitioning from a mayor who actively sought to undermine our longstanding protections for immigrants to one who has already begun taking tangible steps to ensure those protections are fully implemented. Mayor Zohran Mamdani's Executive Order 13 lays out a promising vision for how New York City can ensure that its existing sanctuary laws are understood and properly carried out by the public servants charged with upholding them.¹ The agency audits mandated by the order and the establishment of an interagency response committee to respond to acute crises represent positive initial steps for a new chapter in the city's efforts to protect and defend its immigrant residents.

As the city makes this transition, the Council's own role will be crucial, and it is welcome that this committee chose to begin its work under new leadership to examine the city's sanctuary laws and policies. Independent Council oversight can help hold the new administration accountable to its promises. But the Council is first and foremost a legislative body, and it must also not hesitate to pursue bills that will strengthen our city laws and create new mechanisms for accountability. To those ends, we urge the Council to consider and enact several legislative solutions.

II. Intro. 209-2026: The New York City Trust Act

New York City's sanctuary laws have provided meaningful protections for decades. However, compliance with these laws has been far from perfect. As examined more fully at a separate committee hearing earlier this month, the city's own Department of Investigation released two reports last year finding that both the NYPD² and Department of Correction³ violated the city's sanctuary laws in certain instances. Previously, public records obtained by advocates showed how some DOC employees charged with upholding our city's detainer laws excitedly communicated with ICE about people in their custody.⁴ It is reasonable to assume

¹ NYC Executive Order No. 13 (Feb. 6, 2026), *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/content/dam/nycgov/mayors-office/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2026/eo-13.pdf>.

² NYC Department of Investigation, *DOI Investigation into the NYPD's Compliance with Local Laws Restricting City Assistance with Immigration Enforcement*, Dec. 3, 2025, *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2025/49NYPD.SancLawsRelease.Rpt.12.03.2025.pdf>.

³ NYC Department of Investigation, *DOI Investigation into DOC Correction Intelligence Bureau Investigator Assisting Federal Agents with Immigration Enforcement*, Sep. 25, 2025, *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doi/reports/pdf/2025/38DOC.Release.Rpt.09.25.2025.pdf>.

⁴ Arya Sundaram and Matt Katz, *Emails reveal cozy relationship, cooperation between NYC correction officers and ICE*, *Gothamist* (Feb. 16, 2023), <https://gothamist.com/news/teamsendthemback-private-emails-reveal-cozy-relationship-cooperation-between-nyc-correction-officers-and-ice>.

these examples are not isolated, and that there are more violations that simply have not come to light.

The Council must ensure that there is accountability when our sanctuary laws are violated by passing the New York City Trust Act (Intro. 209-2026). This bill would create a private right of action for those harmed by sanctuary violations to sue the agencies most responsible for implementing those laws for damages. Not only would those harmed be able to seek compensation, but by creating a penalty for sanctuary violations, city agencies would be incentivized to ensure their employees comply fully with the law.

III. Intro. 55-2026: The New York City Know Your Rights Act

In order to assert their rights under the law, people must clearly understand how our local laws apply to them. Many of New York City's immigrant residents are aware that the city has laws in place prohibiting city employees from working with ICE, but may not understand the precise scope of those laws or the areas they protect.

The New York City Know Your Rights Act (Intro. 55-2026) would make sure that both the public and the city's own employees understand how our sanctuary laws work by requiring signage in multiple languages that spells out the legal protections provided under local law, and requiring city agencies to identify examples of non-public areas of city property that non-local law enforcement are restricted from accessing.

IV. Intro. 261-2026: Ending contracts with entities engaged in immigration enforcement.

New York City's existing sanctuary laws already prohibit the use of city resources for immigration enforcement except in limited circumstances.⁵ If city agencies are not allowed to use their own resources to assist immigration authorities, it follows that they should be similarly prohibited from contractually providing goods and services for entities engaged in immigration enforcement. We look forward to working with the Council in pursuing the goals of this legislation and moving the bill forward.

⁵ NYC Admin. Code § 10-178.

V. Ensuring our sanctuary laws protect everyone.

At the core of New York City's sanctuary law scheme are the city's detainer laws, which restrict both the NYPD and DOC from responding to requests by ICE to hold someone past their release date or notifying ICE of a person's release date.⁶ These laws have provided important protections for more than a decade. However, in their current form, the city's detainer laws are convoluted and contain language that has been interpreted by the DOC to allow them to effectively facilitate transfers of people to ICE based on those individuals' past contact with the criminal legal system.

The criminal carveouts in New York City's detainer laws exact a form of double punishment on people in addition to the consequences they face under our criminal legal system and undermine the purpose of the sanctuary laws. They also invite confusion among those charged with implementing the laws that make inadvertent violations more likely.

The Council should revisit legislation that would close the loopholes in our city's detainer laws and make them easier to follow. This would bring the city's sanctuary laws more in line with cities like Chicago, which took action to remove similar carveouts in its own laws.⁷

VI. Conclusion

As New York City enters a new chapter of city governance, the current political moment demands that our leaders both uphold and strengthen our sanctuary laws. We thank the Council for holding today's hearing.

⁶ NYC Admin. Code § 9-131; NYC Admin. Code § 14-154.

⁷ Fran Spielman, *City Council eliminates carve-outs to strengthen Welcoming City ordinance*, Chicago Sun-Times (Jan. 27, 2021), <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/1/27/22252689/immigration-chicago-city-council-eliminates-carve-outs-welcoming-city-ordinance-ice-undocumented#:~:text=By%20a%20vote%20of%2041%20to%208%2C%20the%20Chicago%20City.or%20prior%20felony%20convictions%3B%20or>.

New York City Council Committee on Immigration
March 9, 2026 10:00am
Testimony of Rabbi Adam Graubart

Testimony in Favor of Introduction 55, Introduction 261, and Introduction 209

Hello, I'm Rabbi Adam Graubart. Today, I'm speaking on behalf of myself and not as a representative of a synagogue. I am also a proud member of Jews For Racial & Economic Justice. The federal administration's treatment of immigrants constitutes a moral crisis, and I reject our city government playing any role in the violence happening to our immigrant neighbors. I appreciate the existing restrictions against collaboration with ICE, but the City Council must swiftly pass the Trust Act (Introduction 209) to ensure that we are protecting immigrant New Yorkers in the fullest possible capacity. We have seen numerous violations of our current laws, and immigrants have taken the hit. Jewish tradition teaches about accountability. In fact, Jewish communities dedicate an entire season each year towards heshbon hanefesh – accounting of the soul – in which every person evaluates their past actions against what is kind and just. In Leviticus, the Israelites receive the charge, “tochiach et amitecha – reprove your fellow when they have done wrong.” These particular principles shape my view of how to achieve universal justice. When harm occurs, each of us can name it and work to address it. In this way, the individual may learn and grow while the society avoids repeating the negative consequences of the behavior. When government workers endanger immigrants, we need to empower individual New Yorkers to call out violations of the law and prevent perpetual harm. We must pass the Trust Act now. Jewish texts and history also teach me that everyone is better off when we embrace the migrants in our midst and what they have to offer our society. This is what makes New York the extraordinary city that it is. Therefore, in addition to advancing the Trust Act, I ask the City Council to close loopholes in existing sanctuary protections by passing Introduction 55 and Introduction 261 as soon as possible. Thank you.

Sanctuary Protections for Immigrant Communities

Written Testimony by Naresh M Gehi Esq

Sanctuary protections are an important issue in U.S. immigration law, particularly in places like New York City and the broader state of New York. These policies exist at the intersection of federal immigration authority and local governance. This is shaping how immigrant communities interact with law enforcement, public services, and the legal system. For immigration attorneys practicing in New York, sanctuary policies are not abstract political ideas; they directly influence whether immigrants feel safe reporting crimes, enrolling children in school, or seeking medical care. At a time when immigration enforcement and migration flows are intensifying nationwide, sanctuary protections remain central to legal or any immigration policy discussions.

Sanctuary protections refer broadly to laws, ordinances, and policies adopted by states, counties, or municipalities that limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. These policies often restrict local authorities from honoring civil immigration detainers, sharing certain immigration-related information, or participating in federal enforcement operations unless required by law. Their purpose is not to block federal enforcement but to ensure that local law enforcement focuses on public safety rather than acting as an extension of federal immigration agencies such as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. By separating local policing from immigration enforcement, sanctuary policies aim to build trust within immigrant communities, allowing residents to report crimes and cooperate with authorities without fear of deportation.

It is important to clarify what sanctuary protections do not do. They do not grant legal immigration status or immunity from deportation. They do not prevent federal authorities from conducting enforcement actions. They do not shield individuals from criminal prosecution. Instead, they determine how local resources and personnel are used. Federal immigration law remains enforceable nationwide, but local jurisdictions are not required to assist in its enforcement beyond specific statutory obligations. This distinction lies at the heart of sanctuary policy debates and is grounded in constitutional principles.

History of Sanctuary Protections

The roots of sanctuary in the United States stretch back decades. Modern sanctuary policies evolved from the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s, when churches and community organizations provided refuge to Central American asylum seekers fleeing civil wars. At the time, many of these refugees faced extremely low asylum approval rates despite credible claims of persecution. Faith communities stepped in, arguing that humanitarian obligations justified offering protection. This movement helped shape public discourse and laid out the groundwork for municipal sanctuary policies that emerged in the late twentieth century. Over time, cities and states began codifying protections through formal legislation and administrative directives, transforming sanctuary from a religious and activist initiative into a recognized policy framework.

New York developed one of the most comprehensive sanctuary systems in the country. New York City policies restrict local agencies from honoring ICE detainer requests without judicial warrants and limit the sharing of confidential immigration information. City agencies are generally prohibited from inquiring about immigration status unless required by law. The city also offers municipal identification cards available regardless of immigration status, ensuring that residents can access services and interact with institutions. At the state level, New York has enacted measures such as driver's license access for undocumented residents and expanded funding for immigration legal defense. These policies collectively create a layered framework designed to protect immigrant communities while maintaining public safety.

Legal Position of Sanctuary Protection

The constitutional foundation for sanctuary protections rests primarily on the Tenth Amendment, which reserves powers not delegated to the federal government to the states. Under the anti-commandeering doctrine, the federal government cannot compel states or localities to enforce federal law. Courts have consistently held that ICE detainers are on voluntary requests rather than mandatory orders. Local jurisdictions therefore retain discretion in deciding whether to honor them. Similarly, while federal authorities can enforce immigration law directly, they cannot force local police departments to participate in immigration enforcement activities. The U.S. Department of Justice has challenged sanctuary jurisdictions in multiple lawsuits, arguing that such policies obstruct federal enforcement. However, federal courts have repeatedly upheld the principle that states and cities have authority over local resource allocation and law enforcement priorities.

The legal battles intensified during the administration of Donald Trump, which sought to penalize sanctuary jurisdictions by withholding federal funding and increasing enforcement pressure. Many of these efforts were blocked by federal courts, which ruled that conditioning unrelated federal funding on immigration cooperation violated constitutional limits. While policy debates continue across administrations, the core constitutional principles supporting sanctuary policies remain intact. Local governments retain broad authority to determine how their law enforcement agencies operate and how local resources are deployed.

Present Status of Sanctuary Protections

Understanding sanctuary protections also requires examining immigration trends in New York. The state is home to approximately 3.1 million immigrants, with nearly 40 percent of New York City residents born outside the United States. Undocumented immigrants are estimated to number between 500,000 and 600,000 statewide. Immigrants contribute significantly to the state's economy, paying billions in taxes annually and representing a large share of small business owners and essential workers. In sectors such as healthcare, construction, hospitality, and transportation, immigrant labor forms a backbone of the workforce. These economic realities often shape the argument that inclusive policies, including sanctuary protections, support both public safety and economic stability.

Crime and public safety data have a major role in sanctuary policy debates. Those not in favour often claim that limiting cooperation with federal immigration authorities increases crime. However, empirical research generally does not support this claim. Studies cited by organizations such as the Cato Institute have found that undocumented immigrants are statistically less likely to commit violent crimes than native-born citizens. Research from the American Immigration Council indicates that crime rates in sanctuary jurisdictions are comparable to or lower than those in non-sanctuary areas. One explanation is that when immigrants trust local law enforcement, they are more likely to report crimes and serve as witnesses, improving overall public safety.

Nevertheless, New York faces significant immigration-related challenges. Since 2022, the city has experienced an influx of migrants and asylum seekers, with more than 180,000 arrivals reported over several years. Many have come from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, seeking refuge or economic opportunities. This surge has put immense pressure on housing systems, shelters, and social services. New York's right-to-shelter policies require the city to provide temporary housing to those in need, resulting in billions of dollars in expenditures on emergency housing and support services. Public debate has intensified over how to balance humanitarian obligations with fiscal realities.

Immigration court backlogs present another major challenge. New York's immigration courts have hundreds of thousands of pending cases, with average wait times stretching several years. Asylum seekers often face long delays before receiving work authorization, creating economic hardship and complicating integration. These delays affect not only immigrants but also employers and local communities. Sanctuary protections cannot resolve these systemic issues, which stem largely from federal immigration policy and resource allocation.

Status of Federal and Local Administration in Current Times

Federal–local tensions remain a defining feature of the sanctuary debate. Federal authorities argue that local cooperation is essential for effective immigration enforcement and public safety. Local leaders counter that entangling local policing with federal immigration enforcement undermines trust and diverts resources from community safety priorities. Legal disputes over funding, information sharing, and enforcement authorities continue to shape the process. Courts have generally upheld local autonomy while affirming the federal government's primary authority over immigration law.

Positives of Sanctuary Protections

The benefits of sanctuary protections are often framed in terms of public safety, economic stability, and constitutional principles. When immigrants feel secure interacting with local institutions, they are more likely to report crimes, seek medical care, and participate in civic life. Economically, immigrant participation supports local businesses and tax revenues. Constitutionally, sanctuary policies reinforce federalism by allowing states and cities to control their own law enforcement priorities. At the same time, some argue that sanctuary policies can

strain local resources and create political conflict with federal authorities. These competing perspectives ensure that sanctuary policies will remain a contentious issue.

Future of Sanctuary Protections

Looking ahead, sanctuary protections are likely to remain a central component of New York's immigration framework. However, their effectiveness and sustainability will depend on broader federal immigration reform. Without changes to visa systems, asylum processing, and legalization methods, local policies cannot resolve the underlying challenges. Comprehensive reform at the national level is necessary to address workforce needs, humanitarian concerns, and enforcement priorities in a coherent manner.

Sanctuary protections ultimately reflect a broader debate about the role of local governments in immigration policy. They are not about defying federal law but about defining local priorities within constitutional limits. In New York, these policies aim to maintain public safety, economic vitality, and community trust in one of the world's most diverse urban environments. While political rhetoric often oversimplifies the issue, the legal and practical realities are far more complex. Sanctuary policies operate within a constitutional framework, respond to real-world community needs, and continue to evolve alongside national immigration debates.

I stand before you not just as an attorney, but as someone who has sat across from immigrants in their most vulnerable moments in police stations, courtrooms, and detention centers, where one decision can change the course of an entire life.

Sanctuary Protections and Victims of Crime

Sanctuary protections are closely tied to the purpose of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, which created the U Visa category. The U Visa provides protection to immigrant victims of certain crimes who cooperate with law enforcement. It was designed to encourage undocumented individuals to report crimes without fear of deportation.

In sanctuary jurisdictions like New York City, trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement is essential for the success of the U Visa framework. When immigrants believe that reporting domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, or workplace abuse will lead to immigration consequences, crimes go unreported. Abusers remain free. Communities become less safe.

Sanctuary protections support the very logic of the U Visa system: victims should feel safe coming forward. Without local policies that separate policing from federal immigration enforcement, the U Visa's purpose is undermined.

Another dimension often overlooked in sanctuary debates is workplace exploitation. Undocumented workers are frequently targeted by unscrupulous employers who withhold

wages, ignore safety standards, or threaten to report workers to immigration authorities if they complain.

In industries such as construction, hospitality, domestic work, and agriculture, fear of deportation becomes a tool of control. When local governments distance themselves from federal immigration enforcement, workers are more likely to report labor violations, cooperate with labor departments, and seek justice.

Sanctuary protections do not shield criminal employers. In fact, they help expose them. By reducing fear among workers, these policies strengthen enforcement of labor laws and promote fair competition among businesses.

Immigrants, including undocumented individuals, contribute billions in federal, state, and local taxes each year. Many pay income taxes using Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs). They also contribute through payroll taxes, sales taxes, property taxes (directly or indirectly through rent), and Social Security contributions, often without eligibility to receive benefits.

Organizations such as the American Immigration Council and the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy have documented the significant tax contributions made by undocumented immigrants nationwide.

In New York, immigrants represent a substantial share of entrepreneurs and small business owners. They help sustain industries facing labor shortages and contribute to economic growth in both urban and rural communities.

Today, I want to talk about three issues: the Fourth Amendment, prosecutors' responsibility in plea deals, and the role of criminal trials in immigration enforcement, especially in sanctuary jurisdictions like New York.

The Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution protects every person, not just citizens, from unlawful searches and seizures. Yet many immigrants do not know this. They do not know they can refuse consent to a search without a warrant from a judge. They do not know if they have the right to remain silent. They do not know that an administrative immigration warrant is not the same as a warrant signed by a judge.

When immigrants are unaware of these rights, constitutional protections become meaningless. States must invest in education. Community centers, schools, and public defender offices must provide clear "Know Your Rights" training in multiple languages. Every immigrant should understand: the Constitution protects you, regardless of status.

But knowledge alone is not enough. The criminal justice system itself must act responsibly.

District Attorneys hold extraordinary power over immigrant lives. A single plea deal even for a minor offense, can lead to detention, deportation, and permanent separation from family. This is

why prosecutors must consider immigration consequences before offering pleas. Justice is not served when a low-level offense results in exile from the country someone calls home.

Offices like the Manhattan District Attorney's Office have begun adopting policies that recognize this reality, working toward plea agreements that preserve public safety without triggering unnecessary deportation. This approach does not weaken justice; it strengthens fairness. It ensures that punishment is proportional and humane.

We must also discuss the intersection of criminal trials and immigration enforcement. Although sanctuary cities like New York City limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities, immigrants still face risks. A criminal conviction can trigger detention or removal by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Even when local police do not enforce immigration law, federal authorities may act based on criminal records.

This reality creates fear. Some immigrants hesitate to report crimes. Some avoid courts altogether. When people are afraid to seek justice, public safety suffers for everyone.

Sanctuary policies were created to ensure that local law enforcement serves communities, not federal immigration enforcement. But these policies must be strengthened by education, fair prosecution, and access to counsel. Immigrants must feel safe walking into a courthouse not fearful that seeking justice will lead to deportation.

Final Word

As an immigrant attorney, I believe in a simple principle: constitutional rights do not depend on immigration status. Justice should not depend on where you were born. And public safety is strongest when every member of our community trusts the system meant to protect them.

Let us build a legal system where immigrants understand their rights, prosecutors exercise their power responsibly, and courts remain places of fairness not fear.

Because when we protect the rights of the most vulnerable among us, we protect the integrity of justice itself.

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FAIZA N. ALI

Address: 253 BROADWAY

I represent: MOIA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 §261 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 03/09/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gurvir Singh Sidhu

Address: 2201 Queens Blvd, Woodside, NY 11377

I represent: Sikh Coalition

Address: NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 §261 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Leslie Allen

Address: 116 Nassau Street 3N NY, NY 10038

I represent: The New York City Anti-Violence Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lucia Boyer

Address: 90 Maiden Ln NY, NY 10022

I represent: Catholic Charities Community Services

Address: _____

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arlette Cepeda

Address: _____

I represent: La Colmena

Address: _____

**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: 3/9/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Eduardo Antonetti

Address: 2946 Northern Blvd, LIC, NY 11101

I represent: Internationals Network

Address: same

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 9055 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rebbi Marisa James

Address: 120 West 20th Street

I represent: Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (CBST)

Address: [REDACTED] New York NY

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Juan Diaz

Address: _____

I represent: Children's Defense Fund

Address: _____

**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: 3.9.26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Khadijatu Muhammad

Address: _____

I represent: African Communities Together

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Esther Limb

Address: 100 Broadway

I represent: Her Justice

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 58 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vincent [redacted]

Address: [redacted]

I represent: Workers Strike [redacted]

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. SS 8269 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: March 9, 2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KATIA SKOKO

Address: _____

I represent: Children's Law Center

Address: 44 Court Street, Brooklyn, NY

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**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: 3/9/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deborah Lee

Address: _____

I represent: The Legal Aid Society

Address: 49 Thomas St. NY, NY

**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: 03/09/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mia Casesa

Address: _____ NY 10961

I represent: Workers Strike Back

Address: _____

**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: 3/9/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alberto Oliart

Address: _____

I represent: Workers Strike Back

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 558261 Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Noelle Penas

Address: 3929 50th Street

I represent: New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Address: _____

**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: 3/8/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Arlette Cyprien

Address: [Redacted] Port Richmond

I represent: La Colmenas

Address: _____

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Esther Limb

Address: 100 Broadway 10th Fl. NY NY 10003

I represent: Her Justice

Address: _____

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**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Chua

Address: 100 Pearl Street NY NY

I represent: NYLAG (NY Legal Assistance Group)

Address: _____

**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: 3/09/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Van Xelo

Address: Brooklyn, NY 11220

I represent: Mixteca

Address: 245 23rd St. Brooklyn, NY 11215

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Lopez

Address: _____

I represent: Unlocal Inc.

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Karla Ostolaza

Address: _____ Jackson Heights

I represent: The Bronx Defenders

Address: 360 E 161st St. Bronx NY

**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: 3.9.26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Randy Ali

Address: _____ Pelham NY 10503

I represent: Arab American Family Support Center

Address: 150 Court St, Brooklyn NY 11201

**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: 3.7.26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Korban Kunc

Address: _____ Pelham NY 10803

I represent: Arab American Family Support Center

Address: 150 Court St, Brooklyn, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jalweed Sanollar

Address: _____

I represent: HJ4W4, Doctors Council

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 055 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maryam Shuaib

Address: _____

I represent: Arab American Association of NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 555 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tania Mattos

Address: _____ Queens NY

I represent: Unlora

Address: 45 W 29th St NY Y

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Dave Basnet (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: New York Immigration Coalition

I represent: (NYIC)

Address: _____

**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: _____

Name: Joyce Wong (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 203-05 32nd Ave, Bayside NY 11361

I represent: Korean Community Services of Mt NY

Address: _____

**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: 3/9/2006

Name: Stephanie Kwang (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1409 West 7th Street Brooklyn NY 11204

I represent: Homecrest Community Services

Address: 1409 West 7th Street Brooklyn NY 11204

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**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: 3/9/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MARY ARCHANA FERNANDEZ

Address: 143-02 45th AVE, JUSHING, NY-11355

I represent: SOUTH ASIAN COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL

Address: 31 FV2 CTS (SACS) 143-02 45th AVE, QUEENS NY-11355

**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: 3/9/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nat Naghe

Address: 120 Wall St NY

I represent: Asian American Federation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 03/08/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charles Brown

Address: [REDACTED] NY, NY

I represent: Lutheran Social Services of NY

Address: 475 Riverside Dr NY, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Sophie Dalsimer (NYIFUP Panel)
Address: _____ w/ (BxD + LAS)
I represent: Brooklyn Defender Services
Address: 177 Livingston St, Bklyn, NY 10021

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: _____
Address: _____
I represent: _____
Address: _____

**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: 3/19/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Zachary Ahmad
Address: _____
I represent: New York Civil Liberties Union
Address: 125 Broad St.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 557261 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DR STEVE AUERBACH

Address: [REDACTED] 16025

I represent: Health Justice for NY

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 557261 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RAMEN SEDDIG

Address: 1077 Coney Island Ave, Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Council of Peoples Organization (COPC)

Address: _____

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sierra Kraft

Address: _____

I represent: ICARE Coalition

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 261 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Shelley English

Address: _____

I represent: Health Justice for NY

Address: _____

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Funmi Akinlawonu

Address: 40 Broad Street, New York, NY 10004

I represent: FPWA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 261 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dr. Betty Kolod (MD, MPH)

Address: _____ Box NY

I represent: Health Justice for NY 10468

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**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: 3/9/26

Name: Leidis Dela Rosa (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: La Colmena

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 Res. No. 261

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/2026

Name: Pantia Nouri (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 121 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10013

I represent: The Door

Address: 121 Ave of the Americas New York, NY 10013

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55 Res. No. 261

in favor in opposition

Date: March 9, 2026

Name: Otto Heilmann (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 121 1/2 Avenue of the Americas, 3rd Fl

I represent: The Door

Address: 121 Avenue of the Americas

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lauren Migliaccio

Address: 17 Battery Place NY NY 1004

I represent: Immigrant Justice Corps

Address: 17 Battery Place Suite #331 NY NY 1004

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 55,209,261 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rabbi Adam Graubart

Address: _____ Brooklyn

I represent: Self NY 11216

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 261 & 55 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 3/9/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Samantha Sanchez

Address: _____

I represent: Common Cause New York

Address: _____

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