

PRIDE IN POLICY

A Guide to a More
Just, Equitable
City for LGBTQIA+
and TGNCNBI
New Yorkers

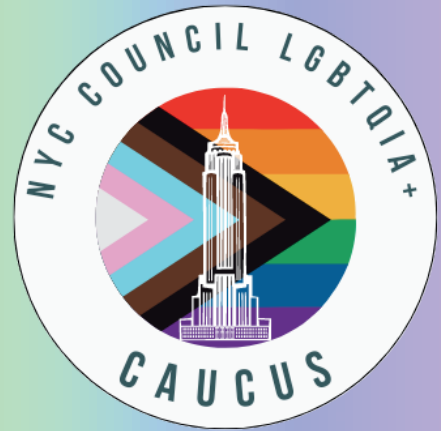


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LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Dear Colleagues,

International attacks against the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more) community—especially trans people and those at multiple intersecting identities—have been on the rise. We mourned the murders of transgender adolescents Pauly Likens, Brianna Ghey, Jazlynn Johnson, and countless others. These bigoted attacks bring to light a necessary truth: Our work to secure and affirm the lives of our LGBTQIA+ neighbors is far from over.

In June 2023, the New York City Council’s LGBTQIA+ Caucus released The Marsha & Sylvia Plan, a policy report detailing tangible solutions the City Council can take to combat the myriad injustices facing our communities. Since then, we have worked to increase funding and pass legislation as outlined in The Plan. The Council has passed four bills from The Marsha & Sylvia Plan:

- Int. 564-2022 sponsored by Caucus Co-Chair Council Member Cabán, to establish a commission on LGBTQIA+ older adults within the Department for the Aging;
- Int. 976-2023 to report on the number of LGBTQIA+ youth in NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) custody, including the type of facility they are located in, availability of wraparound services, related incident reports of hate crimes or discrimination, and more;
- Int. 831-2022 to establish a resource navigator program that centralizes resources for women and gender-expansive folks in DOC custody in locating reentry services that matches their unique needs; and
- Int. 887-2023 to require DOC to provide a monthly report on individuals in DOC custody whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to the individual at birth regarding their housing unit placements, denial/objections to housing unit placement, and any violence propagated against those individuals.

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Additionally, the Council has successfully fought back against budget cuts to vital HIV/AIDS services and won, passed [Int. 435-2024](#) to expand the availability of rapid STI testing sites, passed [Int. 1021-2023](#) and [Int. 1022-2023](#) to establish new Crisis Respite Centers and Clubhouses throughout the City, secured access to IVF treatment for LGBTQIA+ city workers, passed [Int. 1074-2023](#) to prohibit the use of city resources to enforce restrictions on gender-affirming care, and more.

Despite these wins, the LGBTQIA+ community is in the throes of a severe national backlash. As of late June 2024, the [ACLU's legislative tracker](#) reports 530 anti-LGBTQ bills nationwide—more than any previous year. These bills explicitly restrict young gender diverse people's access to gender-affirming [medical care](#), and they have devastating consequences: school hate crimes within states featuring anti-LGBTQIA+ policies have [quadrupled](#) and LGBTQIA+ youth mental health has [plummeted](#). This will only get worse with the election of Donald Trump as our next President.

While many view New York City as a safe haven for LGBTQIA+ people, the truth is that many of these attacks take place in our own backyard. Just a few months ago, Manhattan's largest school district voted in favor of [Resolution #248](#), which requested that the NYC Department of Education (DOE) convene a Gender Guidelines Review Committee, which would have the power to prevent transgender girls from playing on girls' sports teams. When this resolution passed, Council Member Bottcher [stressed that](#) "denying [transgender people's] ability to participate in sports aligned with their gender identity is not only wrong, it's flatly illegal." While the DOE has [denied this request](#), it is concerning to know that these transphobic views exist in our city. Right outside New York City, Nassau County passed a [law](#) prohibiting sports teams that allow transgender women and girls from using Long Island sports facilities. This transphobic law outs and expels athletes who were not assigned female at birth from women's teams by forcing members to provide their original birth certificates.

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Conservative fundamentalist ideology has proliferated in the city, as demonstrated by the anti-LGBTQ Moms for Liberty group hosting a sold-out town hall. Since then, Moms for Liberty has established a Queens chapter, and related groups PLACE NYC and FAIR have gained outsized influence over NYC schools. These groups' impacts threaten the lives and livelihood of LGBTQIA+ students, families, and educators. In response, our community must prepare itself and work to support LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers as possible. Everyone—especially transgender youth and adolescents—should be able to participate in activities and express themselves as they see fit.

We also mourned the loss of community leaders this year, including Cecilia Gentili, a pioneering advocate for the dignity and freedom of sex workers. Cecilia was a vital pillar in the hyperlocal community of Jackson Heights trans Latina sex workers, and played a critical leadership role across the city, country, and world. She founded Trans Equity Consulting, an organization that paid transgender individuals for their expertise on community matters, co-founded Decrim NY, a campaign working to decriminalize sex work which successfully repealed the “walking while trans” law in New York, and co-founded the Callen-Lorde Community Health Center’s Cecilia’s Occupational Inclusion Network (COIN), which provides free health services for sex workers. This doesn’t even scratch the surface of the incredible work that Cecilia did for the LGBTQIA+ and sex work community. Cecilia was a force; she made our community stronger in so many ways and has been dearly missed by all.

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

In the face of these injustices and tragedies, the City Council’s LGBTQIA+ Caucus continues fighting for our communities. **This agenda is a second iteration of the Caucus’ plan for how the City Council can combat the myriad injustices facing the LGBTQIA+ community in New York City.** The New York City Council’s LGBTQIA+ Caucus, which includes the body’s six LGBTQIA+ members, has a mandate to establish “legislative and budget priorities and the creation of community initiatives, rooted in the tradition of Black Queer feminism, to dismantle systems of oppression, and promote the culture, contribution, and interests of the LGBTQIA+ community in New York City.” Below we outline tangible steps the Council can take to fulfill our mission and support our communities.

Over the past year, we hosted public roundtables in each borough to discuss the Marsha & Sylvia Plan and ensure the plan accurately reflects the needs and demands of the LGBTQIA+ community. Attendees of these roundtables were members of and leaders in their respective boroughs, so we turned to them to determine additional policies for which the Council’s LGBTQIA+ Caucus can advocate. The updates made in this version of the plan reflect the feedback and discussions had during the roundtables.

This report was created in the memory of all the LGBTQIA+ titans that came before in the hope that the policies within will make the world not just livable, but a place where the next generation can thrive. We recognize the work of Cecilia Gentili, Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Rusty Mae Moore, and the many others who championed the needs of Black and brown TGNCNBI folks and whose legacy we seek to honor in all we do.

LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Queer rights movements throughout history have been labors of love and joy because that is the world we are fighting to build - a world in which we uplift each other, are free from violence and hate, and can celebrate our beautiful LGBTQIA+ community. With that belief at the center of our legislative processes, we remain empowered to invest in the needs of New York City's queer community to affirm our place in the city we call home. It is more important now than ever before that we continue to organize with Speaker Adrienne Adams, our allies in the Council, and our colleagues supporting the LGBTQIA+ and TGNCNBI communities across the five boroughs to turn this plan into a reality.

A quick note about language in this report. Throughout this document, we use the acronym LGBTQIA+ to address the broader community and the acronym TGNCNBI when referring specifically to transgender, gender nonconforming/gender expansive, nonbinary, and intersex folks.

We look forward to working together to turn this agenda into law because when our communities win, we all win.

In solidarity,



Tiffany Cabán
Co-Chair, LGBTQIA+ Caucus



Erik Bottcher
Co-Chair, LGBTQIA+ Caucus



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The New York City Council's LGBTQIA+ Caucus is among the largest in the City Council's history. With six out and proud LGBTQIA+ members, the Caucus represents 11% of the Council's 51 members. Caucus members represent diverse districts spanning neighborhoods ranging from Chelsea and Greenwich Village in Manhattan to Crown Heights and Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn to Astoria and Forest Hills in Queens to Mid Island in Staten Island. Each of these widely different neighborhoods has at least one thing in common: a robust and active population of LGBTQIA+ residents.

As of March 2021, over 700,000 adults in the New York Metro area identify as LGBTQIA+, the largest LGBTQIA+ population of any U.S. city according to an [analysis](#) from the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. These LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers reflect the diversity of our city. About half identify as white, while 26% identify as Latine and 13% identify as Black. Nearly one in four LGBTQIA+ people in New York are raising children.

Our City Council has recently made a concerted effort at tackling the systemic issues facing many of the intersectional identities our LGBTQIA+ neighbors hold. In the first half of 2024 alone, the Council voted to [expand the availability](#) of rapid STI testing sites, [investigated pay disparities](#) and proposed steps to mitigate wage inequality, called to address the needs of [runaway and homeless youth](#), [supported survivors of gender-based violence](#), and much more.

Many Council Members personally prioritize the advancement of marginalized communities. In 2021, Council Member and LGBTQIA+ Caucus member Crystal Hudson [authored](#) A Black Agenda for New York City that spells out six bold policy recommendations to establish a more equitable and just city for all, and fellow Council Member and LGBTQIA+ Caucus Co-Chair Tiffany Cabán [penned](#) a twelve-point agenda to advance gender equity in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council – which remains majority women for the first time in history and led by the first Black woman elected Speaker of the City Council – is prioritizing the rights of marginalized communities. Given this, there has never been a more opportune time to advance a platform that addresses the needs of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Prior to the Marsha & Sylvia Plan, the first version of this report, there was no coordinated, municipal-level agenda aimed at addressing the myriad needs of the diverse, multifaceted LGBTQIA+ community in New York City. Many city-level elected officials may not know how to provide support other than marching in Pride once a year, issuing statements decrying homophobic and transphobic attacks, hosting a Drag Story Hour at a local library near them, and putting a Progress Pride Flag in their office. To be clear, these are important and helpful actions that help raise visibility of LGBTQIA+ people and show them that their local elected officials support them. But these actions do not advance substantive measures to address systemic issues facing LGBTQIA+ people in our city.

This report aims to make it easy for allies within city government to understand what LGBTQIA+ folks need and what lawmakers can do to meet those needs. After working extensively with advocates, we have expanded these needs across eleven issue areas: Arts & Culture; Education; Government Operations; Health; Housing & Homelessness; Immigration; Mental Health; Older Adults; Public Safety; Sex Work; and Youth & Foster Care.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Baseline over \$5 million in funding for LGBTQIA+ cultural organizations centered on marginalized communities
- Recognize the accomplishments of LGBTQIA+ and TGNCNBI New Yorkers by passing resolutions to (1) recognize Transgender Day of Remembrance/Transgender Day of Visibility, (2) designate January 31st as Cecilia Gentili Day, and (3) commemorate the work of Black and Latine trans women in advancing the rights of LGBTQIA+ folks in NYC and across the nation
- Establish laureate programs for the drag and ballroom communities

1

ARTS & CULTURE

The Council must recognize the work of LGBTQIA+ artists and support the newest activists and artists by providing them the resources needed to advocate for and represent their communities.

2

EDUCATION

The Council must prioritize the safety of LGBTQIA+ students, parents, and teachers across school communities, and continue to work with its partners in the state legislature to build supportive programs and systems within schools for LGBTQIA+ students.

- Expand all-gender facilities in public schools
- Bolster income access and job security programs for LGBTQIA+ youth
- Increase funding for the LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Curriculum Initiative
- Strengthen support for LGBTQIA+ educators and student groups
- Provide in-school medical and educational support for transgender students

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

The Council must ensure New York City's government has the resources and systems in place needed to support the nation's largest LGBTQIA+ population.

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- Create and fully fund an Office of LGBTQIA+ Affairs
- Nominate and appoint more LGBTQIA+ individuals to citywide posts
- Establish a targeted local hiring program for LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers to build on the progress of the Pride at Work Initiative
- Require city agencies to provide an "X" option for gender

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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HEALTH

The Council must expand access to free and low-cost health services for LGBTQIA+ and HIV-affected New Yorkers and combat national efforts to restrict access to gender-affirming care.

- Expand outreach and distribution of PrEP, PEP, and DoxyPEP, throughout NYC and ensure all New Yorkers have access to free PrEP/PEP/DoxyPEP regardless of insurance status or immigration status
- Support folks seeking gender-affirming care in New York City by prohibiting activities that prevent or seek to prevent patient entry into sites that provide gender-affirming care
- Baseline at least \$15 million to support nonprofits that provide TGNC-specific, affirming, and competent services
- Allocate \$10 million to expand services in Street Health Outreach and Wellness units for unhoused LGBTQIA+ people

- Create a housing task force to develop detailed recommendations to support and create more LGBTQIA+ housing
- Baseline at least \$10 million to support nonprofits that specialize in LGBTQIA+ youth housing and related services, including operators of youth shelters
- Direct DYCD to open and operate more tailored facilities for LGBTQIA+ young adults
- Establish a direct cash transfer program for TGNCNBI New Yorkers experiencing homelessness
- Produce social housing

5

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

The Council must support the expansion of supportive housing and shelter beds for LGBTQIA+ people, especially youth, strengthen protections to keep these New Yorkers safely housed, and produce social housing.

6

IMMIGRATION

The Council must support LGBTQIA+ immigrants and asylum seekers by investing in a coordinated and comprehensive response to the current influx of new arrivals and resulting housing and humanitarian crisis.

- Allocate \$550,000 to nonprofits serving LGBTQIA+ immigrants and asylum seekers by aiding with issues like legal assistance, immigration workshops, housing support, job applications, and more
- Improve and expand the shelter system to ensure the LGBTQIA+ immigrants and asylum seekers have safe, stable housing when they arrive
- Expand city and state housing voucher programs to cover immigrant New Yorkers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Invest in the mental health workforce
- Expand and invest in Crisis Respite Centers, mental health crisis response teams, and Clubhouses
- Create a LGBTQIA+ Mental Health Advisory Committee

MENTAL HEALTH



The Council must bolster mental health support for LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers in order to fully address people's needs and challenges.

- Build more LGBTQIA+ specific housing for older adults
- Mandate LGBTQIA+/HIV anti-discrimination and competency training for all older adult service providers
- Provide free sexual health and wellness programming at older adult centers

OLDER ADULTS



The Council must ensure LGBTQIA+ older adults can age in place with dignity and receive the culturally-appropriate support services they need.



PUBLIC SAFETY

The Council must overhaul how our city ensures the safety of its people, especially women and LGBTQIA+ people of color, to reduce the overrepresentation of LGBTQIA+ people at every stage of the criminal legal system.

- Improve services for TGNCNBI people while in custody and during reentry by requiring city agencies like the Department of Corrections to recognize "X" gender markers and require DOC to house TGNCNBI people consistently with their gender identity or where they decide they will be safest
- Change legal language in city laws to eliminate harmful and dehumanizing language regarding people in custody
- Establish Community Safety Centers and Hate Response Funds
- End the NYPD's Vice Squad and disband the SRG. Replace the Vice Squad with peer-led programming to help New Yorkers navigate and mediate community complaints, and aid LGBTQIA+ people access legal, housing, and other services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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SEX WORK

The Council must recognize once and for all that sex work is work.

- Pass the Sex Worker Protection Act, which creates city-level protections for sex workers
- Continue funding the \$4.4 million Persons Involved in the Sex Trade Initiative to support citywide organizations that provide services for sex workers
- Prohibit employers from discriminating against someone on the basis of their current or former participation in legal sex work

- Allocate at least \$5 million to aid ACS in recruiting parents from within the LGBTQIA+ community and ensuring placements for LGBTQIA+ youth are affirming and safe
- Allocate \$5 million for community-based family acceptance programming and mental health services to promote family acceptance and in-home reparative intervention so fewer LGBTQIA+ youth will be kicked out of their homes
- Pass legislation requiring ACS to report on the number and placement of LGBTQIA+ foster youth and youth in the juvenile legal system

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YOUTH & FOSTER CARE

The Council must overhaul our city's youth foster care and juvenile delinquency systems to better support LGBTQIA+ youth and ensure they have the resources needed to transition successfully to independence.

ARTS & CULTURE

LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers have made this city what it is. In every medium from dance to theater, photography, and visual art, LGBTQIA+ folks are the leaders of their disciplines. They have redefined genres and expanded the perception of LGBTQIA+ folks in a positive manner. Our city must move to not only recognize the work of trailblazing LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers but also support the newest wave of LGBTQIA+ artists and activists by providing them with the resources they need to continue their work.

Bolster Funding for Queer Institutions

New York City is home to some of the most unique LGBTQIA+ cultural institutions in the world. For years, the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art has been the only dedicated LGBTQIA+ art museum in the world. The American LGBTQ+ Museum serves as the first major museum in the nation that centralizes the history of LGBTQIA+ people in America. Historically, the City Council has supported these and other organizations through discretionary funding. The City should instead baseline more than \$5 million in funding for LGBTQIA+ cultural institutions to support their programming and operations so New Yorkers across the five boroughs can experience and learn about our city's queer history and culture. It is integral that this funding is allocated towards under-resourced and marginalized communities; organizations that receive funding should collaborate with community stakeholders. In doing so, the Council should create youth-oriented funding opportunities for media training, storytelling, and more.

Recognize the accomplishments of trailblazing LGBTQIA+ & TGNCNBI New Yorkers.

Our city has a long way to go in recognizing the feats of our LGBTQIA+ trail blazers, and this Council can right that wrong by formally acknowledging the accomplishments of trailblazing LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers. The Council must pass:

ARTS & CULTURE

- [Res. 184-2024](#) to recognize November 20th as Transgender Day of Remembrance and March 31 as Transgender Day of Visibility in New York City;
- [Res. 124-2024](#) celebrating the contributions of Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera to the LGBTQ+ rights movement in the United States;
- A resolution designating January 31st as Cecilia Gentili Day in New York City;
- A Local Law calling on the City to establish a public inventory of all significant sites, spaces, structures, or historic districts associated with the LGBTQIA+ community;
- A resolution to call on the federal and state governments to formally nominate Hudson River Park at Gansevoort Peninsula as a historical site to honor Marsha P. Johnson at the site of her death; and
- A resolution to commemorate the work of Black and Latine trans women in advancing the rights of LGBTQIA+ folks in NYC and across the nation and expedite the installation of the Marsha & Sylvia Monument at Ruth Wittenberg Triangle.

Celebrate drag and ballroom culture by establishing laureate programs.

Drag and ballroom have been two of the most important cultural creations of the LGBTQIA+ community, establishing safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ folks to express their identity in community. Only in recent years have both drag and ballroom begun to break through to mainstream culture through TV shows like RuPaul's Drag Race, Pose, and Legendary and documentaries like Paris is Burning. Fundamentally, it was Black and brown New York-based performers who have made both drag and ballroom what it is, and our city must celebrate and uplift these performers. The Council must create a drag laureate program wherein the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Office of Nightlife would appoint a drag laureate to serve as an ambassador to local businesses and LGBTQIA+ spaces. It must also pass similar legislation to create a ballroom ambassador who can advocate for the needs of the ballroom community and educate New Yorkers on the history of ballroom.

ARTS & CULTURE

Support LGBTQIA+ & TGNCNBI pride in the public realm.

During Pride Month in June, many LGBTQIA+ neighborhoods take to their streets to advocate for needed reforms while also raising visibility of the needs of the LGBTQIA+ communities. Some LGBTQIA+ establishments in Manhattan and Brooklyn have established formal or informal rainbow crosswalks to honor the importance of the LGBTQIA+ community in specific areas. The Council should pass legislation requiring the Department of Transportation, in coordination with community stakeholders, to identify up to ten locations, at least one in each borough, for the establishment of a permanent rainbow crosswalk near or at a site of historic significance to the LGBTQIA+ community. Additionally, the Council should fund micro-grants for TGNBNC artists and offer free unused city office space to LGBTQIA+ entrepreneurs, artists, BIPOC LGBTQIA+ youth, and nonprofits to sustain the LGBTQIA+ artistry that makes NYC so unique. The Council can collaborate with NYC Parks to provide free public programs centering artistic expression in each borough.



EDUCATION

There are more than one million students in New York City’s public schools, the largest and most diverse public school system in the world. Our city’s students deserve the richest, most fulfilling educational experiences and the ability to learn in a safe, welcoming, and warm environment. As of November 2024, 46 anti-LGBTQ laws have been passed into law throughout the country. Mostly targeting school curricula and communication by limiting or prohibiting the mention and discussion of queer identities in public schools, these policies have exacerbated a youth mental health crisis. As of 2024, 90% of LGBTQIA+ young people’s well-being has been negatively impacted due to recent politics. The same study found that LGBTQIA+ young people experience mental health struggles and suicidal ideation much more frequently than their non-LGBTQIA+ counterparts, with rates exacerbated for transgender and racialized youth. It’s not only students feeling the deep pain of bigotry: LGBTQIA+ teachers, school administrators, and other educational staff are similarly impacted. LGBTQIA+ teachers are accused of pushing “woke gender ideology” by asking students for their pronouns, displaying photos of their families on their desks, and assigning readings that include LGBTQIA+ characters. Because of this stigmatization, LGBTQIA+ identities themselves are viewed as aberrant and even criminalized.

Here in New York City, we’re witnessing an uptick in transphobic attacks, with extremists sowing hatred outside of schools, libraries, and local organizations. The growth of groups like PLACE NYC and FAIR prove that now is the time to actively strengthen LGBTQIA+ rights. We must extend our longstanding commitment to equity and inclusion to tangibly support LGBTQIA+-friendly schools and redouble our efforts to build safe and supportive school communities for all.

EDUCATION

Support LGBTQIA-led and centered groups in schools.

To further honor our city's commitment to LGBTQIA+ friendly school communities, we encourage the Council to support LGBTQIA-led and LGBTQIA-centered groups in public schools, including Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) student clubs, and provide support for LGBTQIA+ educators, who may also face discrimination in the workplace. The Council must secure baseline funding for GSAs in NYC schools to adequately meet students' needs. Presently, unpaid volunteer staff oversee Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs), formerly known as Gay-Straight Alliances, in New York City schools. These positions, while meaningful, can be dangerous for staff, especially given rising anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiments nationwide and in certain parts of New York City. Many administrators of these clubs are caught between students who understand or are trying to understand their gender expression and sexual orientation and their parents, peers, and administrators who may resist. Additionally, we urge Council members to use their discretionary funding in LGBTQIA-friendly ways by bringing Drag Story Hour and other programs to their local schools, libraries, community spaces, and open streets, and to publicly defend the enriching, creative, and beloved program.



EDUCATION

Increase funding for LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Curriculum Initiative.

In FY25, the city dedicated \$2.8 million to fund the Department of Education’s (DOE) “effort to support the needs of LGBTQ youth and address the intersectionality of race, sexual orientation, and gender identity through DOE’s general curriculum.” This amount has remained the same for years, despite growing needs. Again, we urge the Council to increase funding for this important initiative and to allocate specific funding to purchase more LGBTQIA+ literature for school libraries. The Council must ensure that each subject taught in schools includes LGBTQIA+ issues and topics, expand the Hidden Voices curriculum, and pass legislation to mandate its inclusion in all public schools. The city should follow the lead of organizations like Lambda Literary, which has served LGBTQIA+ writers and readers for nearly 30 years, and further elevates LGBTQIA+ stories and voices in children’s and young adult literature. Studies have shown that the inclusion of an LGBTQIA+ curriculum leads to safer, more positive school environments and fewer instances of bullying and exclusion. Where New York City leads other cities follow: By publicly and unapologetically recommitting efforts to LGBTQIA+ education initiatives, we can help push back on the pervasive anti-LGBTQIA+ hate rippling across the country and make clear that we are a safe city for all LGBTQIA+ folks. Additionally, the Council must expand LGBTQIA+ funding at the NYC DOE level and provide more support for Respect for All (RFA) liaisons in schools. The city should establish DOE-maintained LGBTQIA+ and TGNCNBI resources pages so that students can easily access information.

EDUCATION

Establish a program to train and place more LGBTQIA+ teachers.

Currently, the New York City Department of Education and the New York State Education Department have little data on the sexual orientation or gender identity of its educators. Yet it is clear we have an insufficient number of trans or gender non-conforming educators in city schools. Research shows students benefit from having a teacher who shares their identities. As more and more individuals are coming out as LGBTQIA+ (e.g. 28% of Gen Z adults, 26% of high school students), more and more young people will feel comfortable coming out too. As such, the City should establish a program similar to NYC Men Teach, which former Mayor de Blasio established to close the gap between men of color students and teachers for LGBTQIA+ adults. This program should emphasize TGNCNBI adults and create a pipeline for greater representation of queer educators in city schools. As a first step, the City should field a survey of educators to determine their sexual orientation and gender identity so adequate targets can be established for this program.

Bolster income access and job security programs for LGBTQIA+ youth.

As of July 2024, nearly 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQIA+. LGBTQIA+ youth are overrepresented in the homeless population, as they are 120% more likely to become homeless than their counterparts. It is imperative to provide them with resources that will put them on a path to financial stability. The Council must work with the Administration to baseline funding for the Unity Project, which works across city agencies to support LGBTQIA+ homeless youth, young adults, and elders.

EDUCATION

Enhance anti-LGBTQIA+ bullying and harassment reporting.

Studies show that schools under-reported bullying incidents compared to the amount of bullying that actually occurred. The city needs to enhance its reporting from the DOE to understand the full scope of bullying, cyber-bullying, and harassment at schools, especially for LGBTQIA+ and TGNCNBI youth. The Council must pass legislation requiring the DOE to submit an annual report to the Council that summarizes the outcomes of the annual school survey completed by parents both citywide and for individual schools. The report should include an analysis that compares the school survey results with bullying incidents reported per the Chancellor's regulation A-832. The Council should also host oversight hearings regarding the implementation of policy changes agreed upon in recent settlements of bullying-related litigation.

Establish designated LGBTQIA+ student support groups across all 25 CUNY campuses.

CUNY currently has an LGBTQI+ Hub to support the needs of queer students across its many campuses, including a liaison at each campus. However, 15 campuses do not currently have a student support group to support LGBTQIA+ students on-campus. The Council should support the creation of LGBTQIA+ student support groups at all of CUNY's 25 campuses.

Implement cultural competency training.

New York City should follow in California's footsteps to create cultural competency training for all educators and school staff on LGBTQIA+ identities and ways to support students (CA just passed a state-wide policy doing the same). This should include stronger cultural sensitivity and competency training requirements for teachers, parent coordinators, and other school staff so that everyone who touches culture in the school system knows how to best support and celebrate LGBTQIA+ students.

EDUCATION

Provide in-school medical & educational support for transgender students.

Simply put, students who do not feel safe or comfortable in their own bodies will face difficulties in public environments, especially schools. According to the [Human Rights Campaign's 2023 LGBTQ+ Youth Report](#), LGBTQIA+ students feel unsafe at their schools. Per the survey, students feel unsafe in school bathrooms (26% of LGBTQIA+ youth and 33% of trans youth) and school locker rooms (40% LGBTQIA+, 49% trans). Notably, this lack of safety and concern over the ability of LGBTQIA+ youth to live successful lives – especially amid anti-LGBTQIA+ policies and legislation – has upended the mental health of community members. According to the [Trevor Project 2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Youth People](#), 41% of LGBTQ young people “seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year—and young people who are transgender, nonbinary, and/or people of color reported higher rates than their peers.” Without safety, TGNC and LGBTQIA+ kids cannot learn; and without an education, they cannot access power. NYC schools should ensure all medical personnel are trained annually in LGBTQIA+ competency, including the latest medical developments for gender-affirming care. Additionally, NYC school healthcare providers should connect transgender teenagers with gender-affirming care, including hormones, blockers, and PrEP. Further, City and State lawmakers should ensure that sex education classes teach about gender expression and sexual orientation in a positive and welcoming manner.

EDUCATION

Expand all-gender facilities in public schools.

As of 2022, approximately one in twenty youth identify as non-binary or transgender, with the number anticipated to rise in the coming years. As more young people feel comfortable coming out as TGNCNBI, the need for all-gender facilities will only increase. Currently the city's plumbing code requires separate facilities for each sex and has a minimum number of plumbing features for facilities. Because many public schools are older buildings that are not designed to accommodate many single stall restrooms, the Council must amend the city's plumbing code to permit for the creation of more all-gender spaces. The Council must also pass legislation requiring DOE to publicly report on all-gender facilities in public schools.

Support state legislation to improve school environments for LGBTQIA+ students.

The Council must pass resolutions in support of a handful of state legislative proposals that combined, help combat discrimination and ensure inclusive curricula for LGBTQIA+ folks, including:

- S1532/A4576 to require local boards of education and school districts to establish policies and procedures regarding the treatment of TGNCNBI students;
- Legislation to require New York State to establish and maintain educational standards and professional development programs designed to ensure all educators in New York are knowledgeable about the needs of transgender and gender non-conforming students.
- S351/A4375 to mandate that schools teach middle and high school students about the political, economic, and social contributions of LGBTQIA+ people; and
- S2584A/A4604 to require comprehensive sexuality education for K-12 students (Res. 0094-2024).

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

For a city that is home to the Stonewall rebellion, ballroom culture, and some of the most renowned LGBTQIA+ spaces in the world, our government is woefully behind in responding to the needs of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers. Our city still does not have a centralized hub for resources for LGBTQIA+ folks and has limited data on the LGBTQIA+ folks living and working in our city. We must work to strengthen the internal structures in City Hall to ensure the needs of the LGBTQIA+ communities are top of mind and addressed in real time by establishing an Office of LGBTQIA+ Affairs.

Create and fully fund an Office of LGBTQIA+ Affairs.

Right now, our city has no fully-staffed and fully-funded central hub where LGBTQIA+ folks can go to find resources specific to their communities, comparable to the specific offices that address racial and gender equity, other than the underfunded NYC Unity Project. The Council must pass an amended version of [Int. 669](#) to establish an Office of LGBTQIA+ Affairs to promote city programs, policy coordination, and community outreach and education with respect to issues of concern to LGBTQIA+ communities. The Council must ensure this office is robustly funded and adequately staffed to serve the needs of the hundreds of thousands of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers in our city. It must also fight for an LGBTQIA+ liaison at every city agency, who can work with the Office of LGBTQIA+ Affairs to coordinate a response to address the needs of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers.

Study budget equity for LGBTQIA+ providers across the five boroughs.

LGBTQIA+ individuals live all throughout New York City, but LGBTQ Community Member Centers and advocacy organizations remain [disproportionately clustered](#) in Manhattan. With growing concentrations of LGBTQIA+ folks living in the outer boroughs, the Council must ensure budget equity for LGBTQIA+ community centers and providers. The Council must conduct an audit of discretionary funding allocated toward all LGBTQIA+ providers to determine whether it is adequately funding organizations that serve the outer boroughs.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Collect comprehensive data on LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers.

Right now, our city has limited data on its LGBTQIA+ population. Because there is no Census question asking folks about their sexual orientation or gender identity, we have few regularly updated data sources available that help us understand the scope and diversity of our city's LGBTQIA+ community. By gaining a greater understanding of what our community looks like, our city's elected officials can tailor their work to address people's specific needs. The Council must pass legislation that requires the city to conduct an extensive survey of the LGBTQIA+ population in New York City. The survey should use standard polling methodology to identify the number of LGBTQIA+ folks living in New York City, disaggregated by sexual orientation, gender identity, age, home neighborhood, income, occupation, and other relevant socio-economic factors. The survey should also seek to understand the extent to which LGBTQIA+ folks use city services and which services they use. Any survey responses must be kept anonymous, and participants should be notified that their responses will be collected anonymously and that any information shared will not be held against them.

Nominate and appoint more LGBTQIA+ individuals to citywide posts.

The City Council can nominate and vote on a number of individuals to citywide posts. According to the New York City Charter, the Council has "advise and consent" authority over the Commissioner of Investigation and members of the Art Commission, Board of Health, Board of Standards and Appeals, City Planning Commission, Civil Service Commission, Landmarks Preservation Commission, Tax Commission, Taxi and Limousine Commission, and public members of the Environmental Control Board. The Council has 30 days after receiving a nomination to hold a hearing and act on it. The Council routinely has the authority to nominate members of various task forces or other bodies established by Council legislation. The Council must ensure that LGBTQIA+ folks—especially those holding underrepresented identities—are considered for these positions. Doing so would help to increase the number of LGBTQIA+ folks appointed to citywide positions.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Establish a targeted local hiring program for LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers.

In FY23, the New York City Council established the Pride at Work Initiative, which aims to bring more LGBTQIA+ folks into good-paying, union jobs. This initiative has continued into FY25, but remains poorly funded. In addition to increasing funding for this program, the city must establish and fund a targeted local hiring program for vulnerable New Yorkers, including LGBTQIA+/TGNCNBI folks to provide a pipeline into Civil Service careers without onerous exam requirements.

Mandate single facility unisex bathrooms in government buildings.

In 2016, then-Mayor Bill de Blasio signed Executive Order 16, which “requires all City agencies to ensure that City employees and members of the public have access to single-sex facilities such as bathrooms and locker rooms in City buildings and areas consistent with their gender identity or expression without being required to show identification, medical documentation, or any other form of proof or verification of gender.” The Council must codify this Executive Order and add new language that ensures all newly constructed government spaces include single facility unisex bathrooms.

Condemn homophobic and transphobic language from elected officials or government staffers.

In 2022, the Council released a statement condemning anti-LGBTQIA+ actions and rhetoric and the elected officials who support such acts. The city must ensure all who engage in blatant homophobia or transphobia are held accountable for their actions in a means that is commensurate with their action. The Council must establish a clear policy that is upheld and enforced for all members that delineates clear repercussions for any anti-LGBTQIA+ actions.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Protect the rights of TGNCNBI people seeking government services.

While anti-trans bills are being introduced across the country at record levels and with devastating impacts, it is critical that New York City memorialize support for TGNCNBI people and affirm their rights. The Council must pass [Res. 108-2024](#), calling on Congress to pass [S. Res. 144/H. Res. 269](#) recognizing the Federal Government's duty to develop and implement a Transgender Bill of Rights to protect and codify the rights of transgender and nonbinary people under the law and ensure their access to medical care, shelter, safety, and economic security. The Council must also pass [Int. 246-2024](#), requiring city agencies to provide an "X" option for gender on certain forms.

Support efforts to expand the Lorena Borjas Transgender and Non-Binary Wellness and Equity Fund to \$4 million.

Lorena Borjas was a Queens-based, Mexican-American, transgender activist who [passed away](#) in 2020 due to complications from Covid-19. She personally supported many LGBTQIA+ and TGNCNBI folks in Queens by assisting them in dealing with police harassment, substance use disorder, and other problems. In 2011, Lorena and attorney Chase Strangio founded the [Lorena Borjas Community Fund](#) to help break the arrest-jail-deportation cycle of many noncitizen transgender sex workers. After Lorena passed, transgender activists called for a [\\$15 million](#) trans equity fund in New York State. In June 2022, Governor Hochul [signed into law](#) a bill securing \$2 million in baselined funding to support organizations that serve the TGNCNBI community. Two years later, she announced a \$5.4 Million investment in LGBTQIA+ services split across several different programs. Given how governments across the nation are working to undermine the rights of TGNCNBI folks, it is more important than ever to strengthen our investment in organizations that serve many of our most marginalized neighbors. As such, the Council must support efforts to double the Transgender and Non-Binary Wellness and Equity Fund to \$4 million in the final adopted FY25 New York State budget.

HEALTH

LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers face extreme health inequities in our city. Many within the LGBTQIA+ community struggle to access proper care due to stigma, discrimination, lack of insurance, high medical costs, and providers being unequipped to meet their unique needs. This is further exacerbated by discrimination against age, gender expression, gender identity, race, and HIV status. Many report being misgendered or unable to find an accessible provider for costly gender-affirming care, which should always be considered primary care. Though New York City is home to some of the world's most notable hospitals, these facilities remain out of reach for some LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers, many of whom are uninsured or underinsured – especially Black and brown transgender and gender nonconforming New Yorkers. We must expand access to all forms of PrEP and PEP, including pills and long-acting injectables, ensure everyone can access HIV and STI treatments and prevention, baseline funding for gender-affirming care, and do more to create a city where LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers are able to live healthy lives.

Baseline funding for TGNCNBI-affirming care.

A 2022 report from the Williams Institute at UCLA found that the number of young people identifying as transgender nationwide has doubled in recent years, with 3% of all New York youth ages 13 to 17 identifying as trans – the greatest percentage of any state. As it becomes safer for more TGNCNBI folks to come out and embrace their gender identity, our city must increase its support for these folks to ensure those without the resources for necessary interventions receive the care they need. The city should baseline at least \$15 million annually in funding for nonprofits that provide trans-specific, affirming, and competent services. This should also include funding for services that insurance and existing non-profit providers may not currently cover, such as cryogenic storage for semen or eggs for TGNCNBI folks who may be interested in having a biological child after they transition. It should also cover LGBTQIA+ community outreach workers to engage with TGNCNBI people in navigating affirming care, surgery, aftercare, insurance problems.

HEALTH

Support folks seeking gender-affirming care in New York City.

Currently, dozens of state legislatures are considering proposals to prohibit gender-affirming care for youth, which some states define as 26 years old and younger. Some of these bills criminalize health care providers who provide this care. New York City must double down on its status as a safe haven for LGBTQIA+ folks seeking gender-affirming care. The Council must pass Int. 629-2024 to require reporting on training for medical care for transgender and gender non-conforming people. It must also pass legislation to prohibit activities that prevent or seek to prevent patient entry into sites that provide gender-affirming care. This includes if anti-trans protestors escalate activities and seek to physically block patients from entering these facilities. Finally, the Council must prohibit city agencies, including DHS and HRA/DSS, from denying services to TGNCNBI individuals in city facilities if they are deemed too fragile or high maintenance for the facility following surgical care, and focus on creating additional housing for New Yorkers experiencing homelessness who have received gender-affirming surgery.

Notify TGNCNBI patients of their rights at city hospitals.

Many TGNCNBI folks may be concerned about visiting city hospitals because physicians or other personnel may not recognize or affirm their identities and may not deliver the care they need. The Council must pass Int. 66, which requires DOHMH to ensure city hospitals have signage that notifies folks of their right to be referred to by their preferred name, title, gender, and pronoun and to establish guidance for hospitals to list and post transgender-specific services they offer.

HEALTH

Expand Ending the Epidemic Initiative to incorporate more Black- and brown-led organizations.

Since FY17, the Ending the Epidemic (ETE) Initiative has funded organizations to support prevention, education, outreach, and support services that align with the statewide plan, Ending the Epidemic, to reduce new cases of HIV. According to the [state's ETE dashboard](#), we still haven't met our statewide targets to increase the number of individuals filing PrEP prescriptions to 65,000 (50,558 statewide in 2022) and to reduce the number of new HIV cases by 55% to 1,515 (1,681 statewide in 2022). According to [DOHMH data](#), the bulk of new diagnoses in New York City are primarily among Black (44% of new diagnoses in NYC) and Latine (37%) New Yorkers. The ETE Initiative, funded at [\\$9.55 million](#) in FY23, has gotten us far and can get us even further with strategic resource allocation. This Initiative must be enhanced so it can include more organizations that specifically serve Black and brown LGBTQIA+ folks to ensure the complexities of the intersectionality of race and gender identity/sexual orientation are understood and their needs met.

Expand Hepatitis C Prevention and Care.

Nearly 30% of people with HIV are living with Hepatitis C, but there is not a corresponding amount of resources in Hepatitis C education and support. The city must do more to structure a response and address the syndemics impacting people living with HIV. Hepatitis C is a curable disease, unlike HIV, so the city should aim to reach zero new Hep C cases. Many people do not understand how Hepatitis C is transmitted, or how to prevent and treat it, so the city should also invest in supportive and education services to ensure that those in the LGBTQIA+ community understand the risks and resources that exist.

HEALTH

Expand outreach and distribution of PrEP, PEP, and DoxyPEP throughout NYC.

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is one of the most effective tools for combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, as it reduces the risk of contracting HIV through sexual intercourse by 99% when taken properly. Comprehensive data documenting the prevalence of PrEP use in the city remains few and far between, which limits our understanding of where we must increase resources so all communities can access PrEP and understand its benefits. The Council must pass Int. 362, which would require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to undertake an exhaustive study of the distribution of PrEP in New York City, including the number of individuals receiving PrEP, the number of individuals receiving outreach on PrEP, the number of city staff administering PrEP, and the number of staff conducting outreach on PrEP. This study should include long-acting PrEP injectables and report the outreach for and administration of long-acting injectables separately. The Council must also pass Res. 395, which calls on the state legislature to pass and the governor to sign legislation (S3297 & S3227) to increase access to PrEP and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). The city must ensure that all eligible New Yorkers can access free PrEP, PEP, and DoxyPEP regardless of insurance status or immigration status, mandate training for all city staffers who work with assault victims to discuss PEP, offer a free prescription in the medical location of initial contact, and provide information on PrEP/PEP to individuals in city jails.

Expand sexual wellness services in Street Health Outreach and Wellness units

As approximately 40% of the homeless youth population identifies as LGBTQIA+, our city's street outreach activities should specifically target the needs of this population. The Council must allocate \$10 million to expand services in Street Health Outreach and Wellness units for unhoused LGBTQIA+ folks to include sexual wellness services like PrEP/PEP access, condom distribution, and referrals to H+H LGBTQIA+ outreach workers.

HEALTH

Continue monitoring and fighting Mpox in New York City

The Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox or MPV) crisis took New York City by storm in summer 2022, with our city scrambling to respond to the dual crises of Covid-19 and Mpox. Last year, the city saw nearly 4,000 Mpox cases, primarily in Black and Hispanic/Latine men, and the dispersal of more than 150,000 vaccine doses, including more than 52,000 New Yorkers who received both doses of the two-dose JYNNEOS vaccine. Though the city has declared the end of the current outbreak, another outbreak or Mpox variant could bring yet another crisis to the LGBTQIA+ community. The Council must pass Int. 620 and Res. 294 to ensure our city is prepared for any subsequent outbreak. Int. 620 would require DOHMH to develop a plan to prevent the spread of Mpox, conduct relevant outreach and training on the disease including prevention and transmission, and coordinate with agencies to ensure that communities most at risk of acquiring the virus have strong, accessible vaccine access. It should also fund organizations specifically to administer vaccines and continue conducting outreach on Mpox so folks understand how it is transmitted and how to identify symptoms.



HEALTH

Increase support for older New Yorkers with HIV and long-term survivors.

Three out of five people living with HIV are 50 or older, and 77% of those are people of color. Yet the unique intersectional needs of people aging with HIV are often underrecognized and unaddressed. We must promote and fund programming that increases the collaboration between HIV and aging providers across the city to create more effective approaches that improve the health and well-being of older people living with HIV. Support for New Yorkers who are currently living with HIV – many of whom are long-term survivors and have been living with HIV for decades – is just as vital as our work to end the epidemic. The aging community living with HIV in New York City will continue to grow and there must be a strong and intentional strategy to improve health outcomes, access to care, and services. The city must also invest in specialized clinics or programs that combine HIV care with geriatric services, ensuring that aging LGBTQIA+ individuals have access to mental health and housing support. These programs could also provide long-term support for navigating health insurance and medical costs as this population faces multiple chronic conditions.

Support statewide reforms to bolster LGBTQIA+ health.

The Council must pass resolutions supporting the following proposals:

- S7590/A7897 to create a single-payer universal healthcare system in New York State;
- S4287/A1936 to prohibit New York State from engaging with contractors who fail to provide health insurance that covers services for TGNCNBI folks;
- A7687A, the Senate counterpart of which has already passed, to shield LGBTQIA+ folks from prosecution for seeking, receiving, or providing gender-affirming care in New York State; and
- S183/A2418 to amend the Social Services Law to mandate local social services departments connect people living with HIV with benefits and ensure folks living with HIV who receive housing assistance do not pay more than 30 percent of their household income towards housing costs.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

The scope of New York City’s housing crisis is widely covered, and solutions—from new developments and upzonings, to office conversions, social housing, and tenant protections — are plentiful. Often lost in the conversation about the housing crisis, however, are the specific communities most at risk of displacement and homelessness. LGBTQIA+ youth have a 120 percent higher risk for homelessness than other youth, and queer youth comprise as much as 6 percent of the general population but make up 40 percent of the homeless youth population in NYC. With rates of homelessness and housing instability associated with increased risk of mental health struggles and suicidal ideations, it is paramount that New York City officials prioritize LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers in all new housing policies and embrace Housing First for all New Yorkers. As such, the Council must support the creation of shelter beds, permanent supportive housing rooms, and deeply affordable apartments for homeless and low-income LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers and expand protections, programming, and reporting requirements to keep folks safely housed.

Create a housing task force to develop detailed recommendations to support and create more LGBTQIA+ housing.

Solving LGBTQIA+ homelessness and housing instability will take an all-hands-on deck approach, and the Council must pass legislation to convene a multi-agency task force charged with identifying how to support and create more housing responsive to the specific needs of the LGBTQIA+ community across all ages. The task force — which should also include representatives from commercial and nonprofit developers, impact investors, service organizations, and end-users — would review how to:

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

- Preserve existing affordable housing for older adults;
- Support existing LGBTQIA+ affordable elder housing with adequate funding to address the disparities faced by LGBTQIA+ elders;
- Create intergenerational housing and supportive housing to ensure a legacy of elders and support for young people;
- Expand emergency shelter operations to ensure DHS has capacity to serve LGBTQIA+ adults in every borough;
- Create more beds devoted to the needs to migrant families and formerly incarcerated people;
- Reintroduce the Supervised Independent Living Program (SILP) program for LGBTQIA+ youth exiting foster care and seeking alternative permanent living arrangements;
- Ensure that youth in supportive housing can maintain supportive housing after they reach 25 years old;
- Establish more trans-specific transitional independent living centers (TILs) for people 16-20 and 21-24;
- Determine the feasibility of creating an office under DHS or HPD specifically dedicated to tackling the LGBTQIA+ homelessness crisis and ensuring folks can transition to permanent, supportive housing;
- Ensure the safety of TGNCNBI youth is considered as a factor of housing policy;
- Develop new LGBTQIA+ affirming housing options and innovative LGBTQ+ elder housing models; Create more permanent supportive housing units for LGBTQIA+ youth;
- Create access to LGBTQIA+ friendly support services in residential settings, Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA), and NORCs (naturally occurring retirement communities); and
- Create more specific types of shelters: focusing on mental health, substance use, rehabilitation support, and others.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Baseline funding for programing and operations of LGBTQIA+ youth housing.

To address the LGBTQIA+ youth homelessness crisis, our city must deeply invest in moving young LGBTQIA+ folks from the streets to permanent housing. The first part of that process is to ensure there are sufficient emergency shelter/temporary housing options that provide comprehensive services for LGBTQIA+ youth and understand the trauma experienced by these young people. The city must baseline at least \$10 million to support nonprofits that specialize in LGBTQIA+ youth housing and related services, including operators of LGBTQIA+ youth shelters. The funding should also be used to bolster LGBTQIA+ youth respite services and to hire more housing navigators in homeless youth drop-in centers that can support LGBTQIA+ youth in securing permanent housing and peer navigators to support homeless youth in drop-in centers for runaway and homeless youth with everything from access to public assistance to STI prevention.

Direct DYCD to open and operate more tailored facilities for LGBTQIA+ young adults.

Homelessness among LGBTQIA+ youth remains high, and too many existing shelters and supportive housing programs are not tailored to this population's unique needs and experiences. The Council must work with DYCD to open and operate more tailored facilities for young LGBTQIA+ adults. These facilities should include providing at least 100 beds for 21-24 year olds, expediting the creation of transitional independent living programs for young adults living with severe and persistent mental illness, establishing new shelters for LGBTQIA+ youth, creating more homes for members of the NYC ballroom community, and more. The Council must also pass legislation directing DYCD to grant providers greater discretion in serving age ranges they feel most appropriate for their facilities.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Expedite the adoption of Lopez v. DHS settlement stipulations regarding TGNC individuals.

In November 2021, trans activist and head of STARR, Mariah Lopez, won a groundbreaking settlement against the Department of Homeless Services that changed how TGNC people are treated in our city's shelters. Under the settlement, the city agreed to (1) establish dedicated shelter units and shelters for TGNC people; (2) amend the intake process to require shelter staff to record clients' preferred names and pronouns and better accommodate TGNC people; (3) require mandatory training for staff on the rights of TGNC clients in shelters; and (4) amend DHS' complaint procedure. The Council's Committee on General Welfare must hold regular oversight hearings to determine whether DHS is upholding the settlement. Additionally, the Council must secure additional funding for the Office of the Ombudsman to bolster capacity and staff, and also pass legislation that would establish a 24-hour phone hotline within the office, require the office to provide case specific guidance in navigating the complaint process, and expand services to be available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.

Rehire and fund peer navigators at drop-in centers across NYC.

In 2022, Mayor Adams announced a plan to provide jobs to 16 formerly unhoused young people to serve as peer navigators at city drop-in centers to help young people navigate city services and find housing. After the City hired these young people, the program was suddenly defunded with no plans or timeline for when it would recommence. As LGBTQIA+ youth are at high risk of homelessness and needing services, peer navigators are crucial to ensuring their stability. The City should restore funding for these 16 peer navigators and baseline it moving forward.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Require DHS to submit quarterly reporting on the conditions at Marsha's House.

While the city attempts to tackle the youth homeless epidemic, we must ensure that LGBTQIA+, single adults are not left behind. Currently, there is only one shelter specifically for LGBTQIA+ adults in the entire city, Marsha's House, located in the Belmont neighborhood of the Bronx. Since opening in February 2017, the shelter has been marred by controversy, with allegations of sexual harassment, drug use, and assault. The Council has a duty to guarantee the safety of every New Yorker in our care, with a particular responsibility to those most vulnerable. Those seeking shelter and services at Marsha's House have no other option and, therefore, it is critical that we ensure it is not only a safe respite for the LGBTQIA+ adults currently in its care, but also an attractive option for those currently homeless. The Council must pass a bill requiring DHS to submit quarterly reports on the conditions in the shelter, including the following metrics:

- Number of people who come into the shelter;
- Number of people who leave the shelter and why;
- Number of people who are denied access to the shelter and why;
- The services provided at the shelter;
- The LGBTQIA+-inclusive training received by staff; and
- Number of people leaving because they secured permanent housing.

Further, because Marsha's House is the only LGBTQIA+ adult shelter in the city, it must be accessible to all LGBTQIA+ adults who need it. Asylum seekers are currently not able to access DHS facilities like Marsha's House, they must instead use the city's Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs). LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers often feel unsafe in HERRCs due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, so the city should allow them access to Marsha's House.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Establish a direct cash transfer program for TGNCNBI New Yorkers experiencing homelessness.

One of the greatest barriers for TGNCNBI folks to stability in all areas of life, including housing, is a lack of regular income. Many TGNCNBI people have needs that cisgender New Yorkers do not, like high-cost medical bills. These needs drain already strained income sources and jeopardize the livelihood of transgender and gender non-confirming New Yorkers. Council Member Crystal Hudson passed [Int. 0561-2022](#), which would authorize the City to establish or fund one or more pilot programs to provide direct cash assistance to certain eligible low-income individuals. The City should create its first pilot program to provide direct cash assistance to low-income TGNCNBI New Yorkers experiencing homelessness to help them secure and finance stable housing.

Produce social housing.

New Yorkers, particularly LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers, will be at higher risk of housing precarity as long as the housing market is controlled by corporate landlords who care about profit over people. Social housing means permanently affordable homes, democratically owned and controlled by the people who live there, in conjunction with the public. This could look many different ways, but the essence is that social housing protects residents from rent hikes driven by speculators, which can lead to displacement and luxury development. New York City and State should invest in social housing by all possible methods. This includes the passage of the following bills:

- [S8494/A9088](#): Create a Social Housing Development Authority
- [Intro. 0196-2022](#): Community Opportunity to Purchase Act
- [Intro 0078-2024](#) : Disposition of real property of the city (Public Land for Public Good)
- [Intro. 0570-2024](#): Establish an NYC Land Bank

IMMIGRATION

In the last two years, over 200,000 people, many of whom identify as LGBTQ+ immigrants and asylum seekers, have arrived in New York City. They face unique challenges such as discrimination, housing instability, and lack of access to essential services. Additionally, stigmatization due to sexual orientation and gender identity decreases access to life-saving health services and creates social vulnerability, especially when combined with other sources of discrimination, such as being a person of color, not speaking English, or not being born in the US. For these reasons and more, LGBTQ+ immigrants are at a high risk of experiencing homelessness, have increased health needs, and face various legal challenges.

We have regularly heard about the dire conditions in shelters, systemic barriers to accessing healthcare and other basic services, and critical need for legal support for asylum seekers in NYC. We can no longer accept the rhetoric that pits working class New Yorkers against new neighbors. We must urgently invest in a comprehensive and coordinated response to address the needs of our newest New Yorkers.

Establish and baseline a Speaker Initiative for LGBTQIA+ immigration services.

As a safe haven to countless populations fleeing persecution and discrimination abroad, New York City also serves as a safe haven for many LGBTQIA+ immigrants seeking a more accepting community and home. As such, many LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers are foreign-born and, once in the city, they face unique challenges, like navigating a complex medical system, establishing new support networks, and identifying providers who understand their culture and speak their language. To support this significant segment of the LGBTQIA+ community, the Council should allocate baseline \$550,000 to fund nonprofits serving LGBTQIA+ immigrants by aiding with issues like legal assistance, case management, immigration workshops, asylum applications, housing support, job readiness, and more.

IMMIGRATION

Expand CityFHEPS to cover immigrant New Yorkers.

Currently, New York City’s housing voucher program, CityFHEPS (“City Fighting Homelessness and Eviction Prevention Supplement”), is only accessible for families in which at least one household member has legal immigration status. The Council should expand the CityFHEPS program to be available to every NYC household regardless of immigration status. This could save the city around \$3 billion annually when compared with the cost of housing new arrivals and asylum seekers in emergency shelters.

Enhance DYCD’s Runaway & Homeless Youth Program.

Immigrants and asylum seekers ages 14-24 are currently being denied services in shelters for youth and being sent to adult shelters. The most recent report required by Local Law 79 of 2018 shows that over 1,100 youth were turned away from DYCD shelter programs from January 1 - June 30, 2024. The Council should clarify the responsibility and enhance funds for DYCD’s Runaway & Homeless Youth Program to better serve this population.

Fund mental health services and trauma-informed care.

Experiencing persecution and discrimination abroad and adjusting to a new life with new challenges is often a traumatic experience. LGBTQIA+ immigrants and asylum seekers need mental health support, particularly those focused on trauma-informed care. The Council should increase funding for LGBTQ-focused mental health organizations to specifically provide services to immigrants and asylum seekers, including bilingual counseling and culturally sensitive therapy programs.

IMMIGRATION

Fund free legal services.

While the city invested further into immigration legal services for FY25, there is still a gap in service provision. Many LGBTQIA+ immigrants asylum seekers do not have access to free comprehensive legal services. The city's Department of Social Services should partner with community-based organizations to provide legal services, focusing on asylum claims, deportation defense, and housing protections. Legal services with trauma-informed care should be part of the standards of care in the shelter system.

Expand immigrant rights education.

Many of our LGBTQIA+ new neighbors have not been informed about their rights regarding deportation, mass deportations, and other immigration-related threats. The city should fund and launch a multilingual campaign that educates LGBTQIA+ immigrants and asylum seekers on their rights. This could include partnerships with legal service organizations and immigrant rights advocates.

Support state-level immigration policy.

The Council should pass resolutions in support of the following state bills:

- [S2237B/A3020B](#) to expand healthcare coverage for New Yorkers who are excluded from eligibility for coverage because of their immigration status;
- [S568/A4021](#) to create a statewide Housing Access Voucher Program, providing critical housing assistance to LGBTQIA+ immigrants and asylum seekers and addressing homelessness and housing insecurity at a broader scale; and
- Pass SNAP4All to expand access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for all residents, regardless of immigration status, and ensure food security for LGBTQIA+ immigrants and asylum seekers.

MENTAL HEALTH

Our city is currently facing a mental health crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and disinvestment in communities. Decades of neglect have left many New Yorkers without access to basic services, while mental health care is often only available to the privileged few. LGBTQIA+ folks, especially LGBTQIA+ youth, are more likely than their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts to experience mental health conditions. According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults are more than twice as likely as heterosexual adults to have a mental health condition while transgender folks are nearly four times as likely as cisgender adults. Many LGBTQIA+ folks face rejection within their community, housing insecurity, substance use issues, and other traumas that compound and result in mental illness. The Council must prioritize access to mental health care and harm reduction for LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers.

Create a LGBTQIA+ Mental Health Advisory Committee.

To begin addressing the issue of LGBTQIA+ mental health, the Council must pass legislation requiring DOHMH to create a standing advisory to address how to improve mental health services for LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers. The committee would be composed of advocates within the community and should issue annual reports detailing policy and budget recommendations for the Administration and City Council to consider.

Invest in the mental health workforce.

Mental health providers have been paid inadequately for far too long, resulting in a major shortage in the workforce. The Council must advocate for adequate funding allocations to city contracted service providers to ensure these providers are earning a fair wage and can support their families. Additionally, the city should establish and fund a program at CUNY schools that would subsidize the cost of mental health education, degrees, and licensing. This program should particularly incentivize LGBTQIA+ people to study for degrees in mental health services.

MENTAL HEALTH

Expand Crisis Respite Centers.

New York City's Department of Health & Mental Hygiene operates a Crisis Respite Center program, offering an alternative to hospitalization for people experiencing emotional crises. The Centers offer a warm and safe place for New Yorkers to access 24-hour peer support, psycho-educational treatment, and recreational activities for up to one week. Clients can come and go as they please, continuing to attend an existing job or spend time with family and friends. There are currently four Crisis Respite Centers throughout the city, but this is not nearly enough. The Council passed Int. 1021-2023 last year, requiring the mayor to establish four new centers. The Council must fully fund and implement this law, and ensure that these centers are safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ people experiencing emotional crises.

Increase funding for Mental Health Crisis Response Teams.

With LGBTQIA+ people, especially LGBTQIA+ youth, more likely to be stopped by police than their straight, cisgender counterparts, and too many police interactions leading to injury or harm, the Council should expand and improve the city's mental health crisis response program. The city already has an alternative responder program, B-HEARD, which operates in parts of the city and dispatches an EMT paramedic alongside a mental health professional from NYC Health + Hospitals as first responders to people experiencing a mental health emergency. The Council should fight to strengthen B-HEARD by including peers who have lived experience with mental health diagnoses, increasing funding to hire more teams and pay social workers fairly, and improving the quality and frequency of data reporting on the program.

MENTAL HEALTH

Establish new Clubhouses throughout New York City.

Clubhouses are evidence-based models of psychiatric rehabilitation that offer free support to people with serious mental health conditions. They are one-stop-shops that offer assistance with benefits applications, legal services, health care, job searches, and more. The Council passed Int. 1022-2023, requiring the mayor to establish five new clubhouses throughout the city, and now must ensure that this law is fully funded and implemented.

Support Statewide proposal for Telehealth Payment Parity.

The state must expand telehealth options for mental health services, particularly for LGBTQIA+ youth and individuals in underserved areas. Telehealth services could be offered through Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), community centers, schools, and public health institutions, ensuring that LGBTQIA+ individuals can access culturally competent care without the barrier of transportation or fear of discrimination in physical health settings.



OLDER ADULTS

Many of the LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers who have fought tirelessly to make New York City a safe haven for LGBTQIA+ people are now advancing in age and looking to age in place with dignity. The number of older adults in New York City is expected to jump 41 percent by 2040, according to a recent report from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. And many of those older adults identify as LGBTQIA+. Older adults broadly wish to age in place rather than move to a new city or into a congregate setting. A recent AARP survey found that 77 percent of older adults want to age in their own homes. Our city must begin working towards being truly age-friendly and identify and meet the needs of older adults from marginalized communities, including LGBTQIA+ older adults.

Build more LGBTQIA+ specific housing for older adults.

New York City is home to a handful of housing facilities that are tailored to the needs of LGBTQIA+ older adults. In Fort Greene, SAGE's Stonewall House provides 145 affordable housing units for New Yorkers, half of whom identify as LGBTQIA+, and has a 7,000-square-foot community center that provides programming for this community. By living in identity-affirming housing, LGBTQIA+ older adults will not need to worry about discrimination and will be able to find community, which can be especially difficult for older LGBTQIA+ folks who may lose their chosen family as they age. The city should partner with groups like SAGE and others to operate at least one LGBTQIA+ housing facility in each community district. The city should also embark on an assessment of the current model to determine whether it adequately services the LGBTQIA+ population and identify improved ways to set aside housing for LGBTQIA+ and HIV-affected older adults.

OLDER ADULTS

Mandate anti-discrimination and competency training for older adult service providers.

Too many older adult providers do not have the training needed to understand the complexities of issues facing LGBTQIA+ and HIV-affected older adults. The Council must pass [Int. 775-2024](#) requiring older adult service providers to receive training on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and legislation to ensure all older adult service providers undergo an LGBTQIA+ cultural competency course to understand the complexities facing this population. Int. 775 should be amended to include home health aides and anyone performing in-home services for older adults and their families. The bill should also be amended to include HIV competency training to best support the growing number of New Yorkers aging with HIV. There are multiple barriers to care and services for older New Yorkers living with HIV including stigma, insensitive or unrelatable language, and lack of representation that all act as barriers to potentially life-changing services. The Council must also pass legislation requiring NYC Aging, in coordination with the Mayor's Commission on Gender Equity and other offices and relevant agencies, to identify and implement metrics for any contracted providers that address the provider's LGBTQIA+ competency.

Provide free sexual health and wellness programming at older adult centers.

Sexual health is a core component of healthy aging and LGBTQIA+ and HIV competent sexual health and wellness programming should be strongly encouraged at older adult centers across New York City. Talking about sex and sexuality can be an empowering experience, and older adults need access to supports that help ensure their sex lives can be rewarding, safe, and something they are comfortable discussing in older adult spaces. The Council should pass legislation mandating that all older adult centers provide regular culturally competent and age-targeted sexual health and wellness programming. Additionally, any sexual health campaigns, including those about access to PrEP and PEP, should feature older adults.

OLDER ADULTS

Expand NYC Aging’s outreach to LGBTQIA+ and HIV-affected older adults.

Many LGBTQIA+ and HIV-affected older adults may be unaware of the various resources the city provides to them. While NYC Aging has engaged in robust outreach programs like the “Join Us” campaign to bring more older adults back to older adult centers, the agency should also tailor an outreach component to the LGBTQIA+ community and older adults living with HIV. The Council must pass legislation that would require NYC Aging to create a formal outreach strategy targeting the LGBTQIA+ community and older adults living with HIV, in coordination with relevant city agencies and offices, to explain available resources for LGBTQIA+ and HIV-affected elders, including programming for older adults who are considering transitioning. This outreach strategy must be accessible and effective for older adults, and must come with a corresponding funding increase to the LGBTQIA+ organizations doing the outreach.



PUBLIC SAFETY

The ability of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers to live full, healthy, and joyful lives is predicated on their ability to exist safely at home, at work, in transit, and while socializing. Sadly, LGBTQIA+ people, particularly women and LGBTQIA+ people of color, are not only at a heightened risk of violence compared to their straight and cisgender peers, but they are also overrepresented at every stage of the criminal justice system. Further, TGNCNBI New Yorkers often survive at the intersection of many socio-economic burdens. They disproportionately face food, shelter, and employment insecurity, race-based and gender-based discrimination, and immigration status issues. They are also notoriously policed and criminalized, and thus disproportionately likely to be incarcerated. With extremists peddling anti-LGBTQIA+ misinformation campaigns online and influencing policy, like the 530 anti-LGBTQ bills nationwide, and targeted attacks against TGNCNBI youth on the rise, the safety of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers has never been more important.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Protect TGNCNBI people while in custody and during reentry from sexual and physical violence and provide greater support.

Currently, the Department of Correction (DOC) is woefully unprepared to protect and support TGNCNBI folks while they are incarcerated. In its first report, released in August 2022, the Task Force on Issues Faced by TGNCNBI People in Custody made numerous recommendations about necessary reforms that must be made by DOC, including housing people consistent with their gender identity from the moment they enter DOC custody, but DOC has flatly ignored the recommendations. For instance, the Task Force noted that gender expansive folks are commonly routed through the incorrect intake and “endure days to weeks in custody that is misaligned with their gender identity.” As such, many TGNCNBI individuals may be placed in a housing unit that matches their sex assigned at birth but not their gender identity, stripping them of a gender-affirming space while incarcerated and placing them in danger of physical and sexual violence from other people who are incarcerated and corrections officers. Most notably, TGNCNBI people in custody face physical threats (rape, sexual assault, physical violence), inadequate supports (inability to access basic necessities because of fear to leave their cells), and frequent verbal harassment (misgendering, misnaming, and other forms of verbal harassment).

The Council must pass Int. 625-2024 to require DOC to house TGNCNBI people consistently with their gender identity or where they decide they will be safest. TGNCNBI people are required by New York City and New York State Human Rights Law to be treated consistently with their gender identities in all aspects of public life. It is beyond time for DOC to be required to comply as well. The Council and the city must also immediately adopt all of the Task Force’s recommendations, and the Council must pass Int. 152-2024 to extend the duration of the Task Force and increase its authority to ensure TGNCNBI people are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

To further ensure TGNCNBI folks receive the gender-affirming care they deserve while incarcerated, the Council must pass:

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Legislation to create a process for people in custody and DOC staff to obtain gender-affirming items or medical devices such as wigs, chest binders, and tucking undergarments;
- Legislation requiring sensitivity training on TGNC/NBI identities for DOC staff; and
- Legislation to require DOC and other city agencies to recognize “X” gender markers

Change legal language to emphasize the personhood of people who are incarcerated.

TGNC/NBI New Yorkers often survive at the intersection of many socio-economic burdens. They disproportionately face food, shelter, and employment insecurity, race-based and gender-based discrimination, and immigration status issues. They are also notoriously policed and criminalized, and thus disproportionately likely to be incarcerated. Additionally, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people are more likely to be arrested than straight people, according to research from the [Prison Policy Institute](#). We need to ensure that LGBTQIA+ and TGNC/NBI folks have their humanity and identity recognized at every step of the process. As such, the Council must pass [Int. 151-2024](#) to amend the city’s charter, administrative code, plumbing code, and building code to eliminate the harmful and dehumanizing language of “inmate,” “prisoner,” and “incarcerated individual” to use person-first language like “persons incarcerated” and “persons in custody.”

Create an inventory of LGBTQIA+ safe spaces.

To ensure LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers patronize establishments expressly committed to their safety, we urge the Council to pass legislation requiring the City’s Small Business Services (SBS) to conduct an outreach program to small businesses to identify safe spaces for LGBTQIA+/TGNC/NB folks. SBS would provide a sticker for the door of the business that indicates they’re a sanctuary space and would post a list of all safe spaces online.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Address rising hate crimes by establishing Community Safety Centers and Hate Response Funds.

While New York City has not yet experienced the wave of anti-LGBTQIA+ and, in particular, anti-trans, legislation seen in other parts of the country, hate crimes against the City's LGBTQIA+ community are up by nearly 50%. To address a multitude of safety concerns by LGBTQIA+ folks and others with marginalized identities, we support the launch of a Community Safety Center pilot program: a neighborhood-based one-stop shop for community-led alternatives to criminalization that focus on violence interruption, restorative justice, and services based approaches. When a community member experiences an act of hate violence, they could access support and resources at the Community Safety Center. Additionally, we support the creation of a citywide Racism and Hate Response Fund to ensure that trauma experienced as a result of hate violence will not be further compounded by financial precarity.

End the NYPD's Vice Squad and replace it with peer-led programming.

The NYPD's Vice Squad, a notoriously abusive and costly division, is tasked with policing "quality of life" offenses like sex work, massage work, narcotics, and gambling. While the Vice Squad purports to target trafficking, their tactics have resulted in false arrests with little evidence and the death of Yang Song, a sex and massage worker, during one of their raids. Former sex workers have called for the Vice Squad's budget to be used, instead, for peer-led, multi-lingual outreach to massage workers, street-based sex workers, and trafficking survivors. Peers would help navigate and mediate community complaints and could connect vulnerable workers with access to legal, housing, and other services. These services should be administered through an agency that is not the NYPD.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Disband the NYPD's Strategic Response Group.

The Strategic Response Group (SRG) is a notoriously violent rapid response unit within the NYPD that is often deployed at protests. The SRG has brutalized demonstrators at protests on a variety of issues, including the George Floyd protests in 2020 and the March for Black Trans Liberation in May 2023. While TGNCBNI New Yorkers are already notoriously policed and criminalized every day, they are even more at risk and disproportionately brutalized when peacefully protesting. The Council must disband the SRG and instead invest in community programs and care services that keep LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers safe.

Support state legislation to improve conditions for incarcerated LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers

As allies in the New York State Legislature introduce bills to improve the health and safety of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers, the Council must support their passage by joining their public advocacy, introducing complementary resolutions, and, where possible, introducing city-level bills that could be more quickly passed. A non-exhaustive list of promising pieces of legislature at the State level or ideas for state lawmakers to develop include:

- [S2860/A709](#), The Gender Identity Respect, Dignity and Safety Act, to establish that incarcerated individuals be presumptively placed in a correctional facility with persons of the gender that most closely aligns with the person's self-attested gender identity;
- [S6611/A2746A](#) to clarify that the New York State human rights law applies to prisons, jails, and police; and
- Legislation to expand data collection under Kendra's Law to identify the number of involuntary commitments of LGBTQIA+ folks, as proposed by [Equality New York](#).

SEX WORK

New York City's economy does not work for everyone. Flexible, high-paying jobs are nearly impossible to come by and far too many workplaces refuse to hire members of the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrants, undocumented folks, pregnant people, parents, English language learners, and people with disabilities. While some sex workers' entrance is survival sex work (especially youth), selling services because they have few to no other options to put food on the table, others begin (and stay) because they make good money, create their own schedule, and find it empowering. Whatever reason a New Yorker first begins engaging in sex work and whether they are looking to leave the field or stay long-term, the city has a responsibility to protect their health and safety, support their economic self-sufficiency, and build the caring, non-judgmental society all workers deserve.

Pass city-level protections for sex workers.

While state action is essential, local legislation can go a long way in protecting workers in NYC today. Advocates and organizations like Decrim NY and Red Canary Song have long identified the needs, and organized themselves in mutual aid efforts that could be formalized by the city. The Council should pass [Int. 149-2024](#) to improve conditions and increase protections for sex workers by:

- Providing grants to community organizations working directly with people who engage in sex work;
- Prohibiting housing discrimination based on a person's current or former employment in sex work;
- Creating a dedicated review and enforcement board in the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection to highlight the unique unfair work practices affecting people who engage in sex work and providing them with information related to their rights
- Requiring the Administration for Children's Services to submit a yearly report related to any such cases where information related to an individual's participation in sex work is highlighted in the process of the case; and
- Amending the city privacy laws to protect against the disclosure of a person's status as a sex worker.

SEX WORK

Continue funding for City Council’s Persons Involved in the Sex Trade Initiative with a special focus on sex worker-led organizations.

In 2019, the City Council launched a new initiative, Supports for Persons Involved in the Sex Trade, to provide funding to organizations that offer “services including health care, legal assistance, housing, emergency shelter, and case management to persons involved in the sex trade.” In FY23, the Council designated \$4.4 million to the initiative but, in recent years, has received criticism about the organizations receiving funding. The LGBTQIA+ Caucus urges the Council to provide funding via this initiative to organizations who honor the legitimacy of sex work and are accessible and nonjudgmental in their approach. Further, the Council should ensure that these organizations are providing resources in support in accessible locations where they can effectively reach sex workers.

Prohibit employment discrimination based on employment history.

Former and current sex workers are at higher risk of employment discrimination, including discrimination in hiring and firing decisions and in compensation. Rather than making it more difficult for vulnerable workers to find and keep jobs, we must create protections to give them a fair chance to be hired. The Council should pass [Int. 973-2024](#) to prohibit employment discrimination based on a person’s employment history, including their past or present participation in legal sex work.

SEX WORK

Support sex work decriminalization and support for LGBTQIA+ survivors of violence in the New York state legislature.

By driving sex work underground, continued criminalization of sex work (even criminalization of just the “buyer” side) leads to diminished health and safety outcomes among sex workers. In 2021, the New York state legislature took the significant step of finally repealing the harmful Loitering for the Purpose of Engaging in Prostitution Statute that disproportionately targeted and arrested trans women of color (even those not involved in the sex trade). This year, we urge the New York state legislature to pass The Stop the Violence in the Sex Trades bill (S4396), which would decriminalize commercial sex while maintaining criminal penalties for those exploiting minors, trafficking, coercion, sexual abuse, abuse of minors, and rape.

Additionally, temporary orders of protection disenfranchise the most marginalized New Yorkers by making housing, employment, and education even more difficult to obtain while they await their day in court. They are issued at the beginning of the court case, before any investigation, based upon police reports. These orders have immense consequences for young people, LGBTQIA+ people, criminalized survivors of violence, noncitizens, and people experiencing housing instability. In many instances, LGBTQIA+ people have these orders issued against them – even when they were targeted by biased-based violence. Albany must safeguard against arbitrary orders and ensure that legally innocent people have the right to a hearing to determine the propriety of these orders by passing the Promote PreTrial (PromPT) Stability Act without delay, and the Council must pass the corresponding resolution (Res. 73-2024).

YOUTH & FOSTER CARE

LGBTQIA+ youth are among our city's most vulnerable residents. Too frequently, they are disowned by their families and kicked out of their homes because of their gender identity or sexual orientation, forced into homelessness and survival work (including sex work), and tossed into a bureaucratic nightmare to obtain basic needs like housing or healthcare. While youth homelessness is often underreported and difficult to track, research has shown that nearly 40% of the homeless youth population identifies as LGBTQIA+. Queer youth entering the foster care system disproportionately experience placement disruptions, congregate settings instead of family placements, and multiple placements. Many also choose to hide their identity from their foster family to protect themselves. Our city must begin addressing the root causes that result in LGBTQIA+ overrepresentation in the youth foster care or juvenile delinquency systems by increasing funding for organizations that promote family acceptance and in-home prevention for LGBTQIA+ youth, bolstering funding for LGBTQIA+ affirming placements, improving data reporting on trans and queer youth in the foster system, mandating additional competency training for ACS staff, and ensuring that public schools are safe enough refuges and support systems for trans and queer students with unsupportive parents and families.

Mandate LGBTQIA+ and TGNCNBI sensitivity and competency training.

Legal service providers report that ACS staff routinely misgender youth or place them in inappropriate settings based on their gender identity and expression, even though they are required to participate in a yearly training. The Council must pass legislation requiring LGBTQIA+/TGNCNBI issues be incorporated into all ACS staff training so that staff are better informed on how to apply what they are learning to specific population needs. Further, if an ACS worker is reported for an instance of homophobia or transphobia, they should be required to attend additional training as part of a performance improvement plan. The Center hosts a LIFT program, which trains and certifies ACS staff. The Council should work to expand this program to accommodate more staff members to ensure that these trainings are led by subject matter experts.

YOUTH & FOSTER CARE

Fund organizations that promote family acceptance and in-home reparative intervention for LGBTQIA+ youth

Almost half of LGBTQIA+ youth in out-of-home settings were placed there after they were ejected from their homes because of their queer identity. The city should work to address the root of LGBTQIA+ youth homelessness, which includes a lack of family acceptance, in addition to providing services to address the problem. The Council must allocate \$5 million in funding for community-based family acceptance programming and mental health services for families. Groups like the Ackerman Institute, Foundling, PFLAG NYC, and CAMBA already do this work in our communities, and they need the resources to expand operations so fewer LGBTQIA+ youth end up ignored and effectively removed from their families of origin. The work should include community based services for youth as well as home based programming to support families with communication skills training and information on the importance of accepting a young person's sexual orientation and gender identity. Additionally, groups engaging in this work should wrap family acceptance education into sexual health programming (e.g. pregnancy or child rearing education courses) and train faith leaders and guidance counselors in schools on how to promote family acceptance within their relative communities.

Increase funding for LGBTQIA+ affirming placements

Many LGBTQIA+ foster youth suffer from a lack of available appropriate home-like settings, pushing ACS to place them in temporary shelter while they attempt to find an appropriate foster home. Some are placed in homes that are certified as LGBTQIA+ affirming but still contain implicit or explicit anti-LGBTQIA+ bias, which may result in some youth running away, harming themselves, or missing school. As such, the Council must fight for at least \$5 million to aid ACS in recruiting parents from within the LGBTQIA+ community and ensuring that placements for LGBTQIA+ youth are truly affirming and safe. The funding should also go toward supporting expansions of specialized congregate settings (e.g. group homes) and additional temporary housing for LGBTQIA+ youth.

YOUTH & FOSTER CARE

Strengthen reporting on LGBTQIA+ youth placed in DHS custody or ACS facilities.

LGBTQIA+ youth represent more than one-third of those in New York City's foster care system. Sadly, LGBTQIA+ youth are more likely than their straight and cisgender counterparts to be placed in group congregate settings rather than in family placements and are less likely to report having adults or elder mentors in their lives on whom they can rely. The Council must pass legislation requiring ACS to report on the number of and placements of LGBTQIA+ foster youth, including the number of LGBTQIA+ identifying youth under ACS's purview, the length of time each individual has been in foster care placement, the circumstances for any youth in secure detention facilities, and the number of youth in foster homes compared to institutions (including temporary pre-placement shelters like the Children's Center). The legislation should also include reporting on LGBTQIA+ youth in the juvenile legal system, including the number in non-secure/secure detention or non-secure/limited secure placement as well as services available to these youth where they are detained or placed. The data collection methods should be implemented in a safe and affirming way using best practices, such as those established by the National SOGIE Center.

Support state legislation to protect children of LGBTQIA+ parents and children receiving gender-affirming care.

The State Legislature is considering the following bills that would protect and uplift LGBTQIA+ children and parents. The Council should pass resolutions that support these bills:

- S5402 to prevent judges from considering the adult's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression when determining a child's best interests in a custody dispute; and
- S7506A/A7687 to prohibit the State from authorizing a child to be removed from their parent or guardian based on the parent or guardian allowing the child to receive gender-affirming care.

CONCLUSION

Over the next few years, the Council's LGBTQIA+ Caucus will fight to enact each and every one of the aforementioned policies and budget items. While we know there are many elected officials who claim to support the LGBTQIA+ community, this plan offers a blueprint by which advocates can hold caucus members and other elected officials accountable.

We surely cannot do it alone. Many of our demands will require significant investment that can best be met through increased taxes on the wealthiest New Yorkers, something that is under the state legislature's authority and not the city's. Under the incoming Trump administration, federal funding to support the LGBTQIA+ community will certainly be cut. It will be up to city and state legislatures to take on that responsibility. In a nation presently defined by backlash to years of advancement for LGBTQIA+ people, following a Presidential campaign marred by the scapegoating and harassment of LGBTQIA+ individuals, New York City has a chance to recement itself as a bastion of progress and become the safest and most welcoming place in the nation for LGBTQIA+ people.

By enacting this agenda, we will move closer to our vision of a city and world that is full of joy and love, and in which we uplift and celebrate our beautiful LGBTQIA+ community.



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- GMHC
- GRIOT Circle
- Hetrick-Martin Institute
- Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
- Lambda Independent Democrats of Brooklyn
- Lambda Legal
- Latino Commission on AIDS
- The Legal Aid Society
- NEW Pride Agenda
- New York City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center (The Center)
- New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)
- SAGE
- Strategic Transgender Alliance for Radical Reform (STARR)*
- Stonewall Community Development Corporation
- Task Force on Issues Faced by TGNCNBI People in Custody
- Trans Formative Schools
- Translatinx Network

* STAR House was modeled on "house" culture, a form of mutual care in trans-of-color communities since at least the 1890s. Marsha P. Johnson founded STAR in 1970 with Sylvia Rivera, a Latinx* trans woman known for her outspoken protests for gay and trans rights. As STAR House, Marsha and Sylvia served their mission for more than a year, providing food and housing. Traditional shelters are often unsafe and unwelcoming for trans people. STAR House served as a model for providing safe spaces for the TILGBO+ community. STAR also had an activist branch, formed in 1970 during a five-day protest at New York University. The University's Gay Liberation Activist Group had hosted a summer series of dance-a-thons at the school's Weinstein Residence Hall. The school cancelled the remaining events and banned further gay social organizing. In protest, Marsha, Sylvia, gay students, and soon, straight allies occupied the sub-basement of Weinstein Hall for five days. Marsha and Sylvia seized the energy, led a march to Sheridan Square, and STAR was born. STAR's existence, separate from groups like the Gay Liberation Front and Gay Activist Alliance, reflected the struggle trans people had in being included in the greater gay rights movement, which would resist including trans people for many more years. STAR is now known as STARR-Strategic Transgender Alliance for Radical Reform--led by Mariah Lopez. STARR extends Sylvia and Marsha's legacy by fighting for health care, legal and police reform, as well as direct advocacy on behalf of trans people. STARR continues to serve the immediate needs of the transgender and gender nonconforming community, providing housing, food, and support. STARR has chapters throughout the United States, including the deep south.





JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON
WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY
FEBRUARY 28, 2025**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you very much Chair Louis members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity for holding this hearing and allowing me the opportunity to provide a statement.

Today is particularly an important committee hearing, as we are here to advocate and ensure access to support our transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (TGNCNB) New Yorkers. I would like to highlight the work Chair Louis and the members of the committee on Women and Gender Equity put into organizing this hearing. Less than a month ago, we have seen the rollout of numerous detrimental executive orders signed by Acting Mayor Donald Trump. Out of the 73, 6 of the executive orders directly target our TGNCNB community.

TGNCNB individuals experience oppression and barriers in different aspects of their lives from social and economic discrimination to healthcare. This coupled with disproportionately high rates of violence can increase the health disparities already exacerbated by the pandemic. These impacts will continue to be felt in the future if we do not close the gaps. We already see several hospitals in New York City halting gender-affirming care. Just this month NYU Langone and Mount Sinai have reportedly canceled appointments for young patients seeking gender-affirming care.¹ New patients under 19 years old are reportedly no longer able to get care from NYU Langone.² In addition, NY-Presbyterian has removed the page from their website that includes gender-affirming services they provide for young people.³ New York City is not the only place facing this pause on gender-affirming care; hospitals in Virginia, Colorado, and Washington D.C. have done the same.

Through legislation, we can build a more inclusive and equitable City that ensures accessibility and protections for our TGNCNB New Yorkers. [Int 1200-2025](#) by Council Member Cabán would require the City to administer a public education program to inform the public about legal rights and resources available to TGNCNB individuals. We must make sure that TGNCNB individuals know how to access these legal rights and resources, and where to find them. [Int 1201-2025](#) by Council Member Hanif would update an existing local law on the prevention of interference with access to reproductive health care facilities, by prohibiting activities that prevent access to facilities offering gender-affirming care. It is critical that as we witnessed the federal administration trying to defund gender-affirming care for

¹ <https://www.nyclu.org/press-release/nyc-hospitals-must-continue-to-provide-gender-affirming-care-despite-federal-attacks>

² <https://www.cityandstateny.com/politics/2025/02/state-ag-says-ny-hospitals-must-continue-offering-gender-affirming-care-minors/402711/>

³ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/02/03/new-york-presbyterian-removes-transgender-medical-care-trump/>



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

transgender youth, we must double down and protect anyone who is receiving and providing gender-affirming care. Council Member Ossé introduced two bills, Int 1203-2025 and Int 1204-2025. [Int 1203-2025](#) would require the Chair of the Commission on Gender Equity to work with the Director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Commissioner of Youth and Community Development to develop a plan for the City to provide support to newly arrived migrants 24 years old and younger in the city and newly arrived migrants who are transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex. [Int 1204-2025](#) would require the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to develop a citywide health agenda focused on transgender, gender non-conforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) New Yorkers in light of health disparities between TGNCNBI New Yorkers and cisgender New Yorkers. The agenda must include citywide health goals for TGNCNBI New Yorkers and strategies for DOHMH to advance the health goals.

Lastly, there are four resolutions under consideration at this hearing. [Res 0771-2025](#) by Council Member Bottcher is calling upon the New York State Governor to sign S.929/A.2141, which would extend protections over personal health information. [Res 0774-2025](#) by Council Member Hudson is calling on the New York State Department of Health to implement regulations requiring hospitals in New York City to adhere to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care 8, to ensure medical professionals can provide high-quality and ethical treatment for individuals with gender dysphoria. Finally, Council Member Schulman introduced two resolutions, Res 0781-2025 and a Preconsidered Res. [Res 0781-2025](#) is calling upon the New York State Legislature to introduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to prohibit out-of-state access to the New York State Prescription Monitoring Program's data for certain medications including abortion medications, hormone therapy, and puberty blockers. [The Preconsidered Res](#) is calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.1633/A.2613, which would provide additional protections for the sensitive health information of patients, including information related to abortion or gender affirming care, and require all health information networks, electronic health record systems, and health care providers to provide patients with a right to restrict the disclosures of such patient's health information. Healthcare in the United States is rapidly declining and TGNCNBI individuals continue to face nationwide attacks.

As of today, 26 states currently have restrictions on gender-affirming care.⁴ 24 of these states restrict or prohibit doctors from providing puberty blockers, hormone therapies or surgery to transgender minors.⁵ Arizona and New Hampshire currently ban only surgeries.⁶ In addition, 24 bar transgender students from participating in sports that align with their gender identity and 12 bar students from using school bathrooms that do not match their sex assigned at birth.⁷ These are the many anti-trans pieces of

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/04/us/gender-transition-bans-states.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/07/us/state-legislatures-transgender-bills.html>



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

legislation that have passed and will threaten the lives and well-being of so many people. More young people will be at risk if they no longer receive the care they need and will be endangered by these discriminatory laws. As of 2025584 bills are under consideration that block trans people from receiving basic healthcare, education, legal recognition, and the right to publicly exist within 49 states⁸. Nine have passed, 553 of them are active, and only 22 have failed.⁹ We have a duty to support and affirm transgender people.

While New York has made great strides, transgender people still face barriers and gaps within every system of government. The reality is that we have seen several hospitals rollback their gender-affirming care services. We must create a system of support that reiterates this City's full commitment. I look forward to hearing from you all today as well as any recommendations.

Thank you.

⁸ <https://translegislation.com/>

⁹ Ibid.

New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Oversight Hearing: Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-
conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City
February 28, 2025

Thank you to Committee Chair Louis and the rest of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity for the opportunity to speak on the urgent need to protect our transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) communities here in New York. We are the Ackerman Institute's Gender and Family Project, an organization dedicated to empowering transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive youth, their families, and their communities by providing gender affirming services, training, and research. Over the last 15 years, GFP has served thousands of families in the NY Metro area with a multidimensional support model that includes family therapy, community groups for caregivers and youth, and training for the city's various agencies and institutions. We are submitting our testimony because we are deeply and rightfully concerned about the current federal administration's shameful and discriminatory legislative violence against TGNCNBI communities, particularly on our gender expansive youth. Recent anti-transgender executive orders include restricting federal gender markers, preventing gender-affirming care, criminalizing LGBTQ+ education, discriminating against trans athletes, and reinstating restrictions on reproductive healthcare (Warbelow, 2025). We call on this committee and the broader city council to defend, expand, and shore up support for our community to the fullest extent of their capacity. In particular, we voice our support of the following bills and resolutions: T2025-3200 (Bottcher), T2025-3179 (Cabán), T2025-3093 (Hanif), T2025-3184 (Ossé), and T2025-3183 (Ossé). We also stand with our colleagues and call on the city to put forth the material resources needed to support TGNCNBI-serving organizations by increasing the Trans Equity Fund grant to a total of \$10 million.

Given our position as a mental health clinic, clinical training program, and research institute, we are well positioned to provide evidence in support of the proposed bills and resolutions, and the need for increased funding for TGNCNBI-serving organizations. First, we would like to situate this review of literature and call to action within the framework of the "trifecta of violence" (Lenning et al., 2021; Brightman et al., 2024). This framework connects our nation's history of racism, racist policies and the lynchings of Black Americans with the current epidemic of violence against trans women of color, which ultimately impacts the lives of all TGNCNBI people, including gender expansive youth. Violent ideologies, policies, and actions work together to normalize violence against vulnerable communities, creating a web of dehumanization which seeks to "entangle and incapacitate" TGNCNBI people (Lenning et al., 2021, p. 153). Lenning and colleagues argue that by "codifying ideology into law", the government "emboldens individuals (both citizens and state actors) to take violent actions against the subjugated and marginalized groups in society with little sense of culpability or fear of consequence" (p. 153). This framework is upheld in Brightman and colleagues' (2024) study, which found strong correlations between increases in anti-trans rhetoric, anti-trans legislation and homicides over the last several years. Sadly, we are seeing this manifest in real time, with an increase in youth homicide. Last year, at least four transgender teenagers were murdered and just last month Sam Nordquist, a young Black trans man, was **tortured** and murdered in Upstate New York. The recent executive orders which falsely define biological sex as a binary (Hyde et al., 2019) and deny TGNCNBI youth access to affirming health care will further embolden the public to dehumanize and mistreat our community. Thus, the impact is two-fold: we are denied our basic human rights, *and* a target is set on us in the hopes that the threat of interpersonal

violence will force us to hide and disappear. The leadership of New York city cannot allow this narrative to go unchallenged.

Keeping this trifecta of violence in mind, we wish to offer key evidence and insights in support of the current proposed bills and resolutions, as well as the city's overall efforts to support TGNCNBI communities. We will offer evidence regarding three factors which have a significant impact on TGNCNBI youth in particular: gender-affirming care, gender-inclusive schools and family support.

First, we want to establish that gender-affirming care is evidence-based, socially impactful, and life-saving. Research has consistently shown that gender-affirming care is a protective factor for TGNCNBI youth (Tordoff et al., 2022) and adults (Doyle et al., 2023; Dutton et al., 2024). Access to gender-affirming care is associated with significant improvements in quality of life, physiological health, and mental and emotional well-being (Doyle et al., 2023; Bradford et al., 2019). Proactive, destigmatized support for gender-affirming services improves short and long-term health outcomes for trans populations of all ages by promoting sustained feelings of joy, authenticity, internal congruence, and positive self-regard. The gender euphoria associated with access to affirming services is a vital and irreplaceable aspect in the reduction of psychological distress in trans communities, and has the benefit of improving feelings of social connectedness and personal empowerment across all sectors of the community (not just trans people), allowing trans community members, and youth especially, to feel safe, confident, and empowered in their growth, development, and liberation (Beischel et al., 2021). In this context, gender affirming services are paramount to the creation of vibrant and equitable city systems and spaces whereby TGNCNBI residents and visitors can live, thrive, and participate to their full potential, with the wisdom and support of a joyous, loving, and empathic community.

The current administration specifically seeks to deter providers and institutions from delivering care to TGNCNBI youth by spewing misinformation regarding what transgender healthcare looks like and making false, scientifically incorrect claims about gender that harm TGNCNBI and cisgender people alike (Washington & Yilma, 2024). It is critical that we defend our community's right to access affirming care, providers' right to deliver ethical and evidence-based care, and the right for all parties to be protected from investigation by the federal government. Doctors and caregivers should not be threatened, harassed, and criminalized for following the Standards of Care and Ethical Guidelines established by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (Coleman et al., 2022). These attacks on gender-affirming care have far reaching and devastating effects. In addition to denying youth access to life saving medical services, the current administration's slew of anti-transgender legislation is detrimental to the health of our TGNCNBI youth. Anti-trans legislation has been linked to an increase in internet searches on depression and suicide (Cunningham et al., 2022), an increase in suicide attempts among TGNCNBI youth (Parchem et al., 2025) and even increased anxiety among as cisgender LGBTQ individuals (Horne et al., 2022). For youth, anti-transgender laws can cause up to a 72% increase in suicide attempts (Lee et al., 2024). The city-wide health agenda proposed in Bill Int 1204-2025 will be necessary in addressing the existing health disparities for TGNCNBI adults (Tebbe & Budge, 2022) and youth (Delozier et al., 2020; Eisenberg et al., 2017) and also the expected increase in community distress in response to anti-trans legislation. Anti-trans medical legislation also has the potential to impact providers. GFP is currently conducting research on the impact of anti-transgender legislation on medical and behavioral health providers who care for TGNCNBI patients. In particular, we believe providers are at an increased risk for burnout, which has been correlated with suboptimal patient care practices (Shanafelt et al., 2002) and poorer patient safety (Hall et al., 2016). As a result, we emphatically support Resolutions Res 0771-2025, Res 0774-2025, Res 0781-2025 and Bill T2025-3214, which seek to protect

vulnerable patients' health records, including NYS Prescription Monitoring Program data, and requires providers and hospitals to adhere to WPATH's Standards of Care. Similarly, we strongly support Bill [Int 1201-2025](#), which explicitly seeks to outlaw interference in the provision of gender-affirming care.

Second, we want to highlight the importance of gender-inclusive school environments, which are also under direct attack by recent executive orders. Providing gender inclusivity training for public and private schools throughout the city is another critical dimension of GFP's model because school environments play such a major role in the psychosocial functioning of our youth. According to the Trevor Project, in 2024 nearly half (49%) of LGBTQ+ young people ages 13-17 experienced bullying in the past year, and those who did reported significantly higher rates of attempted suicide in the past year than those who did not (Nath et al., 2024). In addition, 23% of LGBTQ young people reported that they have been physically threatened or harmed in the past year due to either their sexual orientation or gender identity. Our LGBTQ and TGNCNBI youth should not have to experience this violence and discrimination, which often results in more missed days of school and other negative academic, social and psychological outcomes (Day et al., 2018). For TGNCNBI students, harassment can also directly result in physiological health issues, as many trans youth report avoiding school bathrooms, which can result in urinary health issues (Wernick et al., 2017). For Black trans women, anti-trans school experiences can also lead to increased surveillance and punishment, eventually pushing them into the school-to-prison-pipeline (Rosentel et al., 2021). However, according to the Society for Research in Child Development, "school policies that protect, include, and affirm TGD youth's gender identity are associated with positive mental health and academic outcomes" (Toomey et al., 2022). Furthermore, research has shown that when schools implement LGBTQ-supportive policies and practices, all students experience less violence and harassment and better mental health outcomes (Kaczowski et al., 2022). Teachers and school staff must be equipped to support the TGNCNBI students in their classrooms, thus an active push for comprehensive, inclusive education is critical in fighting transphobic violence. Every child deserves to pursue education in a safe environment and Bill [Int 1200-2025](#) will help to ensure that schools and other environments throughout the city remain safe by fighting disinformation, clarifying existing laws and protections, and generally countering narratives that normalize and enable transphobic violence towards our youth. Our years of training NYC public schools, nonprofits, and beyond have reiterated what we already know; education and solidarity are vital antidotes to misinformation and violence. In this moment, it is both powerful and necessary to loudly show our support and to stand proudly in solidarity with our TGNCNBI communities.

And finally, we believe family support is a crucial factor in the survival of TGNCNBI youth. If the trifecta of violence framework tells us anything, we anticipate that the recent anti-transgender executive orders are just the beginning of a long sequence of violence that this administration will engender. Caregivers who are fearful of the current administration may respond by denying their children's gender identity and refusing them access to affirming care (Abreu et al., 2019), potentially leading to an increase in the number of homeless TGNCNBI youth in the city (Ashley, 2019). Parental rejection and negative reactions to their child's gender identity can have devastating effects on youth mental health, well into adulthood (Ryan et al., 2010). On the other hand, research has found that youth who are supported in their gender expansive identities have mental health outcomes on par with their cisgender peers (Olson et al., 2016). In many cases, parental acceptance and support has the potential to dramatically reduce psychological distress and suicidality (Grossman et al., 2021; Pariseau et al., 2019; Russell et al., 2018). Parental support can be a crucial protective for trans feminine youth when they experience discrimination (Wilson et al. 2016). The services we provide help parents to process

their reactions and fears regarding their child's gender, become educated on gender diversity, and find a community of other families that will join them on their journey toward acceptance. We also support caregivers throughout the city by hosting Caregiver Gender 101 trainings in partnership with schools and other city institutions. We know that access to our mental health services and community spaces have dramatically increased the well-being of not only gender expansive children, but also their caregivers and siblings (Glaeser, 2021). We want to continue to provide a safe haven for families navigating this dangerous political landscape as they bravely seek to support their children. The proposed bills and resolutions will undoubtedly lift some of the anxiety and fear our clients currently face, but will not end the fight to protect TGNCNBI communities. For this reason, we again call on the city to increase the Trans Equity Fund to \$10 million to ensure that organizations such as ours can expand our work and collaborate with other CBOs that also rely upon this funding.

In closing, the Gender & Family Project will continue to provide safe, affirming care for families with gender expansive youth. We call on this committee, the council, and leadership within NY State to continue to stand in solidarity with and take proactive measures to protect our families and the greater community of transgender, non-binary, gender expansive, and intersex people who call this city a safe haven. The passing of the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) in 2019 was a landmark victory for TGNCNBI New Yorkers that was felt throughout the country. In this moment, the rest of America is paying close attention to what is happening here in New York. Your leadership impacts not only our community but other progressive cities and states across the country who will look to us for best practices as they seek to protect their TGNCNBI constituents. Every child deserves to feel loved and supported and every adult deserves to feel valued and safe. Please continue to honor the legacy of the trans leaders and activists who have shaped the New York's vibrant culture by fighting proactively for gender diverse communities. Thank you.

**Gender and Family Project,
Ackerman Institute for the Family**

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Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary People in New York City

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Good afternoon - my name is Audacia Ray, I use they/them pronouns, and I've been the Interim Executive Director at the New York City Anti-Violence Project (AVP) for about six months. Today is also my seven-year anniversary at AVP and I'm glad to be spending it here with you all. AVP is here today to express our support of Intros 1200, 1201, 1203, and 1204, as well as Resolutions 0771, 0774, 0781, and 3214.

Thank you to the Women and Gender Equity Committee and LGBTQ Caucus members for showing up not just for, but alongside queer and trans survivors – even when we disagree, I continue to be so grateful that there are so many queer people and allies serving in this City Council. I also want to say that it was not so many years ago that the committee proudly added 'gender equity' to its name - that was a change Chair Helen Rosenthal was very proud of. I love that a few years after that change, we have already outgrown it and agree that the name needs to be updated to better reflect our communities.

AVP was founded in 1980, and today we run a 24/7 hotline – the only LGBTQ-focused rape crisis hotline in the state – and offer free counseling, advocacy, and legal services to our community. We are continuously listening to and adapting to the needs of LGBTQ+ survivors in New York City. Right now, our client base of trans and nonbinary BIPOC as well as immigrant survivors are increasingly threatened and in need of support and their needs are increasing under the current administrations.

We strongly support efforts to protect TGNC New Yorkers. Council Members Tiffany Caban, Shahana Hanif, and Chi Osse's bills to expand legal rights, healthcare access, and resources for TGNC migrants are critical steps in ensuring safety. Additionally, we back Council Member Erik Bottcher's call for stronger privacy protections, Crystal Hudson's push for hospitals to follow WPATH standards, and Lynn Schulman's bill to safeguard prescription data for those accessing gender-affirming care.

For over 40 years, AVP has been on the front lines, fighting for LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected survivors of violence. We provide crisis intervention, legal services, counseling, and advocacy to ensure our communities are safe and supported.

Right now, anti-TGNC sentiment is rising nationwide, and it's showing up here in NYC. From



increased street harassment to barriers in accessing life-saving healthcare, TGNC folks are being pushed to the margins.

There are a lot of brilliant, passionate queer and trans people in this room right now – Council members and staff certainly included – and I want to affirm and encourage us all to know deeply that we are the change, we are the people who are going to throw down for queer and trans people in New York City and beyond, and I believe in us. I’m sorry-not sorry for the hopey-changeey speech, but even after seven years at AVP and tracking nearly 400 murders of LGBTQ+ people across the country, I still believe this can be different.

I want to urge the City Council members, as you continue to work with community and develop legislation to support and protect TGNCNB New Yorkers, to look at the ways you can support community-based organizations, especially grassroots group run by trans people, and hold government agencies accountable so they do their jobs and competently provide the services folks badly need. The Intros on the docket today are solid, and they need funding and follow implementation to assure that they are implemented well. In particular, AVP has often been critical of bills that require the creation of education and mechanisms for planning and written agendas. This is because – we already know what we need. We have to prove that over and over again, and it gets frustrating. These bills are great ideas – and also the people in this room have already deeply developed a lot of similar plans and tools. The Marsha & Sylvia Plan that many of you have collaborated on is one of those impressive and expansive projects.

I also want to point you to TGNC NYC, a printed AVP resource developed with the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP). This resource is a road map to existing NYC services for TGNC people and lays out how folks can access them – what agencies to call, how to figure out who the navigators and liaisons are, strategies for follow up, and more. We’re happy to distribute these pocket guides to other agencies as well as district offices – just email me or reach out to community@avp.org and we’ll get you some.

The attacks on TGNC rights at the federal level are creeping into our city. We see it in healthcare discrimination, increased hate violence, and policy rollbacks. As these threats grow, so do the needs of our community—our hotline calls have increased, and more people are seeking safety and support. And we must not comply in advance with confusing executive orders – we all have to keep showing up and providing visible supports to TGNCNB people in our city.

These bills are necessary, but they’re just the start. We want to work alongside you to build legislation that meets the needs of our communities at the grassroots level. We need more investments and resources to ensure TGNC New Yorkers can live safely and with dignity. We urge the Council to take action, not just in words but in funding and policy. Let’s keep working



together to build a city that models support and protection for TGNC people that other American cities can point to as a best practice.

CALLEN-LORDE

**OVERSIGHT HEARING TESTIMONY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
Committees on Women and Gender Equity
Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, and Non-Binary
(TGNCNB) People ins New York City**

**February 28, 2025
Submitted by Kimberleigh Joy Smith, MPA
Executive Vice President for Public Policy and Advocacy**

Good afternoon and thank you to Chairperson Louis and Council Members Riley, Cabán, Guitérrez, and Vernikov. My name is Kimberleigh Smith, and I am the Executive Vice President for Policy and Advocacy at Callen-Lorde Community Health Center.

Callen-Lorde is a global leader in LGBTQ+ healthcare, providing sensitive and quality healthcare for more than 22,000 LGBTQ+ New Yorkers and the surrounding region, regardless of their ability to pay. In 2024, we served more than 8,000 transgender and gender non-binary patients, which is 37 percent of our total patient population. More than 70 percent of our patients who are 13 to 24 years old are transgender and gender nonbinary. We have received international recognition for our expertise in transgender health. Our practice is also the largest non-hospital-based HIV service provider in New York, with 19 percent of our patients living with HIV. We provide 15 percent of the state's PrEP prescriptions. Over 40 percent of our patients are beneficiaries of Medicaid, and 24 percent are homeless or unstably housed. Callen-Lorde serves communities who have been systemically excluded from healthcare, housing, and economic stability. These are our people.

I would like to focus my testimony today on ensuring access to healthcare services and support for the TGNCNBI community. To say that many of our patients have been living in a state of fear, abject panic, and sheer anxiety for the last several months would be an understatement. The situation has worsened since January 20th. Our medical providers arrive every Monday morning to find hundreds of urgent, anxious, and panicked portal messages from people needing advance prescriptions, surgery letters, support, and help for a myriad of medical and non-medical issues.

Recent Executive Orders, though not operative law, present an existential threat to our bodily autonomy, access to medically necessary, gender-affirming care, and the rights of transgender and gender-diverse communities. Transgender youth continue to be targeted and scapegoated, limiting the availability of safe spaces for them to develop in environments that support their well-being.

For example, the Executive Order (EO) "Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation," issued on January 28th, directs all Executive Branch agencies to work toward

shutting off access to gender-affirming care nationwide for all children and youth under the age of 19.

While this EO does not immediately change any rules or regulations, its intent is clear: that it should be the policy of the United States not to fund, sponsor, promote, assist, or support the so-called 'transition' of a child from one sex to another, and it will rigorously enforce all laws that prohibit or limit these destructive and life-altering procedures.

As such, the EO is designed to bring a nationwide ban on transgender people's access to medically appropriate healthcare. The ban would impact all states, including New York, which has laws in place that are designed to protect the care for transgender children and youth.

This Executive Order has many troubling provision, not the least of which is language that would authorize changing the Conditions of Participation (COP) for providers that bill Medicare and Medicaid. Specifically, the EO appears to contemplate changing the COP so that a provider would be unable to participate in Medicare or Medicaid if they offer gender-affirming care to any transgender person – regardless of whether the individual is covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or some other form of health insurance.

Further, this order is a cruel effort to dehumanize TGNCNBI youth who are trying to access basic healthcare needs. This action undermines the Medicaid program, which provides care for the country's most vulnerable populations. TGNCNBI youth already face high rates of suicide and violence, and reducing access to care will only exacerbate the problem.

Despite these threats, Callen-Lorde remains open to all patients, regardless of ability to pay. Each of our three clinic locations is accepting new patients.

These Executive Orders pose a dire threat to transgender individuals of all ages in New York City, jeopardizing their access to essential healthcare and support. Beyond the devastating impact on TGNCNBI (transgender, gender nonbinary) communities, these measures endanger medical providers who offer affirming care, putting them at legal and professional risk. Furthermore, the very sustainability of TGNCNBI-serving community health centers and organizations hangs in the balance, threatening to dismantle critical lifelines that countless individuals rely on for survival. The consequences could be catastrophic, undoing years of progress and leaving some of the city's most vulnerable populations without the care and resources they desperately need.

To ensure access to supports for the transgender and gender diverse community in New York City, Callen-Lorde urges the New York City Council to:

1. **Increase investment in the Trans Equity Initiative and Support for Persons Involved in the Sex Trades.** Trans Equity programs enable Callen-Lorde and other organizations to allocate resources toward critical infrastructure and staffing, supporting the sustainability and expansion of TGNCNBI surgery navigation services. This initiative prioritizes the health and well-being of marginalized communities, ensuring equitable access to vital healthcare services and affirming diversity and inclusion. We urge the Council to support an increase in **\$10 million for the Trans Equity Programs Initiative prioritizing BIPOC, trans led organization** and additional **funding for Support for People Involved in the Sex Trades.**

2. **Callen-Lorde supports the package of bills recently introduced to safeguard TGNCNBI New Yorkers (Int. 1200, 1201, 1204 et al) and we call on the New York City Council to create and fund a new City Council Initiative** to ensure access to gender-affirming healthcare and related services by providing gap and support funding for federally qualified health centers in New York City. This funding could also support imminent legal, security, and other expenses for health centers.
3. **Support the development of a \$50m statewide contingency fund to cover access to gender-affirming care**, including by subsidizing or replacing, if necessary, the federal share of Medicaid funding for gender-affirming care. This should be similar to the mechanisms created to support reproductive healthcare in response to the Dobbs decision, such as the Reproductive Freedom & Equity Fund and the Title X Contingency Funding.
4. **Provide forceful support for state-level legal protections for gender-affirming care**, specifically **A.5480-A (Bronson)/S.4914 (Hoylman-Sigal)**, which would protect providers, patients, seekers, and supporters of gender-affirming care by making it harder for other states and the federal government to investigate, prosecute, and punish those individuals.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

FOR ORAL TESTIMONY

Good afternoon, Chairperson Louis and Committee Members. My name is Kimberleigh Smith, and I am the Executive Vice President for Policy and Advocacy at Callen-Lorde Community Health Center.

Callen-Lorde provides quality healthcare to over 22,000 LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, including more than 8,000 transgender, gender non-conforming, gender non-binary and intersex (TGNCNBI) patients. Many of our patients face systemic barriers to healthcare, housing, and economic stability. Over 40% rely on Medicaid, and 24% are homeless or unstably housed.

Today, I want to address the urgent need to protect TGNCNBI healthcare access. Our patients are experiencing fear and anxiety due to escalating attacks on their rights. Recent Executive Orders, while not binding law, threaten gender-affirming care and bodily autonomy. The January EO, "Protecting Children from Chemical and Surgical Mutilation," directs federal agencies to restrict care for youth under 19. It signals an intent to cut funding and support, with potential nationwide consequences, even in protective states like New York.

This EO also threatens changes to Medicare and Medicaid Conditions of Participation, which could bar providers from federal programs if they offer gender-affirming care. Such actions would devastate healthcare institutions serving marginalized communities, worsening health disparities and increasing suicide and violence risks.

Despite these threats, Callen-Lorde remains steadfast in its commitment. To safeguard TGNCNBI healthcare in NYC, we urge the City Council to:

1. Increase the *existing* **Trans Equity Initiative to \$10M**, prioritizing BIPOC, trans-led organizations.
2. We urge you to support and pass the **package of bills recently introduced to safeguard TGNCNBI New Yorkers (Int. 1200, 1201, 1204 et al)** and fund a *new* City Council Initiative to ensure ongoing access to gender-affirming care at community health centers in New York City.
3. Support statewide efforts to establish a \$50m contingency fund to replace potential Medicaid cuts for gender-affirming care.
4. Support legal protections for gender-affirming care through state law **A.5480-A/S.4914** to shield providers and patients.

Additionally, we encourage the committee to consider renaming itself to better reflect the TGNCNBI community it serves. Visibility matters, especially amid increasing federal hostility.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I have submitted a lengthier written testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions.



Testimony to the Committee on Women & Gender Equity

Friday, February 28, 2025, 12 P.M.

Council Chambers, City Hall

Dear Chair Louis and the Committee on Women and Gender Equity,

Thank you for holding this critical hearing on Women and Gender Equity.

Today, I testify before you about a crucial issue: ensuring that gender-affirming care is protected, accessible, and covered in the same manner as reproductive health services. This is at the heart of Intro 1201-2025, the AFFIRM Act, guaranteeing transgender New Yorkers equal access to healthcare without fear of discrimination or criminalization.

My name is **Tiffany Jade Munroe**, and I am the **Trans Justice Coordinator for the Caribbean Equality Project (CEP)**, a Caribbean LGBTQ+ immigrant rights organization. CEP works daily with transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNCNB) migrants and asylum seekers, witnessing firsthand the barriers they face when seeking gender-affirming care. These challenges range from systemic discrimination in healthcare settings to insurance denials and the constant threat of harassment and violence. Caribbean Equality Project is currently supporting over 500 LGBTQ+ asylum seekers, all of whom are from Caribbean countries such as Haiti, Guyana, Jamaica, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Martin, to name a few. Trans immigrants face unique challenges; they often do not have access to the family and community support networks that other immigrants rely on- many of whom have been abandoned or are fleeing anti-trans hate violence. Many of our newly arrived and existing community members experiences discrimination when seeking immigration support, obtaining gender-affirming identification documents, legal name change, employment, housing, and sexual health and Trans healthcare.

The AFFIRM Act is critical because it removes legal and institutional roadblocks that prevent TGNCNB individuals from receiving essential medical care. By explicitly including all forms of gender-affirming care under these legal protections, this bill ensures that individuals who experience interference can seek legal recourse and hold perpetrators financially accountable. This provision is a game-changer in reaffirming a person's right to healthcare and deterring those who seek to obstruct it. For the LGBTQ+ immigrant community we serve through our health navigation programs, these protections are life-changing.

Gender-affirming care is life-saving healthcare. It is necessary for the well-being of transgender individuals and is integral to our ability to live authentically and with dignity.

At a time when protections for TGNCNB people waver across the country, this legislation provides a critical safeguard, offering relief and empowerment to those who need it most. Now is the time for transgender individuals to feel protected, valued, and assured that their right to healthcare is upheld. This care is not a choice; it is a necessity for the survival, economic stability, and emotional wellness of transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive New Yorkers.

I call on the City Council to pass the AFFIRM Act to strengthen a healthcare system rooted in diversity, equity, and inclusion—all New York values. We also stand in solidarity with Trans-led and serving BIPOC organizations to call for an investment to increase the Trans Equity Initiative Funding to \$10 million.

The Caribbean Equality Project also supports Intro 1200, 1201, 1203, 1204, and Resolutions 771, 774, and 781.

IT IS TIME TO:

Protect trans healthcare and trans youth, and defend our dignity and rights. This city council must put an end to harassment now by strengthening legal protection and access to gender-affirming care across New York City!

In Solidarity and Respect,

Tiffany Jade Munroe
Trans Justice Coordinator
Caribbean Equality Project

March 4, 2025

Written Testimony to the New York City Council

To members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity,

We are writing on behalf of the Chosen Family Law Center, a nonprofit legal services organization based in New York City that is run by two nonbinary transgender lawyers who have a combined 35 years of experience supporting transgender, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, and intersex New Yorkers. We are writing, both on behalf of our community, and as your constituents, to encourage you to pass the robust package of proposed legislation presented at the February 28, 2025 hearing. We're grateful for the opportunity to have had our Executive Director Diana Adams testify in person and our Senior Legal Director Andy Izenon testify online in support of passage of these bills, and we're honored to have been in communication with the committee counsel over the past month, providing resources on TNBGNCI safety and support, and comparable legislation at municipalities across the nation.

We are writing to add our written testimony as to our reasons for strongly supporting the passage of these bills as expediently as possible to provide essential protections for our Transgender/Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming New York City communities, who are currently experiencing fear for their safety and continuity of their medical care, and need to know that New York City will protect them. We urge the committee to move these bills forward to a vote as soon as possible, as the situation facing these marginalized communities in New York City is urgent. We need leadership from the New York City Council to speak up for these communities as soon as possible.

I. Chosen Family Law Center's Mission and Work

Chosen Family Law Center's (CFLC) mission is to cultivate equitable social and legal recognition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) and polyamorous families and individuals, as well as other underserved non-nuclear family forms such as platonic co-parents or multigenerational families. CFLC enacts its mission through three programmatic avenues: direct legal services for low-income New Yorkers; legislative drafting and advocacy; and professional and public education programs for lawyers, therapists, social workers, and the general public. As a small grassroots trans-led organization, CFLC has had an outsized impact on our community. We've provided over \$160,000 of free legal services to low-income LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers since launching our pro bono client programs in 2019; built referral partnerships with the Family Health Centers, the largest provider of medical care to low-income New York City residents, and other LGBTQIA+ community organizations; helped expand the definition of family for Rent Stabilized Succession of Apartments in NYC; and, in coalition, we passed the first laws in the U.S. for multi-partner domestic partnership (Somerville, Arlington, and Cambridge MA) and relationship structure non-discrimination (Somerville and Cambridge MA, and Berkeley and Oakland CA).

CFLC is proud to provide free direct legal services to New Yorkers, and one highlight of our services program is that we provide comprehensive legal documents for Transgender/Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming people through our Trans Umbrella Project. Since the 2024 election, we have received a deluge of requests for help - over 4X the usual number of inquiries for our free legal services. Most trans direct legal services programs just do free legal name changes, but at CFLC, we prioritize comprehensive and holistic legal care for trans people by offering free Wills and Medical Advance Directives, healthcare proxies and hospital visitation forms, Powers of Attorney, parentage orders, and

other stabilizing legal documents. In this work, we have clearly seen the fear of discrimination in medical settings and panic for their safety that low-income Transgender/Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming New York City residents are currently experiencing as a result of the escalating climate of legal and political hostility. New York City has the power to protect our residents from this climate, and the next step in doing so is to pass the legislative packet under consideration.

II. Urging NYC Council to Pass the Legislative Packet Under Consideration

We are writing to urge the New York City Council to pass the legislative packet under consideration at the February 28, 2025 hearing.

A. Support for the Individual Bills and Resolutions

City Council Bill 1200-2025, “Public information and outreach campaign regarding legal rights and resources available to TGNCNBI individuals,” introduced by Councilmember Cabán, will protect the safety of TGNCNBI individuals by raising public awareness of the legal rights and support resources available to our community in NYC.

Bill 1201-2025, “Access to gender affirming care facilities and a cause of action related to interference with gender affirming care,” introduced by Councilmember Hanif, will ensure the health needs of our community are being met by protecting access to gender affirming and reproductive care facilities, and creating a cause of action for individuals whose access to these facilities is obstructed.

Bill 1203-2025, “Requiring the chair of the commission on gender equity to develop a plan to support newly arrived migrants 24 years old and younger and transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex newly arrived migrants,” introduced by Councilmember Ossé, protects some of the most vulnerable members of our community by mandating the creation of a plan to address gaps in housing, legal, and healthcare needs for young TGNCNBI migrants.

Bill 1204-2025, “Requiring the commissioner of health and mental hygiene to develop a health agenda to promote the health and wellbeing of transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and intersex New Yorkers,” introduced by Councilmember Ossé, will help to close the gap to ensure that adequate health care is provided to TGNCNBI New Yorkers, using input from the TGNCNBI community.

City Council Resolution 0771-2025, “Extend protections over personal health information (S.929/A.2141),” introduced by Councilmember Bottcher, will prevent third parties from obtaining or continuing to possess the private healthcare data of New Yorkers. In particular, CFLC advocates for the passage of this bill because it will protect recipients of gender affirming or reproductive healthcare against prosecution by the federal government or other states.

Resolution 0774-2025, “Dept of Health to implement regulations requiring hospitals in NYC to adhere to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health’s Standards of Care 8,” introduced by Councilmember Hudson, will require all hospitals in NYC to adhere to the most up-to-date scientific information available on TBNCNBI health and ensure that NYC continues to provide world-class care to our community.

Resolution 0781-2025, “Prohibit out-of-state access to the New York State Prescription Monitoring Program’s data for certain medications including abortion medications, hormone therapy, and puberty blockers,” introduced by Councilmember Schulman, will encourage New York State to block access to sensitive information regarding patients’ possession of politicized medications. This will help to prevent out-of-state prosecutions of people seeking reproductive and gender affirming care in New York.

Finally, Resolution T2025-3214, “Provide additional protections for the sensitive health information of patients (S.1633/A.2613),” introduced by Councilmember Schulman, calls on the Governor to protect

New Yorkers seeking reproductive and gender affirming care by enacting protections for sensitive health information and giving patients the right to restrict disclosure of their health information by health care providers, electronic health record systems, and health information networks.

B. Timeliness of Passing the Legislative Packet Under Consideration

It is imperative to the TGNCNBI community that these bills and resolutions pass now. NYC is a beacon to LGBTQIA+ people across the U.S. and the world. As of 2021, over 706,000 LGBTQIA+ people live in NYC, the highest population in the U.S., and over 24% of these individuals are raising children.¹ Our LGBTQIA+ community and our children are disproportionately likely to be in poverty or unhoused. 18% of LGBTQIA+ New Yorkers have been houseless.² Hispanic, Black, and Asian LGBTQIA+ communities experienced houselessness at higher rates—40%, 27%, and 23% respectively—compared to non-Hispanic White respondents at 10%.³ LGBTQIA+ youth are also disproportionately represented in runaway and houseless youth shelters. Research has shown that while only 4.5% of the general NYC population identified as LGBTQIA+, as many as 40% of the houseless NYC youth population identify as LGBTQIA+, nearly ten times higher.⁴ The legislation package under consideration will support and protect the health, well-being, legal rights, and privacy of the LGBTQIA+ community in New York City, and we strongly advocate for its passage.

From our perspective as legal professionals who work with TNBGNCI individuals on their medical advanced directives and healthcare proxies, we see first hand the fear that TNBGNCI individuals have about discrimination or mistreatment in medical settings, both because many have experienced medical trauma from previous mistreatment and because of the public threats to remove health care for TNBGNCI people. The proposed legislation will support the transgender community and prevent healthcare discrimination against our vulnerable community members. Specifically, Bill 1200-2025 will ensure that community members know their legal rights as they relate to healthcare and beyond.

We also urge the passage of the legislation package under consideration because of its intersectional impact on migrant communities and women. At an unprecedented time, when approximately 231,000 migrants have joined the New York City community since Spring 2022,⁵ NYC should continue to prepare support systems for migrants, who are more likely to be in poverty than non-migrants.⁶ Bill 1203-2025 addresses the housing, legal, healthcare, and other needs of both young and TGNCNBI migrants, and we applaud this inclusion. Furthermore, attacks on reproductive healthcare are on the rise in the U.S. in the wake of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*.⁷ In addition to protecting the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community, Bill 1201-2025 and Resolutions 0771-2025, 0781-2025, and T2025-3214 will ensure that people in NYC have the right to bodily autonomy through safe, protected, and private

¹ Williams Institute, *LGBT Adults in Large US Metropolitan Areas* (March 2021), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-us-msa/>.

² NYC Comptroller Scott M. Stringer, *Results of a Survey of New Yorkers*, Bureau of Policy and Research (June 2017), https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Results_of_a_Survey_of_LGBTQ.pdf.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Office of Children and Family Services, *Research and Data: Runaway and Homeless LGBTQ Youth*, <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/youth/LGBTQ/research.php#:~:text=gov%3A%20LGBTQ%20Youth-.Runaway%20and%20Homeless%20LGBTQ%20Youth,LGBTQ%2C%20nearly%20ten%20times%20higher>.

⁵ Office of the Mayor, *Mayor Adams Announces Closure of Six More Emergency Asylum Seeker Sites, end of Tent-Based Sheltering Sites With Closure of Creedmoor Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center*, Press Office (February 14, 2025), <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/087-25/mayor-adams-closure-six-more-emergency-asylum-seeker-sites-end-tent-based>.

⁶ Jeanne Batalova, *Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute (March 13, 2024), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-2024#:~:text=District%20of%20Columbia.-Income%20and%20Poverty,for%20a%20family%20of%20four>.

⁷ *A Year After the Supreme Court Overturned Roe v. Wade, Trends in State Abortion Laws Have Emerged*, American Progress (June 15, 2023), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/a-year-after-the-supreme-court-overturned-roe-v-wade-trends-in-state-abortion-laws-have-emerged/>.

access to reproductive *and* endocrine medical care, including through the creation of a cause of action to protect these rights. Marginalized communities of TNBGNCI individuals, migrants, and women are all under threat right now. Anti-trans and anti-immigrant legislation and restriction of reproductive rights at the state and federal are all being drafted and promulgated by organizations who understand the eradication of LGBTQIA+ communities to be inextricable from genocidal anti-immigrant measures and the destruction of reproductive freedom. These repressive projects being intertwined with each other necessitates our struggles for liberation being similarly intertwined; we cannot imagine trans liberation without immigrant justice, economic justice, and reproductive justice.

We don't want to just protect TNBGNCI individuals, migrants, and women from outside forces – we want to prevent harm coming from out-of-state while also maintaining NYC's legacy of positive, practical support and meaningful acceptance of all people. We must provide not only a sense of safety but also resources for members of all of these communities (LGBTQIA+, migrants, reproductive care seekers) to make sure that when people make it to New York City, they're able to thrive.

III. LGBTQIA+ Sanctuary Bills in the U.S.

We are asking that New York City continue its proud tradition as a welcoming beacon to the LGBTQIA+ community and pass the proposed legislation package. In our professional opinion after analyzing different city and state LGBTQIA+ protection bills across the U.S., we believe that the proposed legislation package will enact the strongest protections for LGBTQIA+ people in the country, and we know that NYC's TNBGNCI community deserves that.

A. Examples of State-Level Bills

A number of states have declared themselves sanctuaries for LGBTQIA+ people. From California to Missouri, LGBTQIA+ Americans—especially transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, intersex, and Two-Spirit Americans—are shown every day that their local community cares about their well-being and will do everything within its power to provide sanctuary for them as they weather the storm of uncertain and hostile federal policy.

New York passed the Trans Safe Haven Bill (effective June 2023), which bars state courts from enforcing the laws of other states that might authorize a child to be taken away if the parents provide gender affirming medical care, and bars state and local authorities from cooperating with out-of-state agencies regarding the provision of lawful gender affirming care in New York, including prohibiting New York Courts from considering transition-related medical care for minors to be child abuse.

California passed the Trans State of Refuge Bill (effective January 2023), which protects and prevents the extradition of trans young people and their families if they flee to California from any state with laws penalizing parents of trans young people for allowing them to receive gender affirming care.

Washington passed the Supporting Youth and Young Adults Seeking Protected Healthcare Services Bill (effective July 2023). This bill prevents medical providers from contacting the parents of youth seeking reproductive and trans healthcare who flee from their homes if the young person would face abuse or neglect as a result of contact, including loss of access to medical care.

Maryland's Trans Health Equity Act (effective January 2024) expands Medicaid coverage of gender affirming care and offers financial incentives to small businesses that provide gender affirming treatment.

Minnesota's Refuge Bill (effective April 2023) establishes temporary emergency jurisdiction over trans minors who've been unable to get gender affirming care and prevents extradition.

Maine's Trans and Abortion Sanctuary Bill (effective April 2024) protects Maine's providers of reproductive care and care for transgender people from out-of-state attacks.

In addition to the above laws, lawmakers in at least 15 states have committed to trying to pass trans refugee state laws, including Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia.

B. Examples of Municipal-Level Legislation

At a municipal level, cities nationwide are taking formal action to affirmatively protect their LGBTQIA+ residents.

In California, West Hollywood, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento have all taken action at the local level to protect transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and Two Spirit residents.⁸ Noting its longstanding commitment to supporting the LGBTQIA+ community, West Hollywood's April 2023 Resolution declared the city a sanctuary for transgender people.⁹

Several resolutions passed on November 19, 2024, by the Los Angeles Unified School Board made Los Angeles a sanctuary city for LGBTQ+ youth and immigrants.¹⁰ The Los Angeles School Board's resolutions "strengthen[ed] its position as a sanctuary for [school] district families and staff members who may be threatened by policies promulgated by the Trump administration, notably migrant families and LGBTQ students."¹¹ The Los Angeles Board of Education expressed its awareness of the incoming Trump administration, referencing the anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQIA+ language dominating his campaign and promising "to enforce the respectful treatment of all persons," and to ensure equity and nondiscrimination for gender expansive youth.¹²

In June 2024, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a Resolution declaring San Francisco a sanctuary city for transgender, non-binary, and Two-Spirit people.¹³ San Francisco's legislation cited the 515 laws targeting transgender people introduced in 40 other states in 2024, noted that transgender people were moving to more supportive cities and states, and reaffirmed the California state sanctuary law passed in 2022, which "protects individuals seeking sanctuary from out of state prosecution and explicitly prohibits law enforcement agencies from knowingly making or participating in the arrest or extradition of an individual pursuant to an out-of-state arrest warrant based on another state's law against receiving gender affirming healthcare in California."¹⁴ Sacramento's resolution did the same, preventing the use of city resources to enforce or cooperate with law enforcement seeking to prosecute individuals for seeking or assisting in the provision of gender affirming healthcare.¹⁵

In the midwest, Kansas City, Missouri passed a resolution in 2023 declaring itself a safe haven for those who receive or assist in the provision of gender affirming healthcare, and committing itself to making the

⁸ Elizabeth Wolfe and Veronica Miracle, "Los Angeles officials move to establish city as a sanctuary for immigrants and LGBTQ youth in advance of Trump's return to the White House," CNN (Nov. 19, 2024), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/19/us/los-angeles-sanctuary-city-lgbtq-students-votes/index.html>; Regular Meeting Revised Order of Business, Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles (Nov. 19, 2024), <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/11-19-24RegBdOBpostRevised.pdf>; Resolution Declaring the City and County of San Francisco a Sanctuary City for Transgender, Gender Nonconforming, Non-Binary, and Two-Spirit People, Resolution No. 344-24, San Francisco Board of Supervisors (June 11, 2024), <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/r0344-24.pdf> (attached as CLE material).

⁹ Resolution Declaring the City of West Hollywood a Sanctuary City for Transgender People, Resolution No. 23-036, City Council of West Hollywood (April 17, 2023), https://weho.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?meta_id=252527.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Wolfe and Veronica Miracle, "Los Angeles officials move to establish city as a sanctuary for immigrants and LGBTQ youth in advance of Trump's return to the White House," CNN (Nov. 19, 2024), <https://www.cnn.com/2024/11/19/us/los-angeles-sanctuary-city-lgbtq-students-votes/index.html>.

¹¹ Regular Meeting Revised Order of Business, Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles (Nov. 19, 2024), <https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/Domain/1057/11-19-24RegBdOBpostRevised.pdf>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Resolution Declaring the City and County of San Francisco a Sanctuary City for Transgender, Gender Nonconforming, Non-Binary, and Two-Spirit People, Resolution No. 344-24, San Francisco Board of Supervisors (June 11, 2024), <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/r0344-24.pdf>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

enforcement and monitoring of any state law prohibiting such care their “lowest priority.”¹⁶ Even in Florida, one of the most hostile states to LGBTQIA+ people, Lake Worth Beach passed a resolution stating its commitment to welcoming, supporting, and protecting the human rights of LGBTQIA+ people and their families.

On the east coast, Washington, D.C. passed a law in 2022 prohibiting disciplinary measures against medical professionals who provide gender affirming care that is legal in D.C., even if it is illegal or restricted elsewhere.¹⁷ Similarly, in October 2024, Northampton, Massachusetts’s City Council passed a resolution making it a sanctuary city for transgender and gender diverse people by restricting the use of city resources or property to detain people who are seeking or providing gender affirming care, including gender affirming surgery or hormone replacement therapy.¹⁸ Finally, within New York state, Ithaca has reaffirmed its prior commitments (made via legislation in 2017 and 2023) to protect migrants, reproductive rights, and gender affirming care.¹⁹

C. Analysis of Comparable Municipal-Level Legislation

While it is honorable that the above cities and states passed resolutions declaring themselves Sanctuary Cities for LGBTQIA+ people, some of these resolutions are vague and do not go nearly far enough to substantively protect the healthcare, privacy, and civil rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Conversely, in our communications with NYC Council’s Committee on Women and Gender Equality over the past month, we provided examples of specific, actionable trans sanctuary bills to incorporate into NYC legislation. Although Mayor Adams’s Executive Order No. 32, Prohibiting Use of City Resources to Assist Jurisdictions Seeking to Enforce Prohibitions on Gender-Affirming Care, is a great start, it does not carry the same weight as legislation passed by NYC Council, nor does it contain the practical measures to operationalize the sentiments of solidarity that can be found in the package now being considered by the NYC Council.²⁰ Additionally, in light of the upcoming mayoral election, it is important to pass affirmative protections that cannot be easily revoked.

Over the past month, Chosen Family Law Center directed committee counsel to the Olympia, Washington resolution declaring Olympia to be a Sanctuary City for LGBTQIA2S+ people in January 2025 because we believe it is the strongest LGBTQIA+ support resolution currently enacted in the country.²¹

Among other protections, Olympia’s resolution declares that individuals will not be prevented from seeking or facilitating gender affirming care within its jurisdiction, adds that city resources will not be expended to prosecute individuals seeking or facilitating gender affirming care in the event a prosecution

¹⁶ Resolution Declaring the City of Kansas City a Safe Haven for Gender-Affirming Healthcare through adoption of a Gender-Affirming Healthcare Police, Resolution No. 230385 (May 11, 2023).

¹⁷ Protecting Health Professionals Providing Reproductive Health Care Amendment Act of 2022, 70 DCR § 593, D.C. Law 24-307 (effective Mar. 10, 2023), <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/laws/24-307#:~:text=Law%20Information&text=Law%2024%2D307%2C%20the%20%E2%80%9C.6%2C%202022%2C%20and%20Dec.>

¹⁸ Deborah Klemer and Rachel Maiore, City Council of the City of Northampton, Resolution Declaring Northampton a Sanctuary City for Transgender and Gender Diverse People, R-24.146 (Oct. 1, 2024), https://northamptonma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/28122/24146-A-Resolution-Declaring-Northampton-a-Sanctuary-City-for-Transgender-and-Gender-Diverse-People_Certified.

¹⁹ Resolution Reaffirming the City of Ithaca’s Commitment to Human Rights Protection for Migrants, Reproductive Rights, and Gender Affirming Care, City Council of Ithaca, NY (2025), https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/3120888/Amended_Sanctuary_City_2025_Reaffirmation.pdf; Matt Dougherty, *Ithaca Common Council to Reaffirm Sanctuary City Status, Anticipating Trump Crackdowns*, Ithaca.com (Jan 16, 2025), https://www.ithaca.com/news/ithaca/ithaca-common-council-to-reaffirm-sanctuary-city-status-anticipating-trump-crackdowns/article_3150260a-d393-11ef-b32f-bf59afef43bd.html.

²⁰ Eric Adams, Exec. Order 32, *Prohibiting Use of City Resources to Assist Jurisdictions Seeking to Enforce Prohibitions on Gender Affirming Care*, Office of the Mayor of the City of New York (Jun. 12, 2023), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2023/eo-32.pdf> (attached as CLE material).

²¹ Resolution Declaring Olympia a Sanctuary City for LGBTQIA2S+ People, File No. 25-0086, City of Olympia, Washington City Council (Jan. 28, 2025).

law is passed in the state of Washington, ensures that information regarding an individual's sex assigned at birth will not be disseminated, and affirms that the city will oppose any anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation passed at the state or federal level.²² The Olympia WA resolution creates tangible support for LGBTQIA+ people and is not just a performative statement.

Given the uncertainty of future bans on gender affirming healthcare, we also suggest incorporating a similar provision to Kansas City's "lowest priority" stipulation to the existing legislation packet, should New York City be required to enforce a state or federal law attacking LGBTQIA+ healthcare access or provision. The relevant language in the Kansas City resolution²³ is:

"In the event any law or regulation is passed in the State of Missouri which imposes criminal punishment, civil liability, administrative penalties, or professional sanctions, on an individual or organization for providing, seeking, receiving, or assisting another individual who is seeking or receiving gender-affirming healthcare, City personnel shall make enforcement of said law or regulation their lowest priority."

Fortunately, New York State has laid strong foundations to strengthen protections for LGBTQIA+ people, diverse families, and other potential targets of this administration. At the state level, New York's shield law protects against out-of-state investigations and prosecutions, professional discipline, and civil liability on the basis of providing gender affirming or reproductive healthcare, in addition to protecting providers' liability insurance and patients' medical information or other data related to such care.²⁴ However, as one point of concern, extradition in the New York state law has an exception for extradition "required by federal law."²⁵ This is one example of an area where New York City could expand protections, for example, by forbidding the use of city resources to facilitate extradition, aligning with Mayor Adams's Executive Order 32 prohibiting the use of city resources to enforce gender affirming healthcare prohibitions.²⁶ Additionally, although New York State is not a sanctuary state for immigration, New York City is an immigration sanctuary city.²⁷ The passage of these bills would serve to provide reassurance and comfort to Transgender/Non-Binary/Gender Non-Conforming New York City residents that New York City will enact the protections in these bills and also do whatever else is necessary to protect them, and could reaffirm that New York City is and will remain a sanctuary for our immigrant communities as well.

We also recommend that the New York City Council develop specific legislation to prevent the extradition of people seeking gender affirming or reproductive healthcare in NYC and make enforcement of state or federal bans on reproductive or gender affirming healthcare a low priority in the City.

We appreciate that Councilmembers Cabán, Hanif, Ossé, Bottcher, Hudson, and Shulman have proposed robust supports through City Council Bill 1200-2025, Bill 1201-2025, Bill 1203-2025, Bill 1204-2025, Resolution 0771-2025, Resolution 0774-2025, Resolution 0781-2025, and Resolution T2025-3214. This proposed legislation package is specific in terms of funding, remedies, and the government departments they are directed to support, which is critically important so that organizations such as Chosen Family Law Center know where to direct our advocacy.

²² *Id.*

²³ Resolution Declaring the City of Kansas City a Safe Haven for Gender-Affirming Healthcare through adoption of a Gender-Affirming Healthcare Police, Resolution No. 230385 (May 11, 2023).

²⁴ Williams Institute Center on Reproductive Health, Law, and Policy, *New York Shield Law Fact Sheet* (Aug. 2024), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Shield-Law-NY-Sep-2024.pdf>.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ Eric Adams, Exec. Order 32, *Prohibiting Use of City Resources to Assist Jurisdictions Seeking to Enforce Prohibitions on Gender Affirming Care*, Office of the Mayor of the City of New York (Jun. 12, 2023), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2023/eo-32.pdf> (attached as CLE material).

²⁷ NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, *Sanctuary Laws in NYC* (Jan. 6, 2025), <https://www.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/legal-resources/sanctuary-city-laws-in-nyc.page#:~:text=New%20York%20City%20is%20a,happening%20in%20New%20York%20City>.

If passed, this set of bills would be the strongest and most specific municipal protections for TGNCNBI people in the USA. NYC deserves these robust protections, to earn the status it has as a welcoming beacon to LGBTQIA+ people across the USA and the world.

IV. Additional Proposed Legislation to Strengthen Mutual Aid Opportunities

In addition to the legislative packet currently under consideration, Chosen Family Law Center urges the NYC Council to strengthen mutual aid opportunities in NYC by passing anti-discrimination and multi-partner domestic partnership legislation.

A. Multi-Partner Domestic Partnership Legislation

NYC's Domestic Partnership law, passed in 1998, New York City Administrative Code 3²⁸, is due for an update to reflect our evolving ideas of partnership and family. Across the U.S., the nuclear family is on the decline. 82% of Americans are living in diverse family structures. Only 18% of U.S. households resemble the nuclear family model of married parents living with their biological children.²⁹ A record 20% of Americans live in multi-generational households,³⁰ 16% of children live in blended families with step-siblings or step-parents,³¹ and 28% of Americans live alone, many forming important care networks and chosen families beyond biological or spousal ties.³² Additionally, 1 in 5 adults will be in a consensually non-monogamous relationship at some point in their life,³³ and over 1/3 of adults describe their ideal relationship as something other than complete monogamy.³⁴

These numbers are even higher in New York City. 87.2% of NYC residents live in non-nuclear families.³⁵ 44% of children in NYC do not grow up in a nuclear family; 27.6% of those live with single parents.³⁶ 13.8% of children in NYC live with grandparents or other relatives.³⁷ 57% of NYC residents over 15 years old are unmarried; 44% have never been married.³⁸ 14% of households in NYC are headed by

²⁸ NYC Administrative Code §3-241, Subchapter 3: Domestic Partnerships (attached as CLE material)

²⁹ United States Census Bureau, America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2016 (October 8, 2021), <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/families/cps-2016.html>.

³⁰ D'Vera Cohn and Jeffrey S. Passel, *A record 64 million Americans live in multigenerational households*, Pew Research Center (Apr. 15, 2018), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/04/05/a-record-64-million-americans-live-in-multigenerational-households/#:~:text=A%20record%20of%2064%20million%20Americans%20live%20in%20multigenerational%20households&text=The%20number%20and%20share%20of%20economy%20since%20the%20Great%20Recession>.

³¹ United States Census Bureau, America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2016 (October 8, 2021), <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/families/cps-2016.html>.

³² Lydia Anderson, Chaneil Washington, Rose M. Kreider and Thomas Gryn, *Share of One-Person Households More Than Tripled from 1940 to 2020*, United States Census Bureau (June 8, 2023), [https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/06/more-than-a-quarter-all-households-have-one-person.html#:~:text=Over%20a%20quarter%20\(27.6%25\).to%202020%20\(Figure%201\)](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/06/more-than-a-quarter-all-households-have-one-person.html#:~:text=Over%20a%20quarter%20(27.6%25).to%202020%20(Figure%201)).

³³ Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy: "Prevalence of Experiences With Consensual Nonmonogamous Relationships: Findings From Two National Samples of Single Americans." July 2017.

³⁴ Linley Sanders, *Monogamy in Relationships*, YouGov (Feb 21, 2023), <https://today.yougov.com/society/articles/45271-how-many-americans-prefer-nonmonogamy-relationship>.

³⁵ American Community Survey, S0901: Children Characteristics, New York City (2022), <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S0901?q=s0901&q=160XX00US3651000>.

³⁶ Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, *Keeping Track of New York City's Children: 2022* at 9–10, 73, https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.cccnewyork.org/2022/11/CCC+Keeping+Track+2022_Small+PDF+Low+Res_corrected_20221021.pdf.

³⁷ American Community Survey, S0901: Children Characteristics, New York City (2022), <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2022.S0901?q=s0901&q=160XX00US3651000>.

³⁸ American Community Survey, DP02: Selected Social Characteristics in the United States, New York City (2022), <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2022.DP02?q=new+york+city+unmarried-partner&t=Families+and+Household+Characteristics:Household+and+Family>.

cohabiting, unmarried partners.³⁹ 10% of New Yorkers live in a household headed by a non-parent, non-partner relative.⁴⁰

Current requirements to become domestic partners remain focused on cohabiting romantic couples, including the following requirements: “Neither you nor your partner is married or related by blood in a manner that would bar their marriage in New York State. Both of you have a close and committed personal relationship, live together, and have been living together on a continuous basis.”⁴¹

New York City should update its existing Domestic Partnership statute to expand to include more than two partners, platonic partners, and non-cohabiting partners. Domestic partnership has substantive benefits that are stabilizing for families, including the ability to share health insurance with a domestic partner on many employer health insurance plans, hospital visitation access, and being internationally recognized as a close family status for purposes of crossing a border in a pandemic to be together, for instance. Chosen Family Law Center has already helped to draft and pass multi-partner domestic partnership bills in Somerville, MA (passed June 2020); Cambridge, MA (passed March 2021); and Arlington, MA (passed April 2021). CFLC can help New York City follow the lead of these groundbreaking cities to support its diverse families.

This work received worldwide press and spurred national and international conversation about the reality of family diversity beyond nuclear families. In part due to this work, Chosen Family Law Center was cited in a case (*West 49th St. LLC v. O’Neill*) that expanded the definition of family for rent stabilized apartment inheritance throughout NYC.⁴² The ruling in *West 49th St. LLC v. O’Neill*: NY Civil Court Judge Karen May Bacdayan held that two potential partners of a deceased man could each be eligible for his rent stabilized apartment to pass to them. The ruling called for a more expansive definition of a family-like relationship for rent stabilization purposes, and explicitly mentioned multi-partner relationships, platonic partnerships, and non-cohabiting partners. *West 49th St. LLC v. O’Neill* affects rent stabilization succession, acknowledging that leaseholders may have more than one life partner. That a leaseholder may have a life partner living separately does not eliminate the succession rights of another life partner who lives in the apartment and otherwise meets the criteria. In other words, the court recognized that the definition of “family-like” includes relationships other than the monogamous two-person model.

Extending domestic partnership to a more inclusive definition of family encourages and supports family bonds and care networks that provide essential support in times of economic and cultural stress for marginalized groups, and is a powerful way to support and encourage mutual aid for a number of communities most likely to be in non-nuclear family forms who are currently facing adversity, including the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrant communities, and single mothers who are at disproportionate risk of poverty.

B. Family and Relationship Status Nondiscrimination Legislation

New York City should also pass family status and relationship structure nondiscrimination laws. There is a clear need for nondiscrimination legislation, not only because of how it would benefit multigenerational, multiparent, or single-parent families, but also because it would affirmatively protect and signal the city’s acceptance of polyamorous families, multigenerational families, and family diversity overall. Some prior state and city court cases involving polyamory, outside of *O’Neill*, have been negative; for example, as the basis for a defamation claim in *Napoli v. Bern*,⁴³ cf. *Laguerre v. Maurice*.⁴⁴ Child custody cases involving polyamorous parents have disparate decisions based on subjective opinions of judges.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ Office of the City Clerk, *Domestic Partner Registration*, <https://www.cityclerk.nyc.gov/content/domestic-partnership-registration> (last visited Jan. 28, 2025).

⁴² *West 49th St., LLC v. O’Neill*, 77 Misc. 3d 385, 178 N.Y.S.3d 874 (N.Y. Civ. Ct. 2022) (attached as CLE material).

⁴³ 73 Misc. 3d 1222(A), 155 N.Y.S.3d 304 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 2021).

⁴⁴ 192 A.D.3d 44, 138 N.Y.S.3d 123 (2020) (finding “that the false imputation of homosexuality does not constitute defamation per se”).

The term "family or relationship structure" encompasses how individuals organize their intimate relationships, family bonds, and household arrangements. This definition recognizes that families and relationships take many forms beyond normative models – principally, nuclear families and monogamous relationships. This legislation adds "family or relationship structure" as protected categories in local non-discrimination laws, ensuring all residents have equal access to housing, services, and opportunities regardless of how they structure their families or consensual relationships. This protection applies regardless of whether someone is currently in any particular type of relationship, ensuring that individuals cannot face discrimination based on their past, present, or potential future family and relationship choices.

Aside from prohibiting discrimination, this ordinance does not grant any additional rights, privileges, or obligations on the basis of family or relationship structure, such as the right to establish a multi-partner domestic partnership, the right to add multiple partners to a healthcare plan, and so on. These protections do not override other relevant sections of City code, such as restrictions on the number of people who may reside in a given residence.

CFLC has helped to pass nondiscrimination bills in Somerville, MA (passed March 2023); Cambridge, MA (passed November 2023); Oakland, CA (passed April 2024); and Berkeley, CA (passed May 2024). We are available to support the drafting and passage of similar legislation in New York City.

V. Conclusion

Without knowing the full totality of attacks on the LGBTQIA+ community outside of New York that will come to pass in upcoming years, the NYC Council's proposed legislation package would be an affirmation that NYC intends to fight to preserve our cultural values and independence as a beacon of safety, welcome, and tolerance for LGBTQIA+ individuals and families. Passage of the legislation package gives NYC an opportunity to reaffirm the existing New York State shield law — and go beyond it. Chosen Family Law Center's proposed nondiscrimination and multi-partner domestic partnership legislation would further strengthen our community by supporting the many New Yorkers with diverse family structures.

New York City's TGNCNBI community needs protection now. In light of the uncertain political landscape that threatens existing protections for LGBTQIA+ people and diverse families alongside myriad other groups, it is more important than ever to fortify NYC's existing protections for our most marginalized community members. We need strong, affirmative protections, and New York City is well-positioned to offer those protections. We are available for dialogue, review, and further support.

Sincerely,
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NYC Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary
(TGNCNB) People in New York City
Public Testimony
February 28, 2025

To the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity:

Good morning. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you today. On behalf of the Free to Be Youth Project of the Urban Justice Center, I would like to thank the New York City Council's Committee on Women and Gender Equity for convening this hearing at such a critical moment. My name is Amy Leipziger and I am the Project Director of the Free to Be Youth Project.

Free to be Youth Project

The Free to Be Youth Project (FYP) is a direct legal service provider dedicated to serving homeless and at-risk lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) youth. The Project is housed at the Urban Justice Center, a non-profit law collective serving New York City's most disenfranchised poverty populations. Since 1994, we have been providing legal services to LGBTQ+ youth and young adults who are low-income, living on the streets, in homeless shelters, in the juvenile justice system, or in foster care. We regularly travel to drop-in and community centers, including the Ali Forney Center, Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project, the LGBT Center, HMI, and Staten Island Pride to offer direct legal services and know-your-rights workshops. We have helped hundreds of LGBTQ+ youth with legal problems like applying for legal immigration status, fighting wrongful denials of disability benefits, changing their names, fighting terminations of their public assistance benefits, and overcoming barriers to obtaining safe and stable housing.

In the past few months, we've seen increased attacks on the safety and well-being of transgender, gender non-conforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) individuals. As these attacks continue and increase, it is critical that adequate protections, resources, and support be provided to our most vulnerable community members.



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Struggles Facing TGNCNBI Individuals

In New York City, there are 146,000 students (up to age 21) attending schools that experience homelessness. While nationally only 9.4% of the population identifies as LGBTQ+, 40% of unhoused youth self-identify as queer or transgender. This statistic suggests there are over 58,400 LGBTQ+ young New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Furthermore, this number does not reflect those youth and young adults that are not enrolled in school or disconnected from social services. The city estimates that there are approximately 20,000 homeless youth and young adults connected to social services, adding, at minimum, an additional 8,000 homeless LGBTQ+ youth and young adults in the city. Trans people make up at least 1.6% of the US Population and a higher percentage of New Yorkers. The number of transgender people is also growing with at least 5.1% of those under the age of 29 identifying as trans and/or nonbinary.

Unhoused and at-risk TGNCNBI youth and young adults are some of the most marginalized and vulnerable members of the LGBTQ+ community, making them particularly susceptible to social support barriers. They are an incredibly hard-to-reach population and struggle to connect with service providers, facing stigma, bias, and discrimination in employment. Our clients have regularly reported experiencing significant mistreatment at work, including abuse of their gender identity, being forced to use a restroom that doesn't correspond to their identity, persistently being misgendered by coworkers and supervisors, and in some instances, denied jobs or opportunities to advance.

TGNCNBI youth report increased levels of depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicidal ideation, or attempts to die by suicide. The Trevor Project's annual report on LGBTQ+ youth mental health revealed that 50% of transgender and non-binary young people seriously considered ending their life—with 1 in 5 attempting suicide.¹ This mental health crisis is exacerbated by the recent rise of anti-LGBTQ+ policies. On November 6th, the Trevor Project's crisis services saw an overall volume increase of nearly 700% compared to the weeks leading up to the election.² Anti-transgender state laws across the country have also led to a 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender and nonbinary youth.² Concerningly, there is a disproportionate lack of access to mental health care for TGNCNBI youth with 3 in 5 transgender and nonbinary young people reported wanting access to mental health care yet being unable to receive it.¹

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The clients that we serve at FYP live at the intersection of multiple forms of oppression. Not only are many of them facing these mental health concerns, but they are disproportionately people of color, immigrants, and/or involved in criminalized street economies. In the last several years, we have seen, and responded to, an unprecedented and increased demand for legal services from recently arrived TGNCNBI youth in New York. Many of these newly arrived youth face the possibility of deportation to countries that respond to their gender identity with hostility and life-threatening persecution—one that often amounts to death sentences. These individuals came to New York in search of safety and stability. We cannot allow the fears that prompted them to flee their home countries to be replicated here.

It is necessary to note that many TGNCNBI individuals facing attacks to their safety and well-being have limited opportunities to seek remedy and support. Youth may feel at risk in educational or workplace settings—especially given the rise of hateful rhetoric that anti-LGBTQ+ policies have encouraged. The New York’s 2023 Department of Labor TGNCNBI report revealed that transgender individuals are over two times more likely to not finish high school than their cis-gender counterparts.³ They are similarly underrepresented in college programs. Many of the respondents included in this report noted feeling unsafe and targeted in schools—leading them to ultimately drop out.³ These instances of discrimination and harassment extend into workplace settings and contribute to heightened rates of unemployment and poverty among TGNCNBI communities. Over 30% of the transgender population in the state of New York reported yearly incomes below \$25,000, compared to only 12% of the cisgender population.³

At FYP, we meet TGNCNBI individuals where they feel most safe. In doing our work, we’ve learned that many community members are unaware of the legal rights and protections available to them. Not only that, but many avoid seeking critical and life-saving resources out of fear. Exposing themselves as TGNCNBI has caused them incredible harm in the past and they fear being further targeted. As such, many have gone unsupported as they navigate a system and world that is growing increasingly hostile towards them. Our mission at FYP is to reach these individuals and provide them with safe and compassionate care. While our clients have been fortunate enough to obtain our services, there are thousands of TGNCNBI youth in the city that don’t have access to these essential resources. Our capacity is limited, as are the capacities of our partner organizations, and more support is needed. We cannot be everywhere at once, and the needs of the community will soon outpace our abilities. Without increased and adequate support

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services, TGNCNBI individuals will continue to fall through the cracks in our system, struggling to access the resources they need to become successful contributors to the New York City community.

Coalition Priorities:

- TGNCBI leaders - and those providers who serve TGNCBI communities - are strapped for resources as they face direct attack. Organizations protecting TGNCBI people in many different ways have come together to propose practical defenses from unprecedented hostility from the federal level. In order to provide needed services, we need the **Trans Equity Initiative Funding to be increased to a minimum of ten million dollars.**
- As those who are closest to the problem are closest to the solution, we encourage NYCC to prioritize using the Trans Equity Funding Initiative to support and grow trans-led organizations. Currently, money to trans-led organizations seems to be less than 38% of the Trans Equity Funding Initiative, less than 0.4% of the total discretionary budget, and less than 0.0025% of the NYC Budget despite trans communities facing disproportionate rates of employment discrimination, violence, homicide, HIV, poverty, and poor health outcomes.
- We also believe that critical support is needed to ensure that Trans Led and Trans Serving organization are to be able to apply for future funding and/or manage contract requirements
- Beyond these specific policy measures, we also urge the committee to consider renaming itself to the **Committee on Gender Equity** to better reflect the TGNCBI community it serves. Language matters, and a more inclusive name would send a powerful message that all gender-diverse individuals—especially those most marginalized—are seen, valued, and protected under the scope of this committee’s work. At a time when our community faces escalating threats from hostile policies at the federal level, visibility and inclusion in the institutions meant to protect us are more critical than ever.

Thank you to the members of this Committee and to the community of youth advocates who have been working hard to address the needs of this community. The Free to Be Youth Project stands ready to assist the NYC Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity in any way that we can.



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1. “The Trevor Project: 2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People,” The Trevor Project, https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/assets/static/05_TREVOR05_2023survey.pdf.
 2. “The Trevor Project Shares Post-Election Day Crisis Contact Volume Data,” The Trevor Project, November 6, 2024, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/blog/the-trevor-project-shares-post-election-day-crisis-contact-volume-data/>.
 3. “2023 TGNCNB Employment Report,” New York State Department of Labor, <https://dol.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2024/01/tgncnb-report-pdf-version-1.pdf>



Testimony from Quadira Coles, Director of Policy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE)
[New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity- Protections and](#)
[Access for TGNCNB New Yorkers](#)¹

Feb 28, 2025

Good evening to the Committee on Women and Gender Equity. My name is Quadira Coles, and I am the Director of Policy & Advocacy at Girls for Gender Equity (GGE). GGE works intergenerationally, through a Black feminist lens, to center the leadership of Black girls and gender-expansive young people of color in reshaping culture and policy through advocacy, youth-centered programming, and narrative shift to achieve gender and racial justice.

We are here today to urge this committee and the full City Council to reaffirm your commitment to protecting, supporting, and expanding access for transgender and gender expansive people, especially youth in New York City. At a time when trans rights are under relentless attack across the country and from the highest level of government, it is important that our city remains committed to ensuring that all young people—regardless of their gender identity—are able to exist, express themselves fully, and thrive.

Protection for trans and gender-nonconforming youth begins in schools. The Department of Education (DOE) has issued [Guidelines to Support Trans and Gender Expansive Students](#)², to ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in a safe environment. Additionally, there are legal protections to prevent discrimination in employment, housing, and other essential services. However, despite the local work done to shore up protections and create equitable opportunity, federal efforts threaten to erase the existence of trans people and roll back the existing safety nets, putting young trans and gender expansive people at risk of harm. We are already seeing this influence play out in our local schools, where

¹<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1281117&GUID=9A4B15A7-4622-45A5-BB8D-B49329BAF5D&Options=info%7C&Search=>

²<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/school-environment/guidelines-on-gender/guidelines-to-support-transgender-and-gender-expansive-students>

policies targeting trans youth—particularly in sports—seek to exclude them under the guise of “fairness.” These efforts do not protect anyone. Instead, they reinforce harmful stereotypes, fuel discrimination, and further isolate trans youth—many of whom are already navigating hostile environments.

As the Committee on Women and Gender Equity, you have the power and responsibility to ensure that this city does not become complicit in this wave of anti-trans rhetoric and policy. You can do that by:

- Monitoring and strengthening enforcement of existing protections for trans and gender-expansive youth in schools, housing, and employment and **ensuring that schools are adhering to inclusive school policies that affirm gender identity in all aspects, including dress codes, curriculum, sports and other extracurricular activities, bathrooms, and classroom environments.**
- **Protecting and funding access to gender-affirming care** and services that support the holistic well-being of trans youth.
- **Financially investing in community-based organizations, led by trans people**, that provide essential mental health resources and advocacy for trans and gender expansive youth. Currently, 62% of New York City’s Trans Equity Funding goes to organizations led by cisgender people.³ To create real, lasting change, it is essential that those most directly impacted by harm have the resources to lead the fight against it. **We are asking for the Trans Equity Fund to be increased to \$10 million.**

New York City has long been a leader in the fight for justice and equity. While some have folded under the demands of trans erasure, we are grateful to this Committee’s leadership in ensuring that trans and gender expansive people and youth not only have legal protections but also feel safe, valued, and empowered in every space they enter.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

³ file:///Users/quadiracole/Downloads/Trans%20Equity%20One%20Pager.pdf



**Testimony: New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Oversight - Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and
Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City
February 28, 2025**

Thank you, Chair Louis, members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity, and other esteemed Council Members for the opportunity to testify. My name is Zephyr Merkur Hererra, and my pronouns are they, them, theirs. I am the Outreach Coordinator at GMHC's Testing Center. I have been working at GMHC for five years, starting in our transgender, gender nonbinary, and gender non-conforming, or TGNCNB, Hub as an HIV testing counselor. I am here to update you on GMHC's ongoing commitment to serving TGNCNB New Yorkers and to express our support for the Introductions and Resolutions on today's agenda.

Founded in 1982 as Gay Men's Health Crisis, the world's first HIV and AIDS services organization, GMHC provides comprehensive services to nearly 5,600 New Yorkers living with and affected by HIV and AIDS every year. Our clients represent populations at highest risk of HIV infection. In 2024, on intake over 78% lived under the Federal Poverty Level. Over 49% of all clients were people of color, nearly 50% were ages 50 and over, 63% identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning, and 5% were TGNCNB or questioning their gender. Given that estimates of New York City's TGNCNB population are between 1% and 2%, GMHC is serving a high proportion of our City's TGNCNB population, an example of our reputation as a safe and affirming provider.

GMHC's TGNCNB Hub provides comprehensive, peer-led case management and referrals, including to *Project Transcend*, our support group that provides a safe and affirming space where clients feel seen, heard, and valued in a judgment-free, strength-based environment. Project Transcend prioritizes community health by integrating HIV education with trans-sensitive STI

testing and PrEP education. It recognizes the importance of communal experiences by hosting catered in-person events. These gatherings foster deeper connections among participants, reducing isolation and strengthening support networks.

GMHC is grateful for the opportunity to support Introductions, 1200, 1201, 1203, and 1204, all of which address critical issues our TGNCNB clients face. A significant proportion are immigrants who have fled their home countries due to anti-trans violence. We provide them with essential resources, including housing referrals, legal referrals, and immigration support. Continued access to gender affirming care is critical because it keeps TGNCNB clients in the medical system. If they are unable to access legal care, they access other sources that increase their risk for HIV through shared needles. I recall a client I counseled who was diagnosed with HIV at our testing center. We linked her to treatment, the first opportunity she ever had to access legal hormones.

GMHC also supports Resolutions 0771, 0774, 0781, and T2025-3214. Preventing the sharing of information that could threaten TGNCNB New Yorker's health and well-being is critical to ensuring they stay connected to HIV care. Privacy is unfortunately a privilege, and it is important to protect TGNCNB New Yorkers from threats and investigations at the federal level. Protection from harm within New York State is also critical. It can be dangerous for TGNCNB people to be identified as such in their medical records, and it often is not necessary: use of hormones, for example, has little to do with treatment for a broken arm.

Lastly, as a member of New York City's Trans and Queer Advocacy Coalition, GMHC strongly supports the coalition ask of the Council to increase the Trans Equity Initiative to \$10M in total funding, with new funds focused on supporting trans-led, community-based organizations. Thanks again for the opportunity to testify today.

Taylor Edelmann
LGBTQIA+ Health & Harm Reduction Manager
National Harm Reduction Coalition
22 W 27th St, 5th Floor
NY, NY 10001

February 28, 2025

Committee on Women and Gender Equity
New York City Council

Testimony on Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City

To the esteemed members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity,

My name is Taylor Edelmann, and I serve as the LGBTQIA+ Health & Harm Reduction Manager at the National Harm Reduction Coalition (NHRC). Through my program, Lighthouse Learning Collective, I focus specifically on providing harm reduction support for LGB/TGNCNB+ people who use drugs and engage in sex work. My work centers on providing capacity-building support and technical assistance to social service providers throughout the city. NHRC is dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of people who use drugs, including LGBTQIA+ communities, through harm reduction, advocacy, and technical assistance. I submit this testimony to emphasize the critical need for expanding support, resources, and funding to ensure TGNCNB New Yorkers have equitable access to services, safety, and opportunities to thrive.

Despite progress in policy and advocacy, TGNCNB people—particularly Black, Indigenous, and other people of color—continue to face disproportionate barriers to healthcare, housing, employment, and safety. To address these systemic inequities, I urge the City Council to take the following actions:

1. Increase the Trans Equity Initiative Funding to \$10 Million

The Trans Equity Initiative is a vital resource for TGNCNB communities in New York City. However, current funding levels remain insufficient to meet the demand for gender-affirming services, housing support, employment opportunities, and healthcare access. Increasing the budget to \$10 million would allow for sustained, long-term investment in the well-being of TGNCNB New Yorkers and the organizations that serve them.

2. **Prioritize Trans-Led and Trans-Serving Organizations, Especially BIPOC-Led Groups**

Trans-led and trans-serving organizations—particularly those led by Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC)—are best positioned to meet the needs of TGNCNB communities. These organizations have the cultural competence, lived experience, and trust necessary to deliver effective and affirming services. However, many of these organizations operate with inadequate funding and struggle to sustain their work. The city must prioritize funding for trans-led and trans-serving organizations and ensure equitable distribution of resources that reach the communities most in need.

3. **Fund Technical Assistance (TA) Support for Trans-Led and Trans-Serving Organizations**

Many trans-led organizations encounter significant barriers when attempting to access public funding, including complex application and compliance processes that disproportionately impact grassroots and smaller organizations. By allocating funds for technical assistance (TA), the city can support trans-led organizations in navigating funding applications, contract management, and compliance requirements. This investment is essential to ensuring that trans-led organizations have the capacity to grow and sustain their impact over time.

4. **Rename the Committee on Women and Gender Equity to the Committee on Gender Equity**

Language matters. The current name of this committee does not fully reflect the breadth of gender equity work needed in New York City. Renaming it to the "Committee on Gender Equity" would be a critical step toward inclusivity, affirming the experiences of all gender-diverse individuals. The city's commitment to gender equity should explicitly recognize and uplift the experiences of transgender, gender non-conforming, and nonbinary individuals, ensuring that they are not erased in broader conversations about equity and inclusion.

New York City has long been a leader in advancing LGBTQIA+ rights, but given our current sociopolitical climate, our work is far from over. The measures outlined above will ensure that TGNCNB individuals have the resources, support, and structural recognition necessary to live with dignity, safety, and opportunity. I urge the City Council to act decisively to implement these changes and to continue fostering a city that prioritizes the well-being of all its residents.

Thank you for your time and commitment to gender equity. I am available for any further discussion and collaboration to make these recommendations a reality.

Sincerely,

Taylor Edelman

LGBTQIA+ Health & Harm Reduction Manager

National Harm Reduction Coalition



Testimony from Kei Williams, Interim Executive Director
[New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity –
Protections and Access for TGNCNB New Yorkers¹](#)

February 28, 2025

Thank you Madam Chair Louis and all Committee Members for making time for this hearing today. My name is Kei Williams, and I am the Interim Executive Director of the NEW Pride Agenda (NPA). By working with a diverse network of communities and elected officials, NPA serves to educate members of the LGBTQIA+ community and allies, as well as the general public, about our legal protections and rights. From passing legislation and demanding the implementation of key laws including GENDA, the Repeal of Walking While Trans, the Safe Haven Act, and Prop-1 to operating our Manhattan-based Empowerment Center to provide direct services, we are meeting the needs of the most marginalized members of our community.

It is clear that there is an existential threat to the rights and wellbeing of the transgender and gender nonconforming / nonbinary (TGNCNB) people at this moment. A robust response on the local level will be vital to ensure that all New Yorkers – especially those who hold intersectional identities – remain as safe as our laws will allow. That is why we are joining the voices today urging this committee and the full City Council to enact all necessary measures to protect, support, and expand investment in the rights, safety, and wellness of TGNCNB people who call this city home.

Many of us are aware of the anti-LGBTQ+ movement that has taken over the country. Extremist politicians and organizations have grown bolder in their attempts to dismantle New York's reputation as a beacon of acceptance and inclusivity. When it comes to our TGNCNB youth, we are already experiencing attempts to enact discriminatory policies from the hostile takeover of school boards in Manhattan² to the refusal of care at our hospitals³. Despite the proclamation of New York as a safe haven state, and having some of the most comprehensive protections and

¹

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=1281117&GUID=9A4B15A7-4622-45A5-BB8D-B49329BAF5DF&Options=info%7C&Search=>

²

<https://glaad.org/lgbtq-activists-youth-and-parents-defended-trans-students-in-tense-nyc-education-council-meeting-heres-why-it-matters/>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/01/nyregion/nyu-langone-hospital-trans-care-youth.html>

anti-discriminatory laws in the nation, federal threats and executive orders have led to extensive fear and an attempted erasure of TGNCNB communities. We also know that our community is not a monolith and most members hold multiple identities – Black *and* trans, homeless *and* migrant, queer *and* youth – which collectively influence our experiences.

As our elected leaders it is crucial that New York City meet impacted communities where they are. We call on you to demonstrate courage in these trying times by:

- **Invest in public education** campaigns that promote the health, wellness, and safety of transgender, gender nonconforming / nonbinary, and intersex people and their families.
- **Strengthen and enact shield law protections, and ensuring access to reproductive healthcare and gender-affirming care** is available to patients without interference before, during, or after.
- **Monitor, enact, and implement the Dignity for All Students Act⁴**, and mandate all NYC schools adhere to the Guidelines set forth by the NYC Department of Education⁵.
- **Expand the Trans Equity Initiative to \$10 million**, and ensure that funding goes primarily to trans-led organizations who are on the frontlines. Funding should also be designed to be flexible, easy to access, and permit recipients to respond to the evolving community needs in real-time and build sustainable infrastructure.

Ignorance is the parent of fear. New York must remain grounded in its values and stand strong in the face of hate. We are not going back, and we thank you for your continued leadership in ensuring that this city remains a beacon of freedom, protection, and hope for our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kei Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Kei Williams
Interim Executive Director
NEW Pride Agenda

⁴ <https://www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/dignity-all-students-act-dasa>

⁵

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/school-environment/guidelines-on-gender/guidelines-to-support-transgender-and-gender-expansive-students>



Dear Chair Cabán and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, I submit this testimony in strong support of the legislative measures before the Council that expand protections and resources for trans, gender non-conforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCI) New Yorkers. These policies are critical to preventing sexual violence, as the ongoing attacks on gender-affirming care and trans rights only increase the risk of harm. Now more than ever, NYC must stand firm in protecting gender-expansive communities.

The Alliance's mission is to prevent sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes through education, prevention programming, and the pursuit of legal and policy change.¹ Through our prevention programming and our collaborations with sexual violence response agencies, we have witnessed firsthand how the widespread dehumanization of gender-expansive communities leads to increased rates of sexual violence. The intersections between transphobia and sexual violence are undeniable: research shows that 1 in 2 transgender or gender non-conforming individuals will experience sexual violence in their lifetime.² As the current presidential administration works to erase critical data on gender-based violence, the full scope of harm becomes even harder to measure. These already staggering statistics likely underestimate the true prevalence, as many survivors do not or cannot report their experiences.

In our prevention work, we engage with youth in community-based organizations, college students, and nightlife workers. We have seen how crucial it is for institutions—including community organizations, schools, and healthcare providers—to center and affirm trans individuals in their policies and programming. Many young people we work with express gratitude for living in New York City, a place they have long viewed as a refuge for queer and trans communities. However, as the federal government escalates attacks on gender-expansive people, this sense of safety is increasingly fragile. When inclusive policies are absent or when leaders fail to take a clear stand against transphobia, that silence sends a dangerous message—one that emboldens discrimination and violence.

Transphobia and sexual violence are deeply interconnected. Many acts of transphobia—including the forced policing of gender, invasive investigations into people's bodies, and

¹ <https://svfreenyc.org/programs/>

² <https://ustranssurvey.org/download-reports/#2015report>



the denial of autonomy—are themselves forms of sexual violence.³ The rigid enforcement of the gender binary is a mechanism of power and control, which fuels the conditions that allow sexual violence to thrive. Expanding our understanding of gender does not just benefit gender-expansive people. Cisgender people benefit as well when we remove the harmful expectations that come from traditional gender roles and stereotypes. By affirming gender-expansive people and including gender-expansive norms in our communities, we foster healthy relationships and reduce violence for all community members.

The urgency of this issue cannot be overstated. Violence against trans people is escalating, particularly in public spaces and nightlife venues. The recent murder of Sam Nordquist⁴, a Black trans man in New York, who was brutally assaulted before being killed, is a heartbreaking reminder of the deadly chain of violence fueled by transphobia—one that begins with discrimination, escalates to sexual violence, and too often ends in murder. When trans adults are murdered, what message does that send to trans youth? Many young people are being told—implicitly and explicitly—that choosing to be themselves puts their lives at risk. The reality is that the number of trans adults remains low, in part, because so many trans individuals do not survive to adulthood due to violence and systemic neglect.⁵

Additionally, I'd like to highlight the need for the council to continue supporting organizations who are providing critical services to the trans community, especially in light of tenuous federal funding for this work. The Council currently funds three of our programs that supports the trans community:

- Project DOT- Launched in 2014 by The Alliance, Project DOT is a sexual violence prevention and youth leadership program and curriculum designed to address the unique challenges faced by young people from gender, racial and ethnically marginalized communities across New York City. **DOT is currently funded through the Young Women's Initiative at \$100,000 and we are seeking an enhancement to \$125,000.**

3

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3222349/#:~:text=Studies%20have%20reported%20that%20transgender,in%20health%20care%20and%20treatment.&text=Transgender%20persons%20are%20frequently%20exposed,life%2C%20mainly%20because%20of%20transphobia.>

⁴ <https://glaad.org/releases/glaad-statement-on-the-tragic-murder-of-sam-nordquist/>

⁵ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5227946/>

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- Sexual Assault Initiative (SAI)- The Sexual Assault Initiative is comprised of five sexual violence intervention programs working to ensure that all communities in our city can access the safe, confidential support they deserve. Our coalition has a special focus on underserved communities, including LGBTQIA+ survivors. Together serving thousands of New Yorkers annually across all five boroughs. **Our initiative is funded at \$2.075 million and due to an increase in the number of survivors we are seeing, we are asking for an enhancement to \$2.5 million.**
- OutSmart- OutSmartNYC's mission is to prevent and end sexual violence in nightlife and party spaces. The Alliance partners with nightlife professionals and other nonprofits to provide training, advocacy, community organizing and referrals for nightlife community members. Outsmart has tremendous potential to impact high rates of violence faced by nightlife staff and participants. **With the support of the Council to fund this initiative at \$300,000, we can bring this programming to the entire city.**
- Transgender Equity Fund – A state fund dedicated to supporting transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals by providing resources for gender-affirming care, mental health services, job training, and trans-serving organizations. **With City Council support, increasing this fund to \$10 million would help meet the urgent needs of trans and gender-expansive individuals working for and alongside their communities.**

By centering and protecting trans people in all our policies and programming, we create safer and more just communities for everyone. I urge the Council to support these legislative measures and take a clear, unwavering stance in defense of all trans and gender-nonconforming people New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and commitment to this critical issue.

New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

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Verbal Testimony:

Dear Chair Cabán and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm here on behalf of the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault to strongly support the legislative measures before you.. These policies are essential to preventing sexual violence, as the ongoing attacks on gender-affirming care and trans rights only increase the risk of harm for trans, gender non-conforming, nonbinary, and intersex New Yorkers. Now more than ever, New York City must stand firm in defending gender-expansive communities.

The Alliance's mission is to prevent sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes through education, prevention programming, advocacy for survivors, and policy change. In our work, we've seen firsthand how the dehumanization of gender-expansive communities



directly leads to increased rates of sexual violence. Research shows that 1 in 2 transgender or gender non-conforming individuals will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. With the current federal administration actively working to erase critical data on gender-based violence, the full scope of harm becomes even harder to measure, and these staggering statistics likely underestimate the true prevalence of violence.

- Through our prevention efforts, we engage with youth in community organizations, college students, and nightlife workers. We've seen how vital it is for institutions to center and affirm trans individuals in their policies and programming. Project DOT- Launched in 2014 by The Alliance, Project DOT is a sexual violence prevention and youth leadership program and curriculum designed to address the unique challenges faced by young people from gender, racial and ethnically marginalized communities across New York City. **DOT is currently funded through the Young Women's Initiative at \$100,000 and we are seeking an enhancement to \$125,000.**
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Many of the young people we work with express deep gratitude for living in New York City, a place they view as a refuge for queer and trans communities. However, as federal attacks on trans rights escalate, this sense of safety is increasingly fragile. When leaders fail to take a strong stand against transphobia or adopt inclusive policies, it sends a dangerous message—that discrimination and harm are allowed.

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Transphobia and sexual violence are deeply intertwined. Many acts of transphobia, such as the forced policing of gender, invasive body investigations, and denial of autonomy, are forms of sexual violence. The urgency of this issue cannot be overstated. Violence against trans people is on the rise, particularly in public spaces and nightlife venues. The recent murder of Sam Nordquist, a Black trans man in New York, who was brutally assaulted before being killed, is a devastating reminder of the chain of violence that begins with transphobia, escalates to sexual violence, and too often ends in murder. When trans adults are murdered, it sends a terrifying message to trans youth—that simply being themselves puts their lives at risk. Tragically, the number of trans adults remains low because so many trans individuals do not survive to adulthood due to violence and systemic neglect.

By centering and protecting trans people in our policies, we create safer, more just communities for everyone. I urge the Council to support these legislative measures and take a clear, unwavering stance in defense of all trans and gender-nonconforming New Yorkers.

Thank you for your time and commitment to this critical issue.

**Testimony from NYC Unity Project
Executive Director Ronald Porcelli**

***Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary
(TGNCNB) People in New York City***

Committee on Women and Gender Equity | Friday, February 28, 2025 – 12:00 PM

Chair Louis, members of the Committee on Women and Gender, distinguished members of the City Council, and the public: good afternoon. I am Ronald Porcelli, Executive Director of the NYC Unity Project. I am grateful to the New York City Council and the Committee on Women and Gender for hosting this hearing today.

The NYC Unity Project is the city's LGBTQ+ interagency coordinating body, housed in the Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice. As an innovation hub of novel programming, the NYC Unity Project ("Unity Project") coordinates across city agencies to incubate culturally competent services tailored to meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly TGNCNB people, people of color, and youth. The Unity Project works across three main sectors: economic mobility, acceptance and anti-discrimination, and health equity.

The Unity Project implements programming through a community-driven approach, investing in community-based organizations, and developing strategic partnerships across the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and academia. Beyond fostering culturally competent services, the Unity Project focuses on four additional pillars: interagency coordination, community engagement and education, policy and protections, and resource access.

NYC government has taken enormous strides to uplift and support the TGNCNB community, and the wider LGBTQ+ community. After centuries of discrimination and persecution, the past few decades have seen extraordinary advances in equity for TGNCNB folks, beginning here at the birthplace of Stonewall, where a rebellion ignited a movement that liberated countless individuals from shame, ostracization, and persecution—both in New York City and across the globe. We have witnessed a profound push for greater rights, protections, and services for LGBTQ+ people.

Yet, the work is far from over. We persist—navigating evolving challenges and confronting gaps that remain. We will continue to approach these needs with compassion, commitment, and empathy. We look forward to this hearing, the opportunity to speak before the council, and candid, thoughtful public testimony.

Policy & Protections:

Frist, with regards to policies and protections, the robust protections of the **New York City Human Rights Law (NYCHRL)** prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression in employment, housing, and public accommodations. The law safeguards employment rights related to sexual and

reproductive health, including gender-affirming care and hormone therapy. To uphold these protections, the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) enforces the Human Rights Law through a combination of investigations, legal action, settlements, penalties, and public education.

LGBTQ+ individuals deserve respectful, high-quality, and culturally affirming health care without fear of discrimination or bias. Knowing and understanding their rights is essential to ensuring they can access care, services, and support. To uphold these rights, the Health Department developed the **LGBTQ+ Health Care Bill of Rights**, a critical initiative that outlines local and state protections designed to empower community members in advocating for their health and well-being. This bill of rights, available in multiple languages, serves as a tool for awareness and action, reinforcing that health care providers and staff are legally obligated to treat LGBTQ+ individuals with dignity and equity.

No one should face barriers, stigma, or substandard care due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. By championing this, we strive to create a health care system that is inclusive, affirming, and accessible to all, ensuring that people receive the compassionate, comprehensive, and affirming care they deserve. Utilizing Unity Project support, efforts are underway to assess its effectiveness, enhance its reach, and make necessary revisions.

Similarly, the **Non-Discrimination Policy** of the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) ensures that all students can learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination based on actual or perceived classes, including gender, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. NYCPS is committed to upholding inclusivity and protecting all students, ensuring that school environments are welcoming to all.

To further support TGNCNB students, the **NYCPS Guidelines on Gender Inclusion** provide a clear framework of best practices and protocols for school-based and central office staff. These guidelines help foster understanding, inclusivity, and respect for TGNCNB students while ensuring they receive the same rights and protections as all students. As part of this commitment, NYCPS mandated that every NYC school must have single-occupancy restrooms available to provide privacy and comfort for students of all gender identities.

In the child welfare and juvenile justice sectors, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) upholds its **Non-Discrimination Policy** to protect LGBTQ+ youth and families. Its core policy, **Promoting a Safe and Respectful Environment for LGBTQAI+ Youth and Their Families**, mandates inclusive, discrimination-free environments in child welfare and juvenile detention systems. Additionally, ACS provides **Trans Health-Related Policy & Guidance** to facilitate affirming health care, including coverage for services not reimbursable by Medicaid.

Similarly, the Department of Homeless Services (**DHS) Policy on Serving Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex Clients** aims to close service gaps for clients of all gender identities experiencing homelessness, with a focus on respectfully accommodating clients who identify as transgender, non-binary, and intersex. DHS is committed to a policy of respect for all individuals and does not tolerate discrimination based on gender identity or expression. No one will be denied access to a gender-affirming facility or program because of their sex assigned at birth. DHS makes every effort to place clients where they feel safe, and where staff can ensure appropriate, affirming, and culturally competent services.

Many members of the LGBTQ+ community continue to face disproportionate rates of HIV and other STIs, making access to affirming and culturally responsive sexual health care essential. The Health Department launched the **New York City 2020 Ending the HIV Epidemic Plan**, a community-driven roadmap developed through a year-long planning process. This plan guides innovative, equity-focused HIV and sexual health initiatives that address social and structural factors driving disparities. It also prioritizes key populations most impacted by HIV, including TGNCNB individuals, reinforcing the commitment to ending the epidemic through inclusive, data-driven strategies.

Community Engagement & Education:

Through community engagement and education, we foster understanding and interconnection between the government and the public, while equipping individuals with the knowledge and resources to build a more supportive society.

The City's **inaugural TGNCNB Health Summit**, held in May 2024 and organized by the Health Department and the Unity Project, represents a groundbreaking initiative designed to foster collaboration, education, and community engagement to promote TGNCNB health. The summit serves as a dynamic forum that brings together TGNCNB individuals, community-based organizations, health care professionals, policymakers, and advocates to engage in meaningful dialogue and collective action. The summit spotlights critical issues in transgender and non-binary health, including barriers to care, culturally competent medical practices, and innovative approaches to improving health outcomes. It provides a platform for sharing best practices, advancing community-driven health care, and addressing systemic challenges. It also serves as a catalyst for change, empowering stakeholders to develop and implement policies and programs that support affirming care. Through expert-led panels, workshops, presentations, and community discussions, the event helps shape a more informed, responsive, and compassionate health care system.

The **Transgender, Gender Nonconforming, and Non-Binary Community Advisory Board (TCAB)**, operated through the Health Department and supported by the Unity Project, serves as a vital bridge between TGNCNB New Yorkers and the Health Department, ensuring that policies, programs, and services are shaped by those most impacted. Created to bridge community with local government and to address the persistent barriers TGNCNB individuals face, TCAB provides critical guidance on programming, educational materials, marketing campaigns, and clinical services. By fostering direct community engagement,

TCAB helps drive meaningful, informed change, making health care more inclusive and accessible.

To further improve health care provision, the Health Department and Unity Project have partnered with Transgender Equity Consulting, Inc. to develop a **LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency Training** for Health Department Sexual Health Clinic staff. The three-hour training covers language, key health considerations, and best practices for providing affirming care.

The **Hidden Voices project**, created by the NYCPS Department of Social Studies & Civics, allows students to find their voice in history, including LGBTQ+ historical figures, as they become analysts of the past while making connections to the present. The Department of Records and Information Services (**DORIS**) operates the **For the Record Blog**, which includes blogposts with primary sources that give an in-depth look at the city's LGBTQ+ history. Additionally, through the **DORIS YouTube Channel**, DORIS documents historic footage in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights.

Annually, ACS conducts its **Youth Experience Survey (YES)** for youth in foster care ages 13 and up. The survey includes questions on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, aiming to improve services for youth. In addition, ACS runs the **Youth Leadership Council** that places a strong emphasis on the voice of LGBTQ+ youth to empower youth in the foster care system and improve existing services. Cultural competency is further supported through the **Family Engagement and Acceptance Training (FEAT)** and **LIFT programs** under ACS and the Unity Project. FEAT provides intensive training for LGBTQ+ mental health clinicians of color to address family rejection of transgender youth. Meanwhile, the LIFT program is a six-month certification designed to equip social workers with the skills needed to support youth and their families.

The **Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Street Outreach Program** is a vital first point of contact for youth experiencing homelessness, many of them members of the LGBTQ+ community, providing direct education, service navigation, and referrals to essential services. Outreach teams actively distribute information about runaway and homeless youth services; provide food, clothing, and transportation; and connect youth with Drop-In Centers, crisis shelters, and other safe locations. By establishing trust and rapport with youth on the streets, the program ensures that those in need are aware of the resources available to them.

CCHR is deeply committed to **community engagement and education**. CCHR's lead advisors and liaisons play a vital role in educating New Yorkers about their rights and responsibilities. The Commission also provides extensive training, including "Human Rights Law 101" and "Working with Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Communities." The **Commission** also engages in widespread **outreach to raise awareness of these protections**.

Programs:

Delivery of culturally competent services to TGNCNB individuals is at the core of our work in addressing disparities facing the community.

I. Health Care and Wellness

Ensuring access to high-quality, affirming health care is essential to the well-being of the LGBTQ+ community, including TGNCNB people. Through strategic investments, we are expanding inclusive primary care, gender-affirming services, sexual health programs, and HIV prevention efforts. The Health Department launched **PlaySure Network 2.0**, a citywide network of 18 agencies that provide a comprehensive package of HIV and sexual health services in health care and non-health care settings using a one-stop shop model. Through the **Building Equity: Intervening Together for Health (BE InTo Health)** initiative, the Health Department supports nine clinics to implement evidence-based HIV care models that address the needs of communities most impacted by HIV.

The Health Department's **Sexual Health Clinics** provide low-to-no-cost services for STIs, including HIV. The Health Department is unwavering in its commitment to ensuring the Sexual Health Clinics offer safe, affirming spaces. The clinics offer STI testing and treatment, expanded HIV services, counseling, as well as vaccinations, contraception, and more. The Health Department's **Express Clinics** provide a fast, hassle-free option for testing chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV, with results available in just hours.

Beyond medical care, **patient navigators and social workers offer up to 12 no-cost counseling sessions**, connect individuals to essential support services, such as substance use treatment, and continued counseling. In 2022, our clinics led the city's response to the mpox outbreak, providing diagnosis, treatment, and vaccination—services integrated into existing clinic workflows.

As part of HIV prevention efforts, with Unity Project support, **Judson Pride Clinic, H+H's flagship pride health center**, has improved access to **confidential (PrEP) services** for patients with privacy concerns. Judson is able to directly dispense PrEP medication directly to patients as part of a confidential visit for sexual and reproductive health care. Judson has also started offering the injectable form of PrEP, which allows patients to access PrEP medication confidentially and without worrying about adherence to daily medication, a barrier to consistent and effective use. Lastly, to further ensure high-quality, affirming health care, the Health Department partners with **Callen-Lorde Community Health Center** to provide comprehensive services for uninsured LGBTQ+ individuals. These services include primary care to behavioral health care, ensuring that care is accessible, holistic, and affirming.

II. Economic Mobility

Economic empowerment is a critical pillar of equity, ensuring that individuals have access to the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. We are expanding workforce development programs tailored to the LGBTQ+ community, including TGNCNB people.

Investments in career readiness, job placement, and leadership development are breaking cycles of economic hardship and fostering long-term stability. By prioritizing inclusive hiring practices, workplace protections, and pathways to success, we are building a future where every person can achieve financial security and professional fulfillment.

DYCD's SYEP Pride connects young New Yorkers to supportive and welcoming early career opportunities by engaging with employers specifically committed to LGBTQ+ youth through their organizational missions and/or employee resource groups. SYEP Pride Project-based learning for 14–15-year-olds, focuses on developing work readiness skills and exploring career pathways while providing young people with the opportunity to explore LGBTQ+ history, culture, and/or community issues. Short-term jobs and internships for 16–24-year-olds focus on paid work experience and skills building. DYCD works closely with the NYC Unity Project to provide training and programming to providers, worksite supervisors, and participants. SYEP Pride has partnered with a variety of private partners, including Google, Disney Theatrical Group, Louis Vuitton, ABC7, Hermes, Republic Records, Fendi, Playbill, Nordstrom, and others to deliver innovative career exploration, career mentorship, and pride-related events.

III. LGBTQ+ Mental Health, Community Acceptance, Substance Use Prevention, and Harm Reduction

Supporting mental health, promoting family and community acceptance, and expanding access to affirming care are essential to community well-being. With Unity Project support, **Judson Pride Clinic** is building more robust programming and helping a greater number of patients access mental health and community support. The work includes peer support groups, mental health and wellness groups, vocational workshops, and staff training in workshop facilitation. In addition, the Unity Project has supported the renovation of the second floor of the clinic's century-old facilities to create a community space for this programming.

The **Family Acceptance of LGBTQ+ Youth Initiative**, supported by the NYC Unity Project and implemented by the Health Department, is a groundbreaking program dedicated to fostering acceptance for LGBTQ+ youth, particularly TGNCNB youth, among parents, caregivers, families, and community. Recognizing that family support plays a crucial role in the mental health and well-being of young people, the initiative provides resources to bridge gaps in understanding and reduce familial conflict. The initiative offers support groups for parents and caregivers; educational workshops for families, community members, educators, and service providers; and one-on-one counseling and conflict mediation to strengthen families. Additionally, it empowers youth through a filmmaking initiative for individuals up to 21 years old, allowing them to share their stories and experiences through creative expression. Social marketing campaigns further amplify messages of acceptance. By emphasizing mental health, education, and cultural competency, the initiative works to create a more supportive environment where young people feel valued, respected, and loved.

The **LGBTQ+ Coalitions** are an initiative, supported by the Unity Project and implemented through the Health Department, dedicated to reducing trauma and addressing substance use within LGBTQ+ communities. Recognizing that traditional drug prevention approaches often fail to consider the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, LGBTQ+ Coalitions takes a community-driven, culturally responsive approach that prioritizes risk reduction and protective factors specific to these communities.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the LGBTQ+ Coalitions have provided critical support to youth, reaching hundreds through innovative programs such as listening sessions, substance-free parties, job and health fairs, social media engagement, art shows, and youth leader award ceremonies. By fostering safe, affirming spaces, the LGBTQ+ Coalitions have helped young people navigate difficult times without turning to alcohol or other substances as coping mechanisms. Beyond prevention, the LGBTQ+ Coalitions actively build resilience through peer-led support groups, leadership training programs, and care coordination services. The program also offers low-threshold counseling.

The Health Department's **crystal methamphetamine harm reduction program** provides vital support for men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender individuals who have sex with men and who use crystal methamphetamine, offering a holistic, affirming, and non-judgmental approach to care, including supportive services. The Health Department's **Psychosocial Support Services for TGNCNB People with HIV** supports partners to provide trauma-informed, culturally affirming care, including individualized counseling, connections to HIV care and treatment, and referrals to essential medical and supportive services.

IV. Social Services, Housing Support, and Food Assistance

Building strong support systems is essential for the well-being of TGNCNB youth, especially those navigating housing instability or food insecurity. Our initiatives focus on creating safe, affirming spaces where young people can access resources, connect with community, and receive support.

LGBTQ+ youth comprise approximately 40% of youth experiencing homelessness. **DYCD's Youth Drop-In Centers**, open to young people aged 14 to 24, serve as safe havens where youth can access food, clothing, showers, laundry facilities, and case management services. These centers also provide referrals to crisis service programs and additional support services, ensuring that youth experiencing homelessness or instability can find the resources they need.

DYCD's Youth Drop-In Centers Expansion, supported by the Unity Project, is a transformative progression aimed at providing around-the-clock support for LGBTQ+ youth in need. With the expansion to five centers with 24/7 service in all boroughs, this initiative ensured that young people have access to safe spaces, essential resources, and supportive community services at any hour.

DYCD's Transitional Independent Living (TIL) Youth Housing Program provides longer-term shelter and essential support for youth experiencing homelessness, aged 16 to 21, with extended services available for young adults aged 21 to 24 at designated Homeless Young Adult (HYA) sites. These facilities are designed to help youth transition to independent living by offering up to 24 months of safe, stable housing while equipping them with the skills needed for self-sufficiency. Youth in the program receive educational support, vocational training, job placement assistance, counseling, life skills training, mental health services, housing referrals, and family reunification assistance when applicable, ensuring a holistic approach to stability and independence. Additionally, **DYCD's Food Assistance Program** ensures that food pantries are available in every borough, providing nutritional support to individuals and families facing food insecurity.

Lastly, **DYCD's Crisis Services Programs**, offer emergency shelter and crisis intervention for youth aged 16 to 20 and 21 to 24 at Homeless Young Adult (HYA) sites. These voluntary, short-term residential programs provide a safe space for young people experiencing homelessness while working toward family reunification when possible. If returning home is not an option, the program helps youth access transitional and long-term placements.

Interagency Coordination:

Underpinning these efforts across City agencies, the NYC Unity Project runs the **LGBTQ+ Work Group – Shaping the Future Together**, a collaborative effort to enhance government operations and ensure that city agencies effectively serve and support LGBTQ+ communities. The work group brings together LGBTQ+ liaisons from key agencies to foster interagency cooperation. Through this coordinated LGBTQ+ Action Group, the city is committed to building a coalition that advances LGBTQ+ representation in government, enhances culturally competent service delivery, and strengthens engagement with LGBTQ+ New Yorkers.

Resource Access:

Our work would not be complete without promoting access to resources.

The **Pride and Care** health resource booklet, funded by the NYC Unity Project and developed by the Health Department, provides information specifically for TGNCNB individuals. This booklet, available in multiple languages, offers critical information on gender-affirming care, primary care, sexual health, safety tips, and community resources.

The Health Department provides essential tools to help LGBTQ+ individuals find knowledgeable, affirming, and LGBTQ+-competent health care providers. The **NYC Health Map's LGBTQ Health Services Directory** serves as a vital resource for those seeking safe, accessible, and high-quality medical care tailored to their needs. The online directory features a diverse network of NYC providers. Beyond simply listing providers, the LGBTQ+ Health Services Directory is designed to help individuals make informed decisions about their health care by highlighting providers with a demonstrated commitment to cultural competency and inclusive practices.

Additionally, the Health Department maintains a suite of LGBTQ+ **webpages that offer health information for men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women (WSW), transgender, TGNCNB individuals, intersex individuals, and suicide prevention.** These webpages provide affirming and compassionate care guidance, outline health care rights, and include resources for individuals and their families to make informed health care decisions.

The **NYC Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) connects LGBTQ+ veterans with services tailored to their needs.** This includes specialized caregiver support, discharge service upgrades, medical care access and navigation, support groups, resource access, and navigation of survivor and dependent compensation (DIC). In addition, veterans who received an other-than-honorable or dishonorable discharge due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression may experience difficulty accessing benefits, including VA home loans, GI Bill educational benefits, and VA health care. DVS helps LGBTQ+ veterans impacted by past discriminatory policies get the benefits they deserve by connecting them to discharge upgrade assistance services.

Lastly, the **NYC Unity Project Website** serves as a digital hub for LGBTQ+ New Yorkers. The newly launched digital platform serves as a comprehensive and user-friendly resource hub, connecting individuals with vital services, programs, and support networks tailored to their unique needs. Whether seeking health and wellness resources, legal assistance, housing support, or community-building opportunities, the NYC Unity Project website offers a centralized destination designed specifically for LGBTQ+ New Yorkers. The platform ensures that individuals can access the information and services they need to thrive. By bringing together citywide initiatives and nonprofit and advocacy organizations under one digital roof, this hub fosters a stronger, more connected community, while considering privacy needs. From mental health resources to legal assistance, the website is more than just an information portal—it is a lifeline, a support system, and a multimedia celebration of the creativity and diversity of LGBTQ+ individuals across New York City.

Position on Proposed Legislation

We are generally in support of the intent behind proposed legislation that offer additional protections to the TGNCNB community. At this time, we, along with our partner agencies, are still reviewing the specifics of the proposed legislation. It will be important to protect the rights of TGNCNB New Yorkers to be free from discrimination and to access care while at the same time protecting privacy during this volatile time. We would like to have further discussions with the Council to discuss the benefits and limitations of each bill and how we can best address the health and safety needs of the TGNCNB community. We want to thank the Council for bringing attention to this important topic and we look forward to working with you.

Conclusion

From the first bricks thrown at Stonewall to the policies and protections we fight for today, our work is part of a long legacy. As we reflect on recent progress made and new and

ongoing challenges, one thing remains clear—our commitment to dignity, compassion, and support for the LGBTQ+ community, particularly TGNCNBI individuals. From the dawn of time, TGNCNBI people have shaped humanity—as healers, spiritual leaders, innovators, and more. In New York City, they have played a critical role in shaping our history and culture. Through collaboration, innovation, and continued investment in culturally responsive services, we continue to build a city where every person is supported and empowered to thrive. By focusing on what truly strengthens our community, we move closer to a future of greater opportunity. Together, we continue our work, uplifting New Yorkers.



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**Testimony of the New York Civil Liberties Union
Before the New York City Council Committee on Women and Girls
Regarding Oversight – Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender
Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City**

February 28, 2025

The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) is grateful for the opportunity to submit the following testimony for the New York City Council Committee on Women and Girls regarding Oversight – Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City. 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 deploy 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. The NYCLU fights for LGBTQ New Yorkers by advancing access to health care, as well as protections in the workplace, education, housing, and more. We fight the criminalization of trans lives and abuse in prisons and jails. We advocate for state recognition of LGBTQ identities and help New Yorkers know their rights.

The Trump presidency is an existential threat to LGBTQ people and to transgender, gender non-conforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) people in particular. In the first weeks of his presidency, the Trump administration issued executive orders (EOs) aiming to exclude transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and intersex people from all walks of public and civic life and make it impossible for them to access health care¹ or participate in society, whether to go to school,² play sports,³ have federal identity documents that match their identities,⁴ or participate in the federal workforce or armed services.⁵ Trump couched this attack in the name of protecting women while re-entrenching the very gender stereotypes that have underpinned centuries of women’s oppression.

¹ Exc. Order No. 14187, 90 Fed. Reg. 8771 – 73 (Feb. 3, 2025).

² Exc. Order No. 14190, 90 Fed. Reg. 8853 – 57 (Jan. 29, 2025).

³ Exc. Order 14201, 90 Fed. Reg. 9279 – 81 (Feb. 5, 2025).

⁴ Exc. Order No. 14168, 90 Fed. Reg. 8615 – 18 (Jan. 30, 2025).

⁵ *Id.*

To be clear, Trump’s EOs are, for the most part, not enforceable on their face, and there must be federal agency action, and in some cases, congressional action, before anyone needs to consider compliance. Their intent is to sow chaos and confusion in order to chill the provision of care and promote advanced compliance, when in fact their requirements are inconsistent, unclear, unworkable, and, in some cases, illegal.⁶

The first of Trump’s EOs purports to redefine “sex” for federal purposes based ideas that sex is only male or female, cannot be changed, and is based solely on reproductive cells at conception.⁷ His second EO explicitly targets health care for transgender young people, and, among other provisions, purports to instruct the federal Department of Health and Human Services to change Medicare and Medicaid conditions of participation or conditions for coverage with the aim of making it impossible for participating providers to deliver gender-affirming care.⁸

Unfortunately, the EOs have had a significant impact in TGNCNBI and LGBTQ communities, causing panic, grief, and fear, and in many instances, denials of care. We have seen a tremendous uptick in the number of intakes we have received from TGNCNBI New Yorkers, and disturbingly, we are also hearing anecdotally about an increase in suicides among transgender people in the U.S.⁹

New York City must respond unequivocally in support of the TGNCNBI and LGBTQ communities in this moment, and we are deeply grateful that the Committee on Women and Gender Equity is taking an important first step in this direction by holding today’s hearing.

In particular, the NYCLU strongly supports Res. 3200, which calls on the Governor to sign the New York Health Information Privacy Act, S.929/A.2141. This critical legislation would give New Yorkers control over our commercial health data, like fitness app and smartwatch data,¹⁰ and make it harder for hostile law enforcement – whether federal or in another state – to use those data to prosecute New Yorkers for providing, receiving, or helping another to access to health care – whether that is gender-affirming care, abortion care, or any other type of health care.

We encourage councilmembers to update the resolution text to clarify that the bill would protect commercial health data that are not protected by the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Indeed, many New Yorkers believe these data are

⁶ See e.g. *PLAG v. Donald J. Trump*, Civil No. 25-337-BAH (D.Md. Feb. 13, 2025); Letter from Letitia James, N.Y. Attorney General, to Colleague (Feb. 3, 2025) (<https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/letters/ag-james-to-hc-providers-re-tro-letter-2025.pdf>).

⁷ Exc. Order No. 14168, 90 Fed. Reg. 8615 – 18 (Jan. 30, 2025).

⁸ Exc. Order No. 14187, 90 Fed. Reg. 8771 – 73 (Feb. 3, 2025).

⁹ E.g. Greta Stuckey and Mark Weiner, *VA patient died by suicide at top of hospital’s garage in Syracuse*, SYRACUSE.COM, Jan. 31, 2025, <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2025/01/va-patient-died-by-suicide-at-top-of-hospitals-garage-in-syracuse.html>.

¹⁰ These data receive no privacy protections at all under New York or federal law, including HIPAA.

protected by HIPAA and are deeply disturbed when they learn that these data – even though they pertain to health – are not. We also note that the bill indeed passed both chambers of the legislature (on January 21, 2025 in the Senate and January 22, 2025 in the Assembly), but it has not yet been transmitted to the Governor.

The NYCLU also strongly supports Preconsidered Res. 3214, which calls on the state legislature to pass and the Governor to sign S.1633/A.2613, which would require the Department of Health to promulgate regulations compelling the electronic health record companies to create the ability to segment electronic health records and suppress sensitive health information at a patient’s direction. This would enable patients to reap the benefits of electronic health records without risking that information about their gender affirming care, abortion, or other sensitive health care will be shared against their will and used against them.

Int. 3179 will support New York’s TGNCNBI community by providing a hub, as well as a media campaign, to help TGNCNBI New Yorkers to learn about their rights, as well as the resources available to them in the City – from where to find gender-affirming care and legal assistance to where to locate housing or social support services. And, critically, the hub will make this information available in all of the designated citywide languages to ensure it reaches as many people as possible – and that it can reach those who are not only at a disadvantage based on gender identity but also based on language minority.

Res. 3196 encourages the State to ensure that hospitals, including hospitals in the City, adhere to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care 8 (SOC 8), the latest standards released by that body. WPATH SOC 8 provides clinical guidance for health care providers caring for TGNCNBI people based on validated research studies, substantive evaluations of medical programs administering gender-affirming care, and rigorous expert professional consensus. Aligning New York hospitals’ policies, practices, and clinical guidelines with WPATH SOC 8 would streamline access to care for many patients.

We commend many of the other bills and resolutions advancing today. Among other provisions, Int. 3093 will fix a gap in New York City’s shield law, ensuring that the countersuit provision applies to interference with all types of gender-affirming care and not merely to interference with endocrine care.

Int. 3183 will require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to address health disparities that disproportionately impact TGNCNBI New Yorkers, taking into account the impact of social determinants of health and the health burdens associated with being multiply marginalized for those at the intersection of race, ethnicity, and/or gender identity minority.

Int. 3184 will help to support TGNCNBI new arrivals – who are under vicious attack by the Trump administration, both for their gender identities and for their immigration status¹¹ – as well young new arrivals, who may need additional support to integrate into New York City.

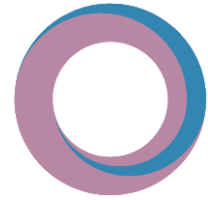
Finally, the NYCLU supports the intent behind Res. 781 and shares the concerns that animate it. A better approach would be to encourage the state legislature to remove testosterone from New York’s prescription monitoring program. We note that abortion medications, puberty blockers, and some hormones are not controlled substances in New York and are not included in New York’s prescription monitoring database to begin with – and we fear that the resolution as currently drafted may sow confusion or lead to other unintended consequences.

By honing the language in these proposals and advancing them, the Committee is taking critical steps to support the TGNCNBI community. The City must also put its money where its values are by investing City dollars to support access to gender-affirming care, particularly if the federal government is successful in revoking Medicaid coverage for this care.

No matter what the policy of the federal government is, we know the value, dignity, and humanity of our communities, and we are grateful to the Committee for taking steps to keep TGNCNBI New Yorkers safe.

The NYCLU thanks the Committee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony.

¹¹ *E.g.* Exc. Order No. 14159, 90 Fed. Reg. 8443 – 48 (Jan. 20, 2025).



TESTIMONY

New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Oversight Hearing on Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming,
and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City
Friday, February 28, 2025 at 12:00 PM

Submitted by:
MJ Okma

Thank you, Chair Louis, members of the Women and Gender Equity Committee, and all sponsors of the vital and comprehensive bill package on the agenda for this oversight hearing on Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City. My name is MJ Okma, and I am a transgender resident of New York City Council District 9, community advocate, and nonprofit consultant.

The current federal administration wants to convince you, your constituents, and my neighbors that transphobia is the norm—but it is not. The norm is cowardice and fear. They want to scare governments, human services nonprofits, hospitals, and schools into compliance. Thank you for refusing to stand back and fall into cowardice.

I fully support the comprehensive slate of bills presented at this hearing to help protect TGNCNB New Yorkers from the onslaught of anti-trans executive orders, propaganda, hate violence, and pseudoscience. I urge the City Council to pass these bills swiftly and help ensure that TGNCNB-led organizations and community leaders are fully integrated in the implementation process so that these policies are not softened during their rollout. Further, the City Council must commit to actively keep introducing, passing, and implementing protections for TGNCNB New Yorkers in response to new strategies the federal government throws at the wall as they attempt to erode all TGNCNB rights and push our community out of public life.

I also wanted to put forward the following concrete recommendations to the New York City Council:

1) Increase the funding for the Trans Equity Programs Initiative from \$3,225,000 in FY25 to at least \$10,000,000 in the FY26 budget while prioritizing new funding allocations to BIPOC TGNCNB-led and predominantly staffed organizations.

Our communities hold the power and expertise not only to support each other during times of hardship but also to build the alternatives to the unjust systems of misogyny, racism, and transphobia that brought us to the moment in the first place. Many TGNCNB-led nonprofits and mutual aid networks have been fighting for more funding to go to TGNCNB movements for years, knowing so little is earmarked to invest in transgender leadership. This deficit is a deep-rooted issue in both government and philanthropic funding. A recent Funders for LGBTQ Issues report found that for every

\$100 awarded by U.S. foundations to LGBTQIA+ services in 2022, only \$0.04 went to transgender populations, despite being one of the most marginalized groups in the country (up from a mere \$0.01 in 2015).ⁱ On the NYC Council level, there is only one discretionary funding initiative catered towards the TGNCNB community which was only most-recently funded at \$3,225,000 with 62% of that funding going to cisgender led nonprofit organizations.ⁱⁱ

Our current political moment demands innovation and creativity to move resources to BIPOC TGNCNB -led organizations as quickly as possible. The NYC Council must step up and help address this gap in any way possible, including—but not limited to—increasing funding for the Trans Equity Programs Initiative in the FY26 budget and ensuring that that funding is being allocated to BIPOC TGNCNB-led and predominantly staffed organizations.

2) Create and fund a new city council discretionary initiative to ensure ongoing access to gender-affirming care at community health centers in New York City in the FY26 budget.

The Trump administration’s executive order threatening to cut federal funding to programs providing gender-affirming care and attempting to ban gender-affirming care for individuals under the age of nineteen is against multiple New York State laws.ⁱⁱⁱ

While this is litigated in the courts, this escalating anti-TGNCNB culture war has already created a climate of fear as young adults and adolescents face uncertainty of just being able to get their medication as well as the stress of being publicly named and targeted.

The executive order has also sparked fear in providers, whose financial stability has been put in jeopardy for simply following standards of care for transgender patients that are endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and every other leading U.S. medical professional association.^{iv} Refusing care can and will lead to malpractice lawsuits while providing care will make them a target of the Trump administration’s culture war. It must also be noted that many TGNCNB New Yorkers and others who rely on these community health centers for their care do not have a financial or medical safety net. If these providers do not continue to offer this type of care, these patients will go without lifesaving medications.^v

The NYC Council has the opportunity in the FY26 budget to stand up against these attacks by establishing a new city council discretionary initiative to fund these centers and ensure they have the resources and security needed to continue to provide care to TGNCNB patients. We need you to ensure that our city remains a safe haven for TGNCNB people seeking care.

3) Strongly and vocally support statewide efforts to establish a \$50 million contingency fund to replace potential Medicaid cuts for gender-affirming care.

At the state level, advocates are pushing for a \$50 million contingency fund for gender-affirming care in the State Fiscal Year 2026 budget.^{vi} This fund will help ensure that

TGNCNB New Yorkers can continue to access their medications and other lifesaving health care, regardless of what happens at the federal level.

This type of healthcare fund is not unprecedented in New York State. Last year's State budget codified the Reproductive Freedom and Equity Grant Fund to strengthen access to strengthening access to comprehensive reproductive care for all New Yorkers in response to the U.S. Supreme Court overturning the constitutional right to an abortion.^{vii viii}

Support and advocacy from the New York City Council is needed to help ensure this vital investment is included in the upcoming State budget.

4) Bolster supports TGNCNB elders, including providing transportation assistance to older adult centers and community health centers that provide safe and affirming environments through NYC Aging and working to address high levels of housing insecurity and homelessness.

Conversations on the impact of the current political climate on TGNCNB New Yorkers are often focused on youth, but I implore the New York City Council not to ignore or exclude the needs of TGNCNB elders. A 2021 report by AARP NY and SAGE found that TGNCNB elders regularly delay necessary care when they are subjected to such prejudice, discrimination, and hostility in the settings meant to support their successful aging.^{ix} In fact, the report showed that 65% of TGNCNB elder New Yorkers reported having limited access to care as they age and more than half (55%) felt that they will be denied medical treatment because of their age and gender identity—devastating numbers that are likely even higher today in light of current events.^x

To address these growing disparities, New York City must act. The combination of the lack of accessible public transportation for older adults and growing fear of harassment on public transportation is keeping TGNCNB elders socially isolated; a transportation fund must be established to help ensure TGNCNB elders can safely travel to affirming community health centers and older adult centers.

The AARP NY/SAGE report also revealed that TGNCNB elders also face extremely high levels of housing insecurity and homelessness, with 54% of transgender elders in fear of having to re-closet themselves when seeking elder housing.^{xi} Many unhoused TGNCNB elders avoid shelters due to safety concerns, blocking one of the City's pathways into affordable housing. The City must consider options to not only expand the number of emergency shelter beds dedicated to TGNCNB older adults but also provide clear alternative access points to affordable permanent housing without requiring referrals from unsafe shelter systems.

For more information on this topic, please refer to the testimony given by TGNCNB elders and services providers that support them on the New York City Council's June 21, 2022 oversight hearing on Challenges Facing LGBTQIA+ Older Adults.^{xii}

Thank you Chair Louis all members of the New York City Council and Council staff who are working alongside the community in defiance to the slew of anti-TGNGBN attacks, violence, and misinformation coming from the federal government.

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ⁱ Funders for LGBTQ Issues, *2022 Resource Tracking Report: LGBTQ Grantmaking by U.S. Foundations*, June 2024, <https://lgbtfunders.org/research-item/2022-tracking-report/>

ⁱⁱ New York City Council, *Fiscal Year 2025 Adopted Expense Budget Adjustment Summary / Schedule C*, June 2024, <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2024/07/Fiscal-2025-Schedule-C-MERGE-FINAL-2.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Office of the New York State Attorney General, *Attorney General James Stands with Transgender Youth Against Discriminatory Executive Orders*, February 2025, <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/2025/attorney-general-james-stands-transgender-youth-against-discriminatory-executive>

^{iv} American Academy of Pediatrics, *AAP reaffirms gender-affirming care policy, authorizes systematic review of evidence to guide update*, August 2023, <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/25340/AAP-reaffirms-gender-affirming-care-policy?autologincheck=redirected>

^v ACLU, *Doctors Agree: Gender-Affirming Care is Life-Saving Care*, April 2021, <https://www.aclu.org/news/lgbtq-rights/doctors-agree-gender-affirming-care-is-life-saving-care>

^{vi} Callen-Lorde, *Standing Up for Trans Health*, February 2025, <https://callen-lorde.org/standing-up-for-trans-health/>

^{vii} New York Public Law, *Public Health Law Section 2599-BB-1 Reproductive freedom and equity grant program*, https://newyork.public.law/laws/n.y. public health law section 2599-bb-1#google_vignette

^{viii} Office of New York Governor Kathy Hochul, *Governor Hochul Announces New Steps to Ensure Crucial Rights are Protected and Communities Across New York are Included, Protected and Celebrated*, January 2025, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-new-steps-ensure-crucial-rights-are-protected-and-communities-across>

^{ix} AARP and SAGE, *Disrupting Disparities: Solutions for LGBTQ New Yorkers Age 50+*, June 2021, <https://aarp-states.brightspotcdn.com/ca/eb/c2353b1e45b3a7fa0f15991c47a6/disparities-lgbtq-full-final-spread-v4.pdf>

^x Id.

^{xi} Id.

^{xii} New York City Council Committee on Aging, Oversight - *Challenges Facing LGBTQIA+ Older Adults*, June 2022, <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5665883&GUID=B9426FEC-6786-4064-AAFO-C990160E24AC&Options=&Search=>

**Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York before the
New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity in Support of the Rights
of Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Non-binary Communities**

February 28th, 2025

Good afternoon. My name is Erika Nunez-Cespedes, and I am the Director of User Experience and Design Communications & Marketing at Planned Parenthood of Greater New York (PPGNY). Thank you to the Chair of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity, Farah Louis for convening this important hearing to explore legislative pathways that support Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNC) people in NYC. This hearing is especially important given the alarming anti-trans sentiment within the Trump-Vance administration and hostile state governments throughout the country. We also thank the bill sponsors who are advancing legislation to not only expand legal protections for the community, but ensure they have equitable access to the resources they need to live full lives.

PPGNY is a trusted provider of sexual and reproductive health care and education programs for communities throughout New York City. In 2024, we conducted over 74,000 patient visits through our virtual health center and at our NYC health centers, providing care to all those in need regardless of immigration status, identity, or ability to pay for services. We engaged over 21,000 individuals through our education and community engagement programs--including over 2,600 young people. Our Project Street Beat program (PSB), through their offices and Mobile Health Center, conducted 270 patient visits with individuals at high risk of HIV exposure. And in 2024, we helped enroll over 4,300 individuals in health insurance programs.

PPGNY firmly believes that the right to reproductive and sexual health care should be afforded to all New Yorkers. We proudly offer a wide range of services to the LGBTQ community including gender affirming hormone therapy (GAHT), STI testing and treatment, PrEP and PEP, HIV testing and counseling, and GYN exams. We offer GAHT care at all four of our NYC health centers. Our services are culturally competent, inclusive, and provided to our patients regardless of their background and circumstances. In 2024, we conducted over 1,600 patient visits for GAHT care and provided care to over 4,800 TGNC individuals.

We recognize that for TGNC individuals, access to resources has historically been out of reach and steeped in stigma and discrimination. Transgender people have been forced to live on the margins with limited access to compassionate, affordable, and comprehensive health care. Recent attacks on gender-affirming health care nationwide have forced many in the community to go without lifesaving care. As a result, many treatable or preventable medical conditions too often become emergency medical issues. We anticipate this will continue with the growing anti-trans attacks bolstered by the President and states hostile to care for the TGNC community.

Despite the small number of TGNC people in the country, the attacks on the community have been constant and becoming more aggressive. In fact, since the beginning of this year, more than 600 bills have been introduced throughout the country that negatively affect TGNC people.¹ Many of these bills are advanced by anti-abortion state governments who are working to restrict access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health care services. We have also seen the Trump-Vance Administration attempt to roll back protections for transgender people through executive orders. This includes the federal government moving to recognize only two genders, denying gender markers on passports, stopping the use of federal funds for GAHT care, and barring transgender women from participating in sporting activities that align with their gender identity.

These most recent attacks are a part of a long legacy of anti-trans sentiment in this country. Despite the growing visibility and understanding of transgender people there are still major disparities in access to housing, employment, and health care.² According to a study by the National LGBTQ Task Force and the National Center for Transgender Equality in New York

¹ *2025 Anti-Trans Bills: Trans legislation tracker*. 2025 Anti-Trans Bills: Trans Legislation Tracker. (n.d.). <https://translegislation.com/>

² *Sex-Segregated Facilities*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 26, 2019, from http://tldef.org/work_show.php?id=6.

State, regarding health care access, 17% of respondents said they were refused care because of their identity; almost a third said they delayed seeking care due to fear of discrimination.³

Nationally, TGNC unemployment rate is two-times that of the general population, and for TGNC folks of color that number is even higher.⁴ The experience is even more dire in New York State with 74% of survey respondents stating that they have been discriminated at work, 37% percent indicating that they were passed up for promotions, and 36% said they were not even considered for employment due to their identity expression.⁵

Thankfully, New York State has been a leader in ensuring that rights are protected for TGNC individuals. As a sanctuary state for GAHT Care, New York protects individuals living in or forced to travel to the state from persecution. Also, New York recently enacted the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity or expression in employment, housing, public accommodations, and more. And the inclusion of the Equal Rights Amendment in the state constitution provides an extra layer of protection for TGNC individuals. These measures are increasingly important to fight against attempts to roll back rights for this community.

³ ISSUES IMPACTING TRANS AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING NEW YORKERS: FACT SHEET. (2014). Retrieved November 26, 2019, from <https://maketheroadny.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Trans-Forum-Fact-sheet-ENG.pdf>.

⁴ ISSUES IMPACTING TRANS AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING NEW YORKERS: FACT SHEET. (2014). Retrieved November 26, 2019, from <https://maketheroadny.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Trans-Forum-Fact-sheet-ENG.pdf>.

⁵ ISSUES IMPACTING TRANS AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING NEW YORKERS: FACT SHEET. (2014). Retrieved November 26, 2019, from <https://maketheroadny.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Trans-Forum-Fact-sheet-ENG.pdf>.

We support measures by the NYC Council that help ensure transgender and gender nonconforming communities can attain the resources they depend on. While we support Intro-3093, which would safeguard access to facilities providing reproductive and gender affirming care, we caution against creating criminal provisions within this law because of potential unintended consequences. We recognize the importance of safeguarding access to sexual and reproductive health care facilities as anti-abortion and GAHT care protestors become more emboldened under the Trump-Vance Administration. However, in response to the hateful federal executive orders, TGNC community members have been exercising their first amendment rights to affirm their right to GAHT care and protesting outside of health centers they allege have rolled back GAHT services.⁶ Individuals should not be persecuted for rightfully and lawfully fighting for their right to the services they deserve. PPGNY also supports Intro [3179](#) that will promote the legal rights and resources available to transgender and gender nonconforming individuals and will help address the discrimination and harassment the community is susceptible to. We urge the Council to liken this public awareness campaign to the city's national marketing campaign for abortion care launched after SCOTUS's decision to overturn *Roe v Wade* in 2022. PPGNY stands ready to help the Council successfully implement these policies once they have passed.

PPGNY applauds the City Council for its efforts to explore accessibility and support for TGNC individuals and ensuring the city's systems are effective when addressing the needs of our community. We look forward to working with the City Council on this matter and we are hopeful that collectively, we can work to make our city more equitable for all.

Thank you.

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⁶ *Hundreds protest NYU-Langone after Families Say Hospital denied children care*. Hundreds protest NYU-Langone after hospital denied care. (n.d.). <https://ny1.com/nyc/manhattan/news/2025/02/04/hundreds-protest-nyu-langone-after-families-say-hospital-denied-their-children-care>

Planned Parenthood of Greater New York (PPGNY) is a leading provider, educator, and advocate of sexual and reproductive health care in New York State. PPGNY offers a wide range of services across 65% of NYS - including gynecological care; birth control; cancer screenings; pregnancy testing; STI testing and treatment; HIV prevention, testing, and counseling; transgender hormone therapy; and vasectomy. PPGNY is also proud to provide abortion services to anyone who needs compassionate, non-judgmental care. PPGNY is a trusted source of medically accurate, evidence-based information that allows people to make informed decisions about their health and future. As a voice for reproductive freedom, PPGNY supports legislation and policies that ensure all New Yorkers have access to the full range of reproductive health services and education.



30 3RD AVENUE #800B,
BROOKLYN, NY, 11217

**Testimony: New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity
hearing on Friday, February 28th.**

**Oversight - Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender
Non-conforming, and NonBinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City**

Good afternoon, my name is Amelia Prochaska, and I'm a Training and Facilitation Specialist with Right To Be, formerly Hollaback!. I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, representing my community as a New Yorker and my organization's work. Founded in Brooklyn in 2005 - Right To Be's work addresses all forms of hate and harassment, including hate and harassment in the trans* community.

Our work focuses on turning the care we have for each other into simple, creative, effective action. Every day, we train hundreds of people to respond to, intervene in, and heal from hate & harassment. We hold space for people experiencing hate & harassment to share their stories for affirmation and support. And we prepare new leaders to create workplaces, schools and communities around our city and around the world that are filled with humanity.

Today we would like to offer our support for New York City's Transgender, Gender Non-confirming and NonBinary community, as they face increased hate and discrimination. We have three supports available for the community:

1. Right To Be is currently providing free and virtual bystander intervention training to address anti-LGBTQIA+ hate at an increased pace, with over 10 free sessions - available for all New Yorkers -- scheduled up to the end of April. We are proud partners with Advocates for Trans Equality (formerly NCTE), and together, we've adapted our training and approach to address the specific experience of folks in the Trans community. 98% of people who take our training say that there is at least one thing they think they could do and 6 months later 78% say they remember and have used the training in their day to day.
2. We know that reporting hate to the police may not always be safe for trans* folks. Through our Hate and Hope tracker, our secure, anonymous story-sharing platform, we've collected stories of harassment from individuals since 2005. Since that date,

we've collected over 32,000+ stories. It's clear that Trans people are facing hateful rhetoric and policy threats across settings like medical spaces, schools, and other public spaces - so it is clear that intervention is needed. Recent trends in stories?

3. Current attacks on Trans* youth are correlating with increasing bullying in NYC against trans* youth. (Add content about 5DYouth)

In particular, BIPOC communities, girls, LGBTQ+, immigrant youth, and young people with disabilities face increased harassment targeting their identities, with long-term negative impacts on their health, confidence, economic/school success, and safety. We must not let a culture of cruelty and dehumanization infiltrate our city's institutions, our community spaces, and even our classrooms.

We trust that our city will lead the response nationwide to the current attack on Trans rights, and we are ready to support the efforts brought forward by the city's council members. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and for your commitment to making New York City a great place for all New Yorkers.



February 28, 2025

New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Hon. Farah N. Louis, Chair

**Testimony of Mason Crawford, Harm Reduction Coordinator,
Safe Horizon Streetwork Project**

**On Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary
(TGNCNB) People in New York City**

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mason Crawford, and I am the Harm Reduction Coordinator at Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project. Safe Horizon is the nation's largest non-profit victim services organization. We offer a client-centered, trauma-informed response to 250,000 New Yorkers each year who have experienced violence or abuse. We use a lens of racial equity and justice to guide our work with clients, with each other, and in developing the positions we hold.

I am honored to testify today on behalf of my program, which has been a steadfast advocate and service provider for transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (TGNCNB) New Yorkers for decades.

Our Commitment to Serving TGNCNB New Yorkers

At Streetwork, we provide a safe, inclusive, and affirming environment where TGNCNB individuals can access essential services free from judgment and discrimination. Our drop-in centers and shelters are built on the principles of harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and unconditional affirmation of identity.

A core strength of our approach is that many of our staff members have lived experience, reflecting the communities we serve. We ensure that our team is not only well-trained but also deeply connected to TGNCNB individuals' unique struggles and strengths. This is reinforced through our hiring process, where clients are directly involved in interviewing potential staff. This practice fosters trust and ensures that those working in our spaces uphold our values of respect, affirmation, and community empowerment.

Our one-stop-shop model is designed to remove barriers that TGNCNB individuals often face when navigating traditional service systems. From legal advocacy and housing navigation to mental health support and gender-affirming resources, we ensure that multiple services are available in one location—reducing the need for clients to move through multiple agencies that may not understand or respect their identities.

Streetwork has also launched a Harm Reduction Peer Internship, a cash-stipend program that empowers young people to engage in critical community outreach. Participants in this program create and distribute safer-use kits, educate the community on Narcan, and facilitate syringe exchanges. This initiative is specifically designed for young people with lived experience, including past or current substance use, sex work, and involvement with the legal system. By equipping them with harm reduction tools and leadership opportunities, the program fosters peer-led support and strengthens community trust.

Beyond providing direct services, we cultivate joy and community through affinity groups and cultural celebrations. One of our most cherished events is our annual Kiki Ball, where TGNCNB clients can freely express themselves in a space that honors their history, artistry, and resilience.

Through our work, we have learned that true support goes beyond offering services—it requires creating a community where individuals feel seen, valued, and celebrated. Streetwork remains committed to ensuring that every TGNCNB person who walks through our doors is met with dignity, respect, and the resources they need to thrive.

What TGNCNB Individuals Need

Based on our extensive work with TGNCNB New Yorkers, we know that access to safety, stability, and affirmation is critical. Our clients consistently highlight the following priorities:

- **Safe and Affirming Housing** – TGNCNB individuals face severe barriers in the shelter system, including discrimination, misgendering, and violence. We need expanded access to inclusive shelters and supportive housing.
- **Healthcare Access** – Gender-affirming care, mental health services, and reproductive healthcare must be readily available and provided by culturally competent professionals.
- **Employment and Economic Stability** – Job training programs, workplace protections, and pathways to entrepreneurship are essential for TGNCNB individuals to achieve financial independence.
- **Legal Protections and Advocacy** – Streamlining processes for name and gender marker changes, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, and ensuring justice and accountability for hate violence are critical for TGNCNB safety and well-being.
- **Community and Visibility** – Access to affirming spaces, peer support networks, and family/workplace education initiatives can foster a greater sense of belonging and security.
- **Safety from Violence** – TGNCNB individuals experience disproportionately high rates of police profiling, domestic and gender-based violence, and hate violence. Comprehensive policy solutions are needed to address these issues and protect our community members.
- **Culturally Competent Social Services** – TGNCNB individuals deserve services that respect their identities and experiences, including inclusive shelter options, youth programming, and harm reduction services.

Systemic Barriers Preventing TGNCNB Access to Safety and Healing

Despite progress in New York City, TGNCNB individuals continue to face systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing safety, healing, and stability. Some of the most pressing challenges include:

- **Healthcare Discrimination and Gatekeeping** – Many TGNCNB individuals report being denied care, subjected to long waiting lists, or forced to travel long distances to access gender-affirming medical services. Insurance barriers further limit access to life-saving treatments.
- **Mental Health Stigma and Limited Culturally Competent Providers** – TGNCNB individuals face higher rates of anxiety, depression, and trauma, yet struggle to find affirming mental health services. Experiences of misgendering, deadnaming, and lack of provider understanding deter individuals from seeking support.
- **Barriers to Legal Recognition** – Complex and inconsistent legal processes make it difficult for TGNCNB individuals to update identification documents, affecting their ability to secure jobs, housing, and basic services.
- **Federal Rollbacks on TGNCNB Protections** – Under the Trump administration, harmful policies such as the redefinition of gender as strictly male or female and restrictions on gender-affirming care will have lasting negative impacts on TGNCNB individuals. These rollbacks and the violent rhetoric from elected leaders are affecting healthcare access, educational protections, and federal anti-discrimination measures.
- **Educational Barriers** – The rollback of federal programs supporting transgender students has disproportionately harmed homeless TGNCNB youth, reducing access to safe educational environments and mental health resources.
- **Safety and Law Enforcement** – TGNCNB individuals, particularly those of color, are at high risk of police violence and criminalization. Without clear legal protections and reform in law enforcement practices, they remain vulnerable to profiling, harassment, and abuse.

Streetwork Project is committed to standing in solidarity with TGNCNB New Yorkers **now and forever**. We will continue to advocate for policies and programs that ensure their safety, dignity, and full inclusion in society. We urge the Council to continue investing in affirming housing solutions, expanding access to gender-affirming healthcare, strengthening legal protections, and supporting community-based initiatives that uplift TGNCNB individuals.

Safe Horizon supports the package of legislation on today's agenda. We need our City leadership to step up and stand against the violent, hateful, transphobic rhetoric and policy-making coming out of Washington.

New York City has an opportunity to be a leader in ensuring that TGNCNB individuals are not only protected but fully empowered to thrive. We look forward to working together to create a city where all people, regardless of gender identity, have access to safety, support, and opportunity. Thank you for your time and commitment to this critical issue. I welcome any questions you may have.

Testimony

New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Friday, February 28th, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Louis and members of the Committee. My name is Bryan Ellicott-Cook (They/He), and I am the Director of Government Relations at SAGE, the nation's largest and oldest organization dedicated to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ elders. I am honored to testify today on behalf of SAGE and the countless older adults of - TGNB (transgender and non-binary) experience who rely on the policies and protections advanced by this committee and the City Council.

SAGE **fully supports all of the agenda items before the committee today**, as they represent critical steps toward ensuring the dignity, safety, and well-being of TGNBI New Yorkers. The legislation and resolutions under consideration today are essential to addressing the unique challenges that TGNBI individuals, including the many of our older adults who attend our SAGECenters and our SAGETrans Program, challenges that have only intensified in the wake of increased attacks on transgender people at the federal level.

We strongly support the **Oversight Hearing (T2025-3105)** on ensuring access to supports for transgender, gender non-conforming, and nonbinary individuals in New York City. Older TGNB adults face disproportionate barriers to care, housing, and economic security, making oversight and accountability essential in ensuring that city services remain accessible and equitable.

We commend the committee for advancing **T2025-3179**, which establishes a public information and outreach campaign regarding legal rights and resources available to TGNB individuals. Too often, older transgender and non-binary adults struggle to access affirming healthcare and legal protections simply due to a lack of awareness of available resources. This campaign will be a vital step toward bridging that gap.

SAGE also strongly supports **T2025-3093**, which requires the Chair of the Commission on Gender Equity to develop a plan to support newly arrived migrants, particularly those who are 24 years old or younger and of transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex experience. TGNBI migrants face heightened risks of discrimination, homelessness, and violence—this plan will help ensure they receive the support they need to thrive.

Another crucial measure, **T2025-3184**, requires the Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene to develop a **health agenda** that promotes the health and well-being of TGNB New Yorkers. This initiative is essential in addressing health disparities, including discrimination in medical settings and the lack of culturally competent care for older transgender and intersex adults.

We particularly emphasize our **strong support for T2025-3183**, which calls on Governor Hochul to sign **S.929/A.2141**. Protecting personal health information is not just a privacy issue—it is a matter of survival for many in our community. In a time when transgender healthcare and bodily autonomy are under siege across the country, New York must lead by safeguarding the rights of all individuals, especially our most vulnerable.

Additionally, **T2025-3196** calls on the New York State Department of Health to require hospitals to adhere to the **World Professional Association for Transgender Health’s (WPATH) Standards of Care 8**. This resolution is critical in ensuring that medical professionals provide ethical, high-quality treatment to individuals with gender dysphoria. Older transgender adults often struggle to receive appropriate and affirming healthcare, and enforcing these standards would be a major step toward rectifying these inequities.

Finally, **T2025-3114** urges the New York State Legislature and the Governor to **prohibit out-of-state access to the New York State Prescription Monitoring Program’s data** for medications such as abortion medications, hormone therapy, and puberty blockers. In an era where trans healthcare is being criminalized in certain states, it is imperative that New York takes decisive action to protect access to these life-saving medications.

Beyond these specific policy measures, we also urge the committee to consider **renaming itself to better reflect the TGNB community** it serves. Language matters, and a more inclusive name would send a powerful message that all gender-diverse individuals—especially those most marginalized—are seen, valued, and protected under the scope of this committee’s work. At a time when our community faces escalating threats from hostile policies at the federal level, visibility and inclusion in the institutions meant to protect us are more critical than ever.

SAGE remains committed to working alongside this committee, the City Council, and all advocates to advance policies that uplift and safeguard TGNB older adults. We thank you for your leadership and look forward to continued collaboration in ensuring that every New Yorker, regardless of gender identity, can age with dignity and respect.



**Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council Committee on Women and Gender
Equity
Hon. Farah N. Louis, Chair
February 28, 2025**

Thank you to Chair Farah N. Louis and the City Council for the opportunity to contribute to the city-wide discord around gender equity in New York City. My name is Caitlin Krenn, and I am addressing the Council on behalf of [The Door – A Center of Alternatives](#) and our prideful service of our Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, NonBinary, and Intersex (TGNCNBI) community members – to showcase our unwavering support of the continued fortification of healthcare access for our TGNCNBI community members.

The Door’s mission is to empower young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth development services in a diverse and caring environment. We serve up to 11,000 youth annually across our four New York City locations, including our lower Manhattan and South Bronx youth centers and two supportive housing sites on the Lower East Side. Broome Street Academy (BSA), a charter high school embedded at The Door, enrolls up to 330 students and prioritizes applicants who are experiencing housing instability or have been involved in the child welfare system.

The Door’s teams work to create a safe, stable, inclusive, and affirming space for all young people. In accordance with our organizational values and their legal rights in our city, among the ways we serve our TGNCNBI community members is provision of any medically necessary treatment in both our Adolescent Health Center and Counseling Center. We serve roughly 300 self-identified TGNCNBI young people annually across The Door, some of whom access our services via their Medicaid coverage – which is also under attack.

Some recent executive orders have posed funding threats to programs, like ours, providing gender affirming care to the community. Despite the temporary abatement of these funding cuts, this federal administration has made their intentions clear; to say nothing of the constant barrage of flagrant rhetoric and hateful messaging emanating from the highest office in the land. Concurrently, despite Mayor Adams’ [historical support of gender-affirming healthcare in NYC](#), recent occurrences leave us questioning his commitment and/or ability to execute on said support. We fear this backsliding on his commitment to healthcare access for gender-diverse youth may already be underway, [as members of his leadership team have indicated support](#) for other attacks on the population.

Amidst the political chaos, young people are frightened – as the federal administration seems to balk norms, legal precedent, and even constitutional fundamentals, it is reasonable to wonder when [institutional protections for TGNCNB youth](#) will be disregarded or attacked. Not only are we supporting young people in navigating confusion



around access and the preservation of such, but the toll this is taking on these community members' mental health is remarkable.

Elevated rates of [mental health concerns among gender-diverse youth](#) are well documented. However, many of our gender-diverse youth, and our entire community that values them, are being profoundly impacted by these threats to their access and frankly, personhood. [Studies show](#) that initiating a gender identity milestone, such as engagement with gender-affirming care, is associated with higher risk of suicide attempts and running away from home; even *thinking* of oneself as transgender is associated with a meaningful increase in the overall probability of attempting suicide. Concurrently, [research shows](#) that pediatric gender clinics are a uniquely safe and affirming space for gender-diverse youth to be forthcoming about safety and risk concerns. The evidence is indisputable – gender-diverse youth are at greater risk for suicidality and self-harm, *and* access to affirming care spaces is a distinct protective factor. Access alone to spaces and services like those provided at The Door is lifesaving and must be protected.

The Door – A Center of Alternatives is meant to be just that, a space where young people are always welcome, and where they are offered alternatives to what the world has afforded them outside of our facility. We remain committed to providing that space and plan to exercise every option to maintain our ability to provide these services to our community regardless of coverage, as we have historically and presently for other targeted groups – however, we have concrete limitations on our resources, calling feasibility into question. Our contribution today serves to demand the fortification of healthcare access to vital treatment that we know is lifesaving for many young people. Access to their necessary medical treatment allows these community members to move through the world as their true selves, safely meeting developmental milestones of these formative years and positions them to become the healthiest versions of themselves in adulthood – what we want for all our young people.

The Door was pleased to see the introduction of [Bill 1204](#), which if passed would require the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to develop a citywide health agenda focused on TGNCNBI New Yorkers. The Door strongly encourages the City Council to pass this legislation and would like to offer the following suggestions to the Commissioner for the development of said health agenda. We request contingency planning around healthcare access for gender-diverse youth, which can include:

- City funding opportunities to supplement the operational needs covered by revenue generated from Medicaid (in the event of its elimination on this matter);
- Advance planning in production, storage, maintenance of hormone therapeutic medications, puberty blockers, necessary materials for gender-affirming surgeries, and all other necessary treatment materials;
- Reinforcement mechanisms to safeguard HIPAA and confidentiality around diagnostics and treatment for this population;



- Law enforcement contingency around any federal attempts to disrupt gender-affirming healthcare operations;
- Protections for gender-affirming health and mental healthcare providers from criminalization or loss of licensure;
- And finally – consistent, affirming public messaging around NYC’s commitment to protecting gender-diverse individuals and their access to healthcare.

We welcome the Commissioner to approach The Door for further consultation on the imperative nature of spaces and services like ours and hope to have an active role in the development of an affirming health agenda that meets the needs of gender-diverse youth in NYC and perhaps serves as a model for other cities and spaces looking to value the humanity of all citizens.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Caitlin Krenn'. The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Caitlin Krenn, DSW, LCSW
Managing Director of Mental Health Services
The Door – A Center of Alternatives

Alan Levine
President

Zachary W. Carter
Chairperson of the Board

Twyla Carter
*Attorney-in-Chief
Chief Executive Officer*

**New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity**

**Oversight Hearing: Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-
conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City
February 28, 2025**

Testimony of The Legal Aid Society

Prepared by:

Ethan Lin (he/him) – Staff Attorney, LGBTQ+ Law and Policy Unit

Anna Blondell (she/her) – Staff Attorney, Juvenile Rights Practice Special Litigation Unit

We wish to thank the City Council and members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity for holding this oversight hearing on the needs of Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, Nonbinary, and Intersex¹ (TGNCNBI) People in New York City.

At a time when TGNCNBI communities face mounting threats at the federal level and ongoing barriers to safety, dignity, and inclusion, it is more critical than ever for New York City to lead in advancing policies that affirm and protect its most marginalized residents. Today, we urge the City Council to take decisive action in several key areas, including access to gender-affirming healthcare, protections for TGNCNBI individuals in the shelter and carceral systems, and the enforcement of workplace protections against discrimination.

Our testimony outlines specific recommendations that the City Council must take to address these urgent needs:

Gender-Affirming Care

1. **Conduct an urgent analysis on funding required to safeguard gender-affirming care** – Ensure contingency funding to protect access if federal Medicaid funding is revoked.
2. **Protect patient privacy by assessing and securing transgender status data in NYC systems** – Investigate how gender markers and identifying information are stored in city healthcare and administrative systems to prevent discrimination.

Child Welfare System & ACS

3. **Allocate \$5 million for community-based family acceptance programming and mental health services** – Promote family acceptance to reduce youth homelessness and unnecessary child welfare system involvement.
4. **Ensure sufficient funding for and continuous access to gender-affirming care for TGNCNBI youth in ACS care** – Allocate dedicated funding and remove bureaucratic hurdles delaying care access.
5. **Mandate TGNCNBI sensitivity and competency training** – Ensure all ACS staff and foster parents receive robust, frequent training on affirming care and protections for TGNCNBI youth.
6. **Allocate at least \$5 million to recruit LGBTQIA+ foster parents and ensure affirming placements** – Address the shortage of affirming homes for LGBTQIA+ youth and prevent inappropriate placements.

¹ We included intersex people in our testimony because the issues highlighted here also affect those in the intersex community.

Jails and Juvenile Facilities

7. **Pass Int. 625-2024 to protect TGNCNBI individuals in NYC jails** – Ensure individuals are housed according to gender identity or where they feel safest.
8. **Pass legislation to ensure gender-aligned housing and other necessary protections for TBNCNBI youth in juvenile detention and placement** – Ensure youths are housed according to gender identity or where they feel safest.

Employment

9. **Ensure all New Yorkers are informed of their workplace rights and pass Int. 1200-2025 with modifications** – Strengthen a public awareness campaign educating workers on their legal protections.
10. **Codify the NYC Human Rights Commission’s guidance on gender identity and expression into law** – Protect existing rights from political threats by embedding them into city law.
11. **Commit additional resources to the NYC Commission on Human Rights** – Increase funding for hiring mediators to reduce workplace discrimination case backlogs and ensure faster resolutions.

Shelters

12. **Increase the number of beds reserved for TGNCNBI individuals experiencing homelessness** – Expand the capacity of gender-affirming shelter units and ensure compliance with the *Mariah Lopez v. NYC DHS* settlement.
13. **Increase resources for the LGBTQI Unit within the Department of Social Services and require gender-affirming training for shelter staff** – Ensure staff understand and accommodate the needs of TGNCNBI individuals in shelters.

The Legal Aid Society

The Legal Aid Society is the oldest and largest not-for-profit public interest law firm in the United States, working on more than 300,000 individual legal matters annually for low-income New Yorkers with civil, criminal, and juvenile rights problems. The Society also brings law reform cases that benefit all two million low-income children and adults in New York City. The Society delivers a full range of comprehensive legal services to low-income families and individuals in the City. Our Civil Practice has local neighborhood offices in all five boroughs, along with centralized citywide law reform, employment law, economic equities, immigration law, health law, and homeless rights practices.

The Society's LGBTQ+ Law and Policy Unit addresses systemic issues affecting LGBTQ+ individuals across all three of Legal Aid's practice areas – Civil, Criminal Defense, and Juvenile Rights – by advocating for affirming and equitable treatment. For instance, the Unit collaborates with the Juvenile Rights Practice to support LGBTQ+ youth in the child welfare system, including through the ACS LGBTQAI+ Advocates' Council, where it advances policy reforms and best practices. It also works with The Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defense Practice, New York City's primary defender of low-income individuals in State court, and partners with the Prisoners' Rights Project to challenge unconstitutional conditions in city jails and state prisons, particularly for incarcerated TGNCNBI people. Additionally, the Unit has been an active member of the NYC Board of Correction's Task Force on Issues Faced by TGNCNBI People in Custody since its inception in 2019.

The Legal Aid Society's Health Law Unit (HLU) provides direct legal services to low-income health care consumers from all five boroughs of New York City. The HLU operates a statewide helpline and assists clients and advocates with a broad range of health-related issues. We also participate in city, state, and federal advocacy efforts on a variety of health law and policy matters. The HLU along with the Civil Law Reform Unit and LGBTQ+ Unit litigated *Cruz v. Zucker* which secured the right to gender affirming care for Medicaid recipients in New York.

The Society's Juvenile Rights Practice (JRP) provides comprehensive representation as attorneys for children who appear before the New York City Family Courts in abuse, neglect, juvenile delinquency, and other proceedings affecting children's rights and welfare, typically representing more than 30,000 children each year. The Legal Aid Society represents the majority of children and youth placed in foster care through New York City's Family Courts as well as the majority of children charged as juvenile delinquents. The Legal Aid Society has dedicated teams of lawyers, social workers, paralegals and investigators devoted to serving the unique needs of children and youth in the custody of the Administration of Children's Services (ACS). In addition to representing clients in trial and appellate courts, the JRP also pursues impact litigation and other law reform initiatives.

The Society's Employment Law Unit (ELU) represents low-wage workers in employment-related matters such as claims for unpaid wages; claims of discrimination, including discriminatory and retaliatory terminations; unemployment insurance; and family, medical, and sick leave. ELU conducts litigation, outreach, and advocacy designed to assist the most vulnerable workers in New

York City, among them, low-wage workers who face arbitrary, discriminatory, and retaliatory treatment on the job. The ELU routinely represents TGNCBI individuals who face discrimination and retaliation on the job and who are denied leave.

The Society's Homeless Rights Project (HRP) protects and enforces the rights of all homeless families and individuals in NYC. The HRP advocates to city agencies on behalf of clients, works closely with community partners to advocate for policies that support the needs of homeless New Yorkers, and regularly testifies before City and State legislatures. HRP currently monitors and enforces the *Butler v. City of New York* settlement, which ensures all New Yorkers with disabilities who need shelter can meaningfully access it. Moreover, as counsel in the historic *Callahan*, *Eldredge*, and *Boston* cases that created the right to shelter in NYC, Legal Aid Society's HRP is uniquely situated to provide insight about issues related to shelter for both long-time New Yorkers and new arrivals.

I. Defending Gender-Affirming Care by Providing Funding and Protecting Privacy

We condemn the January 28, 2025 federal Executive Order targeting health care for TGNCNBI youth.² The order explicitly directs the federal Department of Health and Human Services to alter the Medicare and Medicaid conditions of participation and threatens to pull all federal funding from providers that deliver gender-affirming care to people under 19 years old. Young people are uniquely vulnerable, often unable to protect their own rights because of a lack of autonomy and resources. Gender-affirming care is critical for young people who need it and can have a lifesaving impact. Moreover, the ripple effects of this order could jeopardize access to gender-affirming care for all TGNCNBI people.

Recommendation: Pass T2025-3183, With Amendments to Ensure the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Conducts an Urgent Analysis on Funding Required to Safeguard Gender-affirming Care in the Event of Federal Funding Cuts

We support T2025-3183, an important bill that aims to address the health disparities between TGNCNBI and cisgender New Yorkers. However, we recommend that the bill be amended to require an urgent analysis on funding required to safeguard gender-affirming care in the event federal funding for this care is no longer available. Given the increasing threats to gender-affirming care at the federal level, it is critical that both New York State and New York City take proactive steps to safeguard these essential healthcare services. We strongly urge New York City to prepare contingency funding to ensure continued access to gender-affirming care if the federal government succeeds in revoking Medicaid coverage. Protecting this care is essential to safeguarding the lives and well-being of TGNCNBI New Yorkers.

² Exec. Order No. 14,187, 90 Fed. Reg. 8771, 8771-73 (Feb. 3, 2025).

Many community-based organizations and healthcare providers play an essential role in ensuring access to gender-affirming care. The City should explore ways to provide direct support to these providers to ensure they can continue operating and serving our communities.

Gender-affirming care is essential, evidence-based health care that significantly improves the mental and physical well-being of TGNCNBI individuals. It can be life-saving care.³ Studies consistently show that access to this care reduces depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation while fostering improved self-esteem and overall quality of life.⁴ Denying or delaying access has devastating consequences. This care is well-researched and widely accepted clinical practice endorsed by every major medical and mental health association in the United States and a cornerstone of personal autonomy and dignity.⁵

On February 13th, 2025, a temporary restraining order was issued by the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland temporarily halting the implementation of the January 28 Executive Order.⁶ The EO has already harmed TGNCBI New Yorkers; some have already lost access to care, many more are experiencing heightened fear and uncertainty about losing their own access.⁷

For the reasons outlined above, we urge the City Council to pass T2025-3183 with amendments requiring an urgent funding analysis to safeguard gender-affirming care in the event of federal cuts. Ensuring continued access to this essential, evidence-based healthcare is critical to protecting the rights, health, and well-being of TGNCNBI New Yorkers.

³ See D.M. Tordoff, J.W. Wanta, A. Collin, C. Stepney, D.J. Inwards-Breland & K. Ahrens, *Mental Health Outcomes in Transgender and Nonbinary Youths Receiving Gender-Affirming Care*, 5 JAMA NETW. OPEN e220978 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0978>; J.L. Turban, D. King, J.M. Carswell & A.S. Keuroghlian, *Pubertal Suppression for Transgender Youth and Risk of Suicidal Ideation*, 154 PEDIATRICS e2024067026 (2024), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7073269/>.

⁴ See Kareen M. Matouk & Melina Wald, *Gender-affirming Care Saves Lives*, COLUMBIA UNIV. DEP'T OF PSYCHIATRY (Mar. 30, 2022), <https://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/gender-affirming-care-saves-lives>.

⁵ The American Medical Association asserts that "every major medical association recognizes the vital role of gender-affirming care in improving the physical health and mental well-being of transgender individuals." American Medical Association, *Everyone Deserves Quality Medical Care Delivered Without Bias*, AMA (Oct. 27, 2023), <https://www.ama-assn.org/about/leadership/everyone-deserves-quality-medical-care-delivered-without-bias>. The American Counseling Association endorsed a position statement that, "gender-affirming medical procedures and mental health care are essential and endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Endocrine Society, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, the American Medical Association, the United States Association for Transgender Health, and the World Professional Association of Transgender Health", American Counseling Association, *SAIGE Position Statement on Gender-Affirming Healthcare Bans*, <https://www.counseling.org/about/values-statements/saige-position-statement-on-gender-affirming-healthcare-bans> (last visited Feb. 28, 2025). There are at least 30 leading medical groups recognizing the medical necessity of gender-affirming care and their statements in support thereof. See Advocates for Trans Equality, *Medical Organization Statements*, <https://transhealthproject.org/resources/medical-organization-statements/> (last visited Feb. 28, 2025).

⁶ See *PFLAG, Inc. v. Trump*, No. 1:25-cv-00337 (D. Md. Feb. 13, 2025).

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/01/nyregion/nyu-langone-hospital-trans-care-youth.html#:~:text=The%20hospital%20system%2C%20NYU%20Langone,that%20dispense%20puberty%2Dblocking%20medication.>

Recommendation: Protecting Patient Privacy by Assessing and Securing Transgender Status Data in NYC Data Systems

The City Council should investigate how gender markers and other identifying information related to TGNCNBI status are stored and displayed within New York City's data systems. For example, in the state's Medicaid processing system, eMedNY, gender marker codes identifying individuals as TGNCNBI are visible to anyone with access to a patient's Medicaid case. This raises significant concerns about privacy and the risk of discrimination. We urge the City to assess whether similar vulnerabilities exist within NYC's healthcare and administrative data systems and to take immediate steps to safeguard sensitive information and protect individuals' privacy.

The federal administration's executive orders targeting TGNCNBI people has fostered a hostile environment, emboldened discrimination, and rolled back hard-won protections. Against this backdrop, the ability to withhold one's TGNCNBI status in healthcare settings is not just a matter of privacy – it is essential for safety, dignity, and survival. Ensuring TGNCNBI patients have control over their personal health information is critical to mitigating the harm caused by discrimination and bias within the healthcare system.

Gaps in current medical privacy laws erode patient privacy and harm some of the most vulnerable members of our community. When health data systems share gender identity information with healthcare providers without patients' knowledge or consent, they heighten the risk of discrimination against TGNCNBI individuals. Preserving a patient's ability to choose whether to share health information that reveals TGNCNBI status is vital for navigating healthcare in an often hostile or biased environment.

While TGNCNBI-friendly providers do exist, it is inevitable that TGNCNBI patients will need to access care from providers who may lack trans competency or, worse, harbor discriminatory bias. LGBTQ-specific community health clinics are invaluable resources, but they often face limitations – offering mostly general healthcare or struggling with underfunding. As a result, many TGNCNBI patients must see specialists outside their primary providers' network, increasing their exposure to potential discrimination.

Working with a provider who lacks cultural competency can exacerbate a TGNCNBI patient's experience of gender dysphoria, compounding the physical and emotional toll of seeking care. Giving patients control over when and whether to disclose their TGNCNBI status offers a vital layer of protection and autonomy in navigating these discriminatory environments.

Addressing these vulnerabilities is critical to ensuring that all patients can access healthcare safely, without fear of discrimination or stigma. To protect the privacy and safety of TGNCNBI individuals, we urge the City Council to assess and secure data that may reveal transgender status within NYC's healthcare and administrative systems. Ensuring that patients have control over their personal health information is essential to preventing discrimination,

safeguarding dignity, and ensuring equitable access to healthcare in an increasingly hostile environment.

II. Protecting TGNCNBI Youth in Foster Care By Ensuring Affirming Homes, Healthcare, and Family Support

As stated above, we condemn the federal administration's targeted attacks on transgender youth and their access to lifesaving and medically necessary health care. These threats pose a particular risk to our young clients who are currently under the care and custody of the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) through the foster care system. These youth already experience delays and administrative hurdles accessing this essential care and generally have worse outcomes than other youth in the child welfare system.

By way of background, LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately represented in ACS care.⁸ More than 1 out of 3 youths (34%), ages 13-20, in New York City foster care self-identifies as LGBTQAI+, as compared to 1 out of 8 in the general population.⁹ Of the total LGBTQAI+ population in foster care, approximately 13% are transgender, gender nonbinary, gender fluid, or gender non-conforming youth, and intersex youth.¹⁰ These children experience worse outcomes than other youth, including higher rates of placements in more restrictive settings,¹¹ higher rates of homelessness,¹² less satisfaction in their foster care placements,¹³ and higher rates of negative encounters with police.¹⁴

LGBTQAI+ youth in care have reported higher rates of despair, loss of interests or pleasure, and less hope about their future than non-LGBTQAI+ youth.¹⁵ The increased prevalence of mental health conditions in this population is widely thought to be a consequence of minority stress, the chronic stress from coping with societal stigma and discrimination because of one's gender identity and expression. Because of this stress, transgender minors also face a significantly heightened risk of suicide. Critically, in the general population, a shocking

⁸ Theo G. M Sandfort, *Experiences and Well-Being of Sexual and Gender Diverse Youth in Foster Care in New York City*, N.Y.C. ADMIN. FOR CHILD.'S SERVS. (2020),

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/about/2020/WellBeingStudyLGBTQ.pdf>.

⁹ *Id.* at 7.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* 29.3% of the LGBTQAI+ youth as compared to 20.8% of the non-LGBTQAI+ youth were placed in group homes or residential care.

¹² *Id.* at 8. "23.3% of the LGBTQAI+ youth in care reported to have been homeless as compared to 19.5% of the non-LGBTQAI+ youth."

¹³ *Id.* LGBTQAI+ youth were more likely to say that they experienced little to no control over their lives in foster care (32.5% versus 21.3% among non-LGBTQAI+ youth), and LGBTQAI+ youth more frequently reported having heard staff or other people refer to them as "hard to place" (30.6% versus 23.8% among non-LGBTQAI+ youth).

¹⁴ *Id.* 24.1% of the LGBTQAI+ youth reported negative encounters with the police versus 17.5% of the non-LGBTQAI+ youth.

¹⁵ *Id.* at 9. LGBTQAI+ youth reported more frequently than non-LGBTQAI+ youth that they recently had been bothered by little interest or pleasure in doing things (51.8% versus 31.5%) and by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless (31.5% versus 27.6%). In addition, LGBTQAI+ youth were less hopeful and more pessimistic than non-LGBTQAI+ youth about their future.

percentage of TGNCNB kids are depressed, have considered suicide, or made a suicide attempt.¹⁶ We expect these numbers are similar in the foster care context – especially with the rhetoric of violence and erasure currently coming from the federal government.

For these reasons, we urge the City Council to take several steps to (i) decrease the number of TGNCNBI youth entering the foster care system in the first instance, (ii) ensure TGNCNBI youth in care have prompt and continuous access to gender-affirming care, and (iii) improve the general experience of TGNCNBI youth once they are in the system. To achieve these goals, The Legal Aid Society recommends several immediate reforms, outlined below. We also ask the City Council to closely revisit the recommendations already outlined in the Pride in Policy Plan released by the Council’s LGBTQIA+ Caucus, and to double its efforts to pass legislation that aligns with those priorities. Specifically, as discussed in more detail below, the Council must:

- Allocate \$5 million for community-based family acceptance programming and mental health services to promote family acceptance and in-home reparative intervention so fewer TGNCNBI youth will be kicked out of their homes and siphoned into the foster care, homeless, or juvenile or criminal legal systems;
- Set aside sufficient funding and mandate policy reforms to ACS practice around this population to ensure continuous and prompt gender affirming care for TGNCNBI youth in the care of ACS;
- Mandate TGNCNBI sensitive and competency training for staff and foster parents that recognizes the dangers of the current climate for TGNCNBI youth; and
- Allocate at least \$5 million to aid ACS in recruiting parents from within the LGBTQIA+ community, ensuring placements for LGBTQIA+ youth are affirming and safe, and improving their quality of life while in care.

Recommendation: Allocate \$5 Million for Community-based Family Acceptance Programming and Mental Health Services to Promote Family Acceptance and In-home Reparative Intervention.¹⁷

ACS must do more to decrease the number of TGNCNBI youth entering foster care, including allocating additional funding for community-based services to work with TGNCNBI youth in the City so fewer youth will be siphoned into the foster care, homeless, or juvenile or

¹⁶ “According to one study, a third of transgender youth have seriously considered suicide, and one in five has made a suicide attempt (Reisner 2015).” Human Rights Campaign Foundation, *Mental Health and the LGBTQ Community*, https://988lifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/LGBTQ_MentalHealth_OnePager.pdf (last visited Feb. 28, 2025), citing Sari L. Reisner et al., *Mental Health of Transgender Youth in Care at an Adolescent Urban Community Health Center: A Matched Retrospective Cohort Study*, 56 J. ADOLESC. HEALTH 274, 274–79 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.10.264>.

¹⁷ This recommendation is included in the Pride in Policy Plan put forth by the City Council’s LGBTQ+ Caucus.

criminal legal systems. The Legal Aid Society regularly represents children who have been rejected by their families and who lacked access to meaningful reparative intervention while they were still in their home. Some children have been forced out of their homes by caretakers who are not able to accept the youth's sexual or gender identity. Others have been placed in foster care because of bullying, abusive name-calling, shaming, or pressure to conform inflicted by family members.

Given the many ways in which TGNCNBI youth may become involved in the child welfare system and the benefits of reducing system involvement, when possible, the City should fund a comprehensive array of family acceptance programming and mental health services for these children and their families. Community-based services should be offered to youth independently or jointly with families, and the process should be confidential. Clients often desire anonymity – the ability to come as they are, without the consent, permission or, in some cases, knowledge of a parent, and the assurance of confidentiality – which serves as a foundation for successful casework. The importance of confidentiality must be centered in each program, given the message coming out of the federal government that individuals will be targeted because of their TGNCNBI identity. Further, these services must be geographically, linguistically, and culturally accessible. Home-based services that stress the importance of family acceptance of the youth's gender identity are also particularly important to provide families with enhanced communication skills training and information regarding positive adolescent development.

Currently, the City makes some of these services available, such as the family therapy services provided by the Ackerman Institute. However, the need for such services has become significantly greater following the federal government's attack on TGNCNBI identities, increasing stress within the community and requiring additional support to protect and enhance family bonds.

Recommendation: Ensure Sufficient Funding for and Continuous Access to Gender Affirming Care for TGNCNBI Youth

The City Council should act quickly to ensure that sufficient funds are set aside for gender affirming healthcare for youth in ACS care. While we understand that ACS's current administration is dedicated to continuing to provide this care, the City Council must ensure such funding is available regardless of the availability of federal or state funding and regardless of who leads the City administration. The City Council can do this by setting aside City funding and by advocating with state officials to ensure state-level funding remains available for this essential care.

As an important part of the effort to ensure continuous and prompt access to care, the City Council should work with ACS to develop policies that remove any unnecessary hurdles for

youth to access this care. The current ACS policy on LGBTQ+ youth is over a decade old and does not incorporate major recent advances in the legal rights of TGNCNBI youth and in the development of best practices for working with those youth in care. According to ACS, it has been in the process of revising the policy for several years, but to date no finalized updated policy has been issued. Consequently, current ACS policy makes outdated and harmful statements about gender affirming care, including stating that this care, which has been covered by Medicaid since 2016, must be covered through the Non-Medicaid Reimbursable policy (NMR). The NMR process, which may become the primary process for accessing gender affirming care if Medicaid coverage is terminated or abridged, is cumbersome, and ACS does not adequately train agencies on navigating the process or filing out the paperwork. Inadequate training often results in agencies refusing to pay for treatment but also having no idea how to get the treatment covered by ACS. This is not isolated – it's an issue spanning across agencies.

The process for obtaining gender-related medical care in foster care is slow – painfully, unacceptably slow. Our clients and staff have experienced a distinct lack of urgency regarding this type of medical care. While our clients who are prescribed other types of medication typically have rapid responses from agencies, there does not appear to be the same kind of reaction time for gender-affirming care. This is apparent even where there is no parent standing in the way of obtaining the treatment or medication, for instance with children who are freed for adoption.

One client had a medical professional submit a letter confirming her diagnosis, supporting her request for gender-affirming medical intervention, and asking the agency to pay for it immediately. Not only did the agency withhold that letter from the child's attorney and the Court for almost a year, but the agency also did nothing to seek medical care for this young person. It took over a year, and a court order, for the agency to begin to even explore gender-related care.

Any new policy must provide accurate guidance in one location and enhance training and oversight around the importance and mechanics of assisting youth to access timely transition-related care. While ACS has released some letter guidance on this issue, the experiences of our clients demonstrate that some agencies continue to believe certain types of transition-related care are “cosmetic” and need not be provided and others fail to recognize the urgency of this type of care, such as the provision of puberty blockers prior to the development of secondary sex characteristics. Many agencies continue to mistakenly believe that an NMR is necessary for coverage that is currently covered by Medicaid. ACS must promulgate clear, simple guidance and remove existing hurdles in its policies that impede youth accessing transition-related care, hurdles that do not exist for children accessing other types of medically necessary care, such as requiring the input and approval of additional levels of staff.

ACS should also develop policies and trainings to explain to staff how to assist with basic things like name changes, changing gender identity markers, and provide more clarity on when

and how ACS/agency case workers can and should share information with attorneys for children. Often, agencies do not provide us with the documentation necessary to assist on behalf of our clients, such as documentation necessary for us to file a name change or HIPPA for children who are freed for adoption.

ACS must also expand and strengthen its partnerships with LGBTQ+ affirming mental health providers. As ACS's own data demonstrates, LGBTQ+ youth in the child welfare system experience higher rates of depression and anxiety.¹⁸ This data correlates with broader studies showing the high rates of suicidal ideation of LGBTQ+ youth and the difficulty these youth encounter when trying to access affirming mental health care services.¹⁰ By developing relationships with more programs and specialists in LGBTQ+ youth mental health, ACS and its agencies can fast track youth to services when they express a need for those services or experience transphobia and homophobia in the child welfare system.

Recommendation: Mandate TGNCNBI Sensitivity and Competency Training

City Council should work closely with ACS to ensure that training around working with TGNCNBI youth is mandatory, robust, and frequent. Our clients continue to experience discriminatory behavior from case workers and foster parents. Some foster parents continue to deadname and misgender our clients, inappropriately house them in rooms with other children of a different gender and sometimes kick them out for expressing their identity.

Training for all agency staff as well as foster parents should adopt the LGBTQ+ Community Practice Model, a model introduced by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in an informational letter released in 2021.¹⁹ This model is designed to create affirming environments for people of all sexual orientations and genders through an intersectional lens. For instance, the training must provide concrete guidance on how to limit heterocentric and ciscentric language and behavior, to avoid making assumptions about a youth's sexual orientation and gender identity, and how to discuss those topics sensitively and non-judgmentally with young people. This is particularly critical now, with new waves of misinformation coursing out of the federal government.

ACS must ensure that mental health providers in its agencies provide affirming care and are familiar with the standards of care for gender expansive people set forth by WPATH, internationally recognized standards which promote transgender health.²⁰ Too often, our clients

¹⁸ See *supra* note 13.

¹⁹ See 21-OCFS-INF-06 Informational Letter at https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/policies/external/ocfs_2021/INF/21-OCFS-INF-06.pdf.

²⁰ While the January 28, 2025 Executive Order on gender-affirming care for youth orders all federal agencies to rescind or amend all policies that rely on WPATH guidance, the WPATH standards continue to be recognized by every major U.S. medical and mental health organization as the gold standard for provision of individualized gender-affirming care for both youths and adults.

interact with clinicians who are not familiar with the specific needs of TGNCNBI youth and at times pathologize them for their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Recommendation: Allocate At Least \$5 Million to Aid ACS in Recruiting Parents from Within the LGBTQIA+ Community and Ensuring Placements for LGBTQIA+ Youth are Affirming and Safe, including Enhanced Training that Recognizes the Dangers of the Current Moment²¹

ACS and provider agencies must place LGBTQ+ youth, and all youth in care, in the most home-like setting possible and ensure that they are not institutionalized due to the lack of available affirming foster home placements. Our LGBTQ+ clients have often been forced to stay in temporary shelter placements, sometimes for months, while ACS attempted to locate an affirming and appropriate foster home. We currently have at least one trans client living for months in a shelter placement because ACS has not been able to locate a safe and affirming home for them after they left their prior foster home because they were concerned for their safety. We had another client who left their foster care placement because it was not affirming and lived in unscreened, unsupervised settings for years until they turned 16 and were eligible for placement in an LGBTQ+ group home. This is completely inappropriate – it should never take months or years to find a child a safe space to sleep, regardless of their identity.

Other clients have been placed in more restrictive placements than necessary, simply due to a shortage of affirming foster homes within the five boroughs. While ACS states that every foster home certified by agencies is LGBTQ+ affirming, we know from direct experience that implicit or explicit bias against our clients continues to create friction, sometimes leading to children struggling with depression, missing school and key services, running away, or harming themselves. In some instances, it leads to children choosing homelessness rather than remaining in non-affirming, inappropriate foster care placements. Recently, one of our clients was kicked out of their pre-adoptive home, where they had lived for years, because the foster parent rejected their identity. Additional funding should be provided and enhanced oversight must be levied to ensure that ACS is recruiting foster parents from the LGBTQ+ community and creating sufficient affirming homes to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ youth.

If a determination is made that a child must be placed in a congregate care setting, ACS has very limited beds in LGBTQ+ group homes. Many of our clients have reported feeling uniquely supported and understood in spaces that actively affirm their identities, including specialized congregate settings for LGBTQ+ youth such as the SCO Family of Services LGBTQ+ group home. The City should support an expansion of actively affirming placement options for LGBTQ+ youth across the spectrum of foster care options.

²¹ This recommendation is included in the Pride in Policy Plan put forth by the City Council's LGBTQ+ Caucus.

III. Ending Injustice in NYC Jails and Juvenile Detention Facilities by Protecting TGNCNBI People from Violence, Discrimination, and Civil Rights Violations

We condemn the January 20, 2025 federal Executive Order mandating the elimination of important protections for TGNCNBI people under the Prison Rape Elimination Act.²² This Executive Order strips TGNCNBI people of their rights and exposes them to heightened risks of violence and sexual assault in correctional facilities. The Executive Order not only endangers TGNCNBI individuals but also reinforces harmful narratives that devalues TGNCNBI people's humanity and safety. In face of this Executive Order, New York City has an opportunity to take a stand and send a different message - one that affirms New York City's commitment to human rights and the safety of all its residents.

Recommendation: Council Should Act to Immediately Pass of Int. 0625-2024 and Align New York City with other States and Counties.

Int. 625 requires that the Department of Correction (DOC) house TGNCNBI people consistent with their gender identity or where they feel safest unless there is clear and convincing evidence that they present an immediate danger of committing gender-based violence. It requires any denial of gender-aligned housing be documented in writing, with an appeal process for affected individuals. The bill also ensures proper intake procedures so that people are housed appropriately from the moment they enter custody, avoiding the current dangerous delays in intake facilities.

This bill is essential for the health and safety of TGNCNBI people, who are routinely discriminated against by DOC and forced into inappropriate and unsafe housing without any lawful justification and no meaningful pathway for appeal.²³ The Legal Aid Society submitted a FOIL request in March 2023 for the Department's housing determinations when someone requested gender-aligned housing or the Special Considerations Unit (the SCU, a voluntary unit) in RMSC, the women's jail. The data is clear that TGNCNBI are routinely denied their right to safe and gender-aligned housing in DOC custody. From January to July 2024:

- 132 individuals applied for gender-aligned housing or housing in the Special Considerations Unit. 50% were denied, often for vague reasons such as "current housing

²² The January 20, 2025 Executive order requires the government to define gender strictly based on sex assigned at birth, effectively erasing transgender, nonbinary, and intersex individuals from federal recognition. Included in the order was a demand to revise Part 115.41 of Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations - a critical provision of the 2003 Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) that provides essential protections for TGNCNBI individuals at risk of sexual and physical violence in correctional settings.

²³ The Legal Aid Society, Testimony on Proposed Legislation, N.Y.C. Council, Comm. on Criminal Justice, at 6-7 (Sept. 27, 2024).

needs, infraction history, conviction history, and incident history.”²⁴ Notably, the safety needs of the person – including their risk of being sexually assaulted or abused – are never considered.

- 100% of nonbinary applicants were denied housing in the Special Considerations Unit, and 80% were denied gender-aligned housing.²⁵
- Six transgender women were forcibly moved to men’s jails due to disciplinary infractions.²⁶ DOC disciplines transgender people by involuntarily transferring them from gender-aligned housing to men’s jails, a punishment reserved only for transgender people and never applied to cis women.

Additionally, highlights of data from DOC’s publicly available numbers indicate the same:

- In the third quarter of FY 2024, **all** nonbinary individuals (100%) were denied housing in the Special Considerations Unit, while 78% were denied placement in gender-aligned housing.²⁷ In the fourth quarter for FY 2024, 80% of nonbinary people were denied housing in the Special Considerations Unit, while 80% were denied placement in gender-aligned housing.²⁸
- Among transgender women, about half were denied housing in the Special Considerations Unit and half were denied gender-aligned housing in the third quarter of FY 2024²⁹ and the first quarter of FY 2025.³⁰
- In the first quarter for FY 2025, DOC denied 50% of the requests it received for gender aligned housing and **rescinded 36% of the requests it granted**.³¹

This treatment is wholly inconsistent with New York City’s reputation as a leader in protecting and respecting the rights of TGNCNBI people. In any other sex-segregated space, such as homeless shelters or locker rooms, TGNCNBI people have the legal right under New

²⁴ This number is based on DOC’s response to Legal Aid Society’s FOIL request in March 2023 for DOC’s housing determinations when someone requested gender-aligned housing or the Special Considerations Unit (the SCU, a voluntary unit for TGNCNBI people) in RMSC, the women’s jail.

²⁵ *Id.* Based on LAS client experience, this likely means 80% of non-binary people, which includes transfeminine people, were denied transfer to women’s jails from men’s jail.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ NYC Dept. of Corr., *TGNBI Individuals in Custody Report – FY2024 3rd Quarter*, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/FY24%20Q3%20TGNBI%20Report%20-%20FY24%20Q3.pdf>

²⁸ NYC Dept. of Corr., *TGNBI Individuals in Custody Report – FY2024 4th Quarter*, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/FY24%20Q4%20TGNBI%20Report%20-%20FY24%20Q4.pdf>

²⁹ NYC Dept. of Corr., *supra* note 27.

³⁰ NYC Dept. of Corr., *TGNBI Individuals in Custody Report – FY2025 1st Quarter*, https://www.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/pdf/FY25_Q1_TGNBI.pdf.

³¹ *Id.*

York City and New York State laws to self-determine where they feel safest.³² The law recognizes their right to be addressed by affirming names and pronouns, access bathrooms that align with their gender, and choose safe spaces. Yet, once TGNCNBI people enter the city's jails, these rights are routinely denied, subjecting them to extraordinarily high rates of violence, harassment, and discrimination.³³ This treatment has long-term deleterious effects on a person's physical and emotional well-being.³⁴

As the numbers above demonstrate, DOC consistently disregards our clients' identities and experiences of violence and sexual assault. In one instance, a transgender woman in her 60s was placed in a men's intake jail, even though DOC and her parole officer knew she was a woman. Although she had previously lived in a women's shelter, had previously been placed in a women's jail, and possessed official documents affirming her gender, she was held in the men's facility for several days until she was bailed out.

Even when a client's transfer to gender-aligned facility is approved, the waiting period to transfer is rife with danger. In another case, a Legal Aid client was approved to be moved from a men's jail to a women's jail. In blatant violation of her privacy, officers told her in a public area of a men's unit that she would be transferred to the women's jail. She was subsequently raped in the shower of the men's unit before she was transferred. One of the procedural changes mandated by Int. 625 would help address such injustices by closing the gap between when an

³² Exec. Law § 296; N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 8-107; Mayor's Exec. Order No. 16 (Mar. 7, 2016). These laws ensure that people can access gender-segregated spaces consistent with their gender identity or expression. *See* Guidance on Protections from Gender Identity Discrimination under New York State Human Rights Law (State Division of Human Rights, Jan. 29, 2020); Legal Enforcement Guidance on Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Expression (City Commission on Human Rights, Feb. 15, 2019).

³³ *See* Allen J. Beck, *Sexual Victimization in Prisons and Jails Reported by Inmates 2011-12: Supplemental Tables: Prevalence of Sexual Victimization Among Transgender Adult Inmates* (Bureau of Justice Statistics, Dec. 2014), available at https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/svpjri1112_st.pdf; *see also* Jaime M. Grant et al., *Injustice At Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey* 6 (2011), available at https://www.transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/NTDS_Report.pdf; Valerie Jenness et al., *Violence in California Correctional Facilities: An Empirical Examination of Sexual Assault 2* (University of California, Irvine, June 2007), available at <http://ucicorrections.seweb.uci.edu/files/2013/06/BulletinVol2Issue2.pdf> (finding that 59% of transgender women housed in men's prisons had been sexually abused while incarcerated and that transgender people were 13 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than cisgender people in prison). A recent report on the treatment of TGNCI people in the New York State prison system found that 91% of the 44 respondents reported at least one form of physical assault while incarcerated and 75% of the 44 respondents reported at least one incident of sexual violence by corrections officers. The Sylvia Rivera Law Project & Take Root Justice, *It's Still War in Here: A Statewide Report on the Trans, Gender Non-Conforming, Intersex (TGNCI) Experience in New York Prisons and the Fight for Trans Liberation, Self-Determination, and Freedom* 25, 27 (2021), available at <https://takerootjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Its-Still-War-In-Here-1.pdf>.

³⁴ *See* Leah Drakeford, *Correctional Policy and Attempted Suicide Among Transgender Individuals*, 24 *Journal of Correctional Health Care* 171, 172 (2018); Ethan Rogers et al., *The Disproportionate Mental Health Burden Among Incarcerated Transgender and Gender Diverse People*, 29 *Journal of Correctional Health Care* 39 (2023). A recent report on the treatment of TGNCI people in the New York State prison system found that 51% of the 44 respondents attempted to harm themselves while incarcerated and 34% had tried to actively take their own life. Respondents connected these efforts to treatment they received while in the New York State prison system. *It's Still War in Here*, *supra* note 20, at 41-42.

individual is taken into custody and when a decision is made about their gender-aligned housing request.³⁵

Thus, we urge the City Council to **act immediately** to protect the TGNCNBI community incarcerated in the City jails. This legislation is particularly urgent considering the harmful attempt by the federal government to roll-back existing legal protections and refuse to recognize the existence of transgender people. By enacting Int. 625, the City can live up to its reputation as the bastion of LGBTQ+ rights and provide to the community the rights and protections that it needs and deserves. Passage of Int. 625 would bring New York City in line with 17 New York State counties, six states, Washington D.C., and several other countries that have adopted policies respecting gender identity in carceral settings. These jurisdictions prohibit baseless denials based on anatomy, sexual orientation, or disciplinary records, ensuring that TGNCNBI people receive the same rights and protections as cisgender individuals.

Recommendation: Pass legislation to ensure gender-aligned housing and other necessary protections for TGNCNBI youth in juvenile detention and placement.

The Council should pass legislation that clarifies transgender youth have a right to be housed based on their gender identity in juvenile detention and placement and free from abuse and harassment in those settings. The anticipated changes to the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act will likely eliminate protections for transgender youth in juvenile detention, necessitating that these protections are firmly protected by both city and state law. Such protections are necessary to ensure LGB and particularly TGNCNBI people are housed safely and to address the high rates of sexual assault and misconduct of LGBTQ+ youth in these facilities.³⁶ We welcome the opportunity to work with the City Council to develop this legislation and protect transgender youth.

IV. Expanding Shelter Access by Increasing Beds and Resources for TGNCNBI New Yorkers

The NYC Department of Social Services recognizes that LGBTQI individuals are “disproportionately likely to live in poverty and need access to public benefits.”¹ Despite this recognition, the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) lacks adequate capacity of shelter units specifically for TGNCBI clients and needs to improve staff training and understanding of the needs of TGNCBI clients receiving gender-affirming care. Legal Aid Society’s Homeless Rights

³⁵ In our 2023 testimony, Legal Aid mentions a woman who was approved for transfer yet the Department took *two weeks* to transfer her to RMSC. See The Legal Aid Society’s January 25, 2023 testimony.

³⁶ See, e.g., Ctr. for Am. Progress, Movement Advancement Project & Youth First, *Unjust: LGBTQ Youth Incarcerated in the Juvenile Justice System* (June 2017), <https://www.lgbtmap.org/file/lgbtq-incarcerated-youth.pdf>.

Project works with many TGNCNBI clients living in homeless shelters who experience these barriers within the shelter system.

Recommendation: Increase number of beds reserved for TGNCNBI individuals experiencing homelessness

In November 2021 under the *Mariah Lopez v. NYC DHS* settlement, the City agreed to establish TGNC Shelter Units and TGNC-Affirming Shelters, mandatory staff training, and evaluation and enforcement criteria to protect TGNC clients from discrimination and harassment. The following recommendations fall under the City's existing and unfulfilled requirements listed in the aforementioned agreement.

NYC only has one shelter dedicated to LGBTQ adults and it is often at or near capacity. There are a limited number of TGNC-coded units in larger communal shelters. According to DHS-PB-2023-010,² TGNC individuals should be able to be added to a waitlist for one of these units, but we have never seen clients successfully join the waitlist. In the *Lopez* settlement, the City agreed to temporarily prioritize small dorm or single room placement for clients who request TGNC shelter placements and are unable to be placed or are transferred out of TGNC shelters, but the City has failed to create sufficient capacity to meet the need. The alternative to these placements is to reside in the adult shelter sites, which are comprised of mostly communal spaces and bathrooms, exposing TGNCNBI clients to harassment, discrimination, and privacy risks.

New York City must prioritize increasing the number of reduced density beds and shelter sites reserved for and dedicated to serving the needs of TGNCNBI individuals, including adults and seniors. The City cannot fulfill their promise to prioritize small dorm or single room shelter for TGNC clients that request TGNC shelter placements if most TGNC clients are unable to place their requests. The *Lopez* settlement requires the NYC DHS to “create and maintain at least one TGNC Affirming Shelter or TGNC Shelter Unit” in each of the five boroughs of New York City by December 31, 2022. We urge the City to comply with the *Lopez* settlement and increase the capacity of TGNC beds to meet the needs of TGNCNBI individuals that would request such placements.

Recommendation: Increase Resources for the LGBTQI Unit within Department of Social Services and Require Gender-Affirming Training for Homeless Shelter Staff

TGNCNBI individuals must retain their right to gender-affirming care in shelter and NYC must require that shelter staff receive adequate training on how to recognize and accommodate the needs of this population. Staff training and increased resources are especially necessary to identify, accommodate, and uphold TGNCNBI individuals' unseen needs as the City

collapses the Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center (HERRC), a new arrival shelter system), into the DHS shelter system.

One recent Legal Aid Homeless Rights Project client, a transgender woman, had a single room accommodation while living in a HERRC due to a need to perform a daily procedure following gender affirming surgery. This self-performed procedure could not be done in a bathroom nor in a congregate setting and if not routinely performed, could result in medical complications that would require additional surgery. She was transferred to a single adult DHS site where she shared a room with four other women, leaving her unable to perform the necessary procedure directed by her doctors. When we advocated on her behalf, DHS staff flagged her case as an LGBTQI issue and disregarded her reasonable accommodation claim. It took five days and extensive discussion and education surrounding her needs as a transgender woman before DHS transferred her to a different shelter.

The City must provide more robust training for staff about the needs of TGNCNBI individuals, especially those receiving gender affirming care who may need reasonable accommodations as a result. These accommodation needs are not a matter of convenience; they are essential to ensuring the health and safety of our clients. We also urge that the City recognize the particular vulnerability of TGNCNBI new arrivals, many of whom face additional language barriers in the shelter system. Thus, we suggest the City adopt local law T2025-3184 as it supports TGNCNBI new arrivals, and we recommend that the law expand to protect all age groups, not just young people. Many of our new arrival TGNCNBI clients are over the age of 50. Additional resources must be allocated to ensure gender-affirming care and accommodation across the NYC Department of Social Services and to the NYC DSS LGBTQI unit. With additional staffing in this unit, more individuals needing transfers to a new shelter or a shelter equipped to accommodate their needs would receive them and would receive them in a timely manner. More training for shelter staff would increase understanding of the medical needs of LGBQ and TGNCNBI populations.

V. Safeguarding Workplace Rights for TGNCNBI Individuals in the Face of Federal Rollbacks

The Employment Law Unit routinely represents TGNCNBI individuals who face discrimination and retaliation on the job and who are denied leave. We repudiate the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) efforts to roll back workplace protections for TGNCNBI workers. The EEOC's statement disregards well-established legal precedent, its own guidance and virtually invites employers to discriminate against this already vulnerable group. Indeed, the EEOC has established a separate procedure for TGNCNBI complaints that suggests a heightened level of scrutiny will be given to complaints of harassment by people from this

marginalized community.³⁷ While the acting EEOC chair has admitted she cannot unilaterally rescind portions of the agency's harassment guidance, it is clear the EEOC is no longer a viable forum for the trans community.

We urge the city to take immediate and concrete steps to safeguard TGNCNBI workers from discrimination. In the face of federal hostility, New York City can serve as a bulwark of fairness, equity, and opportunity for all.

Recommendation: Ensure that All New Yorkers are Informed of their Rights under Local Law and adopt Int. 1200-2025 with Recommended Modifications

We support Int. 1200 with the modifications recommended below. Int. 1200 mandates, among other things, a public awareness campaign to educate the public about the robust protections of the New York City Human Rights Law and to make it clear that New York City will vigorously enforce those rights for all New Yorkers, including TGNCNBI individuals. Existing CCHR guidance on gender identity and expression protections should be reaffirmed and amplified to counter misinformation and fear.³⁸ New York City should reconfirm its commitment to being a national leader in civil rights protection and enforcement. It should remind all New Yorkers that our law has -- and will continue to afford -- greater protections to its residents than what federal law provides.

We recommend modifying Int. 1200 to include:

- A timeline for implementation of the campaign and clarity around the frequency of subsequent campaigns.
- The agency or entity assigned to carry out and report back on the outreach campaign.
- Specificity around the requirements of the public awareness campaign (*e.g.*, bus shelter advertising, LinkNYC kiosks, social media advertising, subway advertisement, etc.).
- Information about how New Yorkers can enforce their rights described in paragraph (B)1.
- A report back to City Council that assesses the efficacy of the campaign and proposes changes for future outreach efforts.
- The financial support necessary to complete this work.

³⁷ Vin Gurrieri, *EEOC Adds Extra Layer of Review for Trans Bias Charges*, LAW360 (Jan. 31, 2025), <https://www.law360.com/employment-authority/discrimination/articles/2291688> (last visited Feb. 25, 2025).

³⁸ See N.Y.C. Comm'n on Hum. Rts., *Legal Guidance on Gender Identity and Gender Expression*, <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/legal-guidances-gender-identity-expression.page> (last visited Feb. 28, 2025).

Recommendation: Codify the New York City Human Rights Commission’s Guidance on Gender Identity and Expression into Law

City Council should adopt law that codifies the Commission’s existing guidance on gender identity to ensure that political pressure cannot threaten the availability of these important rights in the future. Codifying this guidance will strengthen and clarify the scope of transgender rights in New York City, providing lasting protections and reinforcing the city’s commitment to safeguarding TGNCNBI individuals in employment and all areas of public life.

Recommendation: Commit Additional Resources to the Commission on Human Rights and Enable it to Hire More Mediators for Timely Complaint Resolution

The City should allocate additional funding to the Commission on Human Rights. The CCHR budget is insufficient to meet the needs of New Yorkers and advocates have been sounding the alarm about its slow processing times since its workforce was drastically cut following COVID. The CCHR budget should be augmented to reflect its critical importance to New Yorkers in the absence of a federal partner and funding should be restored and hiring should be facilitated so that it is exempted from peps, 2:1 hiring, allotments and other budgetary tools that hamper the ability to staff up.

Workplace discrimination takes many forms: blatant refusal to hire, wrongful termination, and hostile work environments that force TGNCNBI employees to leave otherwise viable jobs. Many workers experience persistent misgendering, harassment, and denial of appropriate facilities. In one recent case, the employer made a nonbinary employee continue to use their deadname to access their work files, claiming that it could not change their name in the company’s computer systems. The same company misgendered the employee’s nonbinary partner, causing them to face barriers to necessary healthcare. The employee was fired after complaining of discrimination against themselves and their partner. In an *amicus* brief on employment sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination to the United States Supreme Court, The Legal Aid Society described the experiences of a transgender client who was treated as an object of curiosity and ridicule at work because of their gender identity. The brief also described a gay man who was told by a supervisor that she wanted to address him “like a man” and then supposedly imitating him by waving her arms flamboyantly. He was fired after complaining about her behavior toward him. In short, even in today’s New York City, people who are perceived as gender nonconforming face harassment in the workplace often culminating in termination, particularly if they complain. The resulting economic instability disproportionately pushes TGNCNBI individuals into unemployment and homelessness, further deepening the housing insecurity crisis in our city.

In addition, the Commission should receive additional funds to increase its capacity to mediate complaints and reduce resolution times. This includes hiring and training additional

mediators and expanding enforcement efforts. By investing in additional resources, the city can reduce complaint backlogs, offer faster and more effective relief, and ensure that TGNCNBI workers receive timely protection. Swift intervention will also send the message that the City Commission is an effective watch dog. This is important because 82% of TGNCNBI workers report experiencing workplace discrimination, including being fired, not hired, not promoted, or verbally, physically, or sexually harassed at work.³⁹ These numbers are even more alarming for Black TGNCNBI individuals, who face layered inequities and heightened barriers.

Unfortunately, staff reductions at CCHR have caused significant delay in resolving complaints and leave vulnerable workers without meaningful recourse to resolve workplace issues promptly. The delay also sends the message to employers that discriminatory conduct has no consequence. The Commission's inability to act quickly undermines its mission and erodes public confidence in local protections. At a time when TGNCNBI individuals are under direct attack, expediting the complaint resolution process is essential to safeguarding their rights and those of all workers.

³⁹ See Brad Sears, Christy Mallory, Andy Lin & Neko Michelle Castleberry, *Workplace Experiences of Transgender Employees*, *Williams Inst.*, UCLA SCH. OF L. (Nov. 2024) at 2, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trans-Workplace-Discrimination-Nov-2024.pdf>.

THE CENTER

Committee on Women and Gender Equity

*Oversight Hearing - Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming,
and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City*

February 28, 2025

Testimony of

**The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center
New York, NY**

**THE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL &
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the existing services and supports offered by our City for transgender, gender non-conforming, and nonbinary (TGNCNB) people. More than ever in the recent past, this is an important conversation that New York City can and should lead the nation on.

The divisive and violent national rhetoric regarding transgender people is presenting additional pressures on our transgender community members and clients, and is negatively impacting spaces like school and home, creating an even greater need for spaces like The Center that can provide refuge, support, and connections to services. This initiative is more important than ever to meeting the needs of our community members.

Calls to Action for The New York City Council on supporting TGNC New Yorkers

- (1) The New York City Council should use its bully pulpit to support trans people as often as possible. Express public solidarity with TGNC New Yorkers, at every moment, and with your constituents of all backgrounds. This is of critical importance right now. In order to combat the onslaught of anti-trans rhetoric, violence and discrimination that threatens to overtake our country, we need to continue to make the lives, tribulations, and dreams of trans people feel real to our neighbors.
 - (a) Detractors are counting on every one of us to abandon trans people in order to execute their hateful agenda – we will not. We need leaders, more than ever, to be the buffer and to stand up.
 - (b) For that reason, we support the package of bills that are being heard today because they reflect a broad, intersectional view of the lives of trans New Yorkers: from healthcare, to immigration, to mental health, to justice in our criminal legal system.**
- (2) We call on the City Council to invest in TGNC leaders and services. The Center joins our coalition partners from the NYC Trans and Queer Advocacy Coalition in calling for the expansion of the Council's Trans Equity Initiative this year. We call on the Council to increase that initiative to at least \$10 Million, and to prioritize new initiative spending on trans-led, grassroots organizations that are serving New Yorkers and that are leading the way on achieving justice for trans people in New York City. The City Council should work with our coalition and with trans community leaders to review and analyze the current beneficiaries of Trans Equity Funding to promote equity.
- (3) Educate your colleagues. Tell them about the importance of safeguarding the gains we've made, and about the need to expand protections for vulnerable New Yorkers.

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The Center's TGNCNB Initiatives

The Center is committed to serving TGNCNB New Yorkers, and to expanding our offerings to this community, especially as an antidote to the violence, hatred, and discrimination facing trans communities across our country right now.

In 2024, we served 646 TGNC-identified community members in our social support services with 5931 units of direct service and 241 TGNC-identified community members in our social groups' services with 1,449 units of direct service. With continued funding from the Council's Trans Equity initiative, we will be able to expand our services to support a larger number of TGNC New Yorkers.

The Center offers a robust slate of programming in an affirming setting that is designed by and tailored to TGNC community members, as well as their partners and families, to connect with others going through similar experiences. Starting in 1989 with The Center's Gender Identity Project, our services have evolved over time to include a range of transgender-driven support, advocacy, education, and economic stability initiatives. Current programming also provides an opportunity for members to interact with other trans-identified and allied service providers. For example, The Center offers short-term counseling and a number of support groups, such as a queer immigrant mentorship and empowerment group. In addition, through our community support programming, we offer case management services to support the community, navigate various social services and ensure they have their basic needs met in order to enable them to focus on their long-term financial stability. These services include support groups, peer support workshops, workforce events, and skills-building classes. Additional programs include ESL classes, mental health services, referrals to education programs, healthcare navigation, legal referrals, immigration support, and housing support. During and after COVID-19, The Center shifted to a telehealth model, allowing our counselors to continue providing support services, both individual and group models. The remote model continues even as we are now open again to the public in person.

Increasingly, The Center has worked to support newly arrived New Yorkers in an effort to mitigate the harmful effects of the current immigration crisis. Because our programs are available at no-cost to all New Yorkers, and because they are intended to specifically meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people, we are experiencing a surge in demand for direct-services and community spaces. The Center remains one of the few organizations in our City that is well-positioned to support our community, but we will need to scale funding to support these initiatives. We share the Council's goal of reaching every New Yorker who is in need of support, regardless of immigration status.

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The Center's History

New York City's LGBT community formed The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center (The Center) in 1983, in response to the AIDS epidemic, ensuring a place for LGBTQ people to access information, care and support they were not receiving elsewhere. Now, we are the largest LGBT multi-service organization on the East Coast, The Center sees more than 6,000 weekly visitors and hosts over 400 community group meetings each month. The Center has a solid track record of working for and with the community to increase access to a diverse range of high-quality services and resources, including our substance use recovery programming for adults and youth; HIV/AIDS programming; youth programs; and our families and opportunities work.

The Center's services

The Center fosters a welcoming environment where everyone is celebrated for who they are. We offer the LGBTQ communities of NYC advocacy, health and wellness programs; arts, entertainment, and cultural events; recovery, parenthood, and family support services. In addition, The Center has made racial equity a keystone element of our approach to community building.

- **Counseling and support groups:** The Center provides short-term individual counseling and referral services, as well as hosts a range of support groups for our transgender and gender nonconforming communities. Both individual counseling and groups offer support around a variety of topics, including gender identity and expression, emotional challenges, substance use and recovery, and aim to build peer support networks.
- **Employment support:** Despite legal protections in New York State, the effects of discrimination continue to place trans and gender nonconforming communities at extremely high rates of poverty, unemployment, underemployment and homelessness. The Center provides services to directly combat this inequality, including individual career coaching support, case management, events focused on career exploration, legal workshops and networking opportunities.
- **Health insurance enrollment and linkage to care:** The Center is a designated navigator agency for the NY State of Health, the health insurance marketplace for New York through the Affordable Care Act. We provide information and education on the options available, and help individuals, families, small businesses and their employees enroll in New York State Medicaid, The NY Essential Plan, Child Health Plus and Qualified Health plans. We also help connect individuals to TGNCNB affirming medical and behavioral healthcare as needed.

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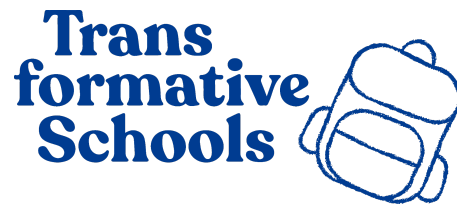
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- **HIV prevention, testing, and linkage to care:** We offer counseling for individuals, groups, couples and families, plus a variety of events, speakers and informal social gatherings for positive people and their loved ones. This includes HIV & AIDS education, anonymous testing, counseling and support, partner notification, and linkage to medical treatment including PEP, PrEP, and antiretroviral medications.
- **Legal services:** The Center partners with community-based legal providers to provide TGNCNB community members with drop-in assistance around gender-affirming access to healthcare, insurance, employment issues, housing, name and gender marker changes, public benefits and more.

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Testimony from Ro Peña, Co-Founder of Trans Formative Schools
Supporting Increasing the Trans Equity Fund to \$10,000,000
and Prioritizing Trans-Led Organizations

New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Protections and Access for TGNCNB New Yorkers
February 28, 2025

Good afternoon, members of the committee on Women and Gender Equity. My name is Ro Peña, I'm a non-binary educator and Co-founder and director of programming at Trans formative Schools. Where every day we facilitate a free trans-centered afterschool program for youth who are seeking safety and community with other youth just like themselves. We are eager to continue to do this work as we move towards launching a middle school. However, we can't do it without a roof over our heads, and the necessary funding to support our educators, among so many other financial needs.

I am here today to address the allocation of funding for organizations that support our larger transgender community. Trans-led organizations are uniquely positioned to understand and address the specific needs and challenges faced by transgender individuals, who make up about 1.6% of the population in the United States. This figure is even more pronounced in vibrant places such as here in New York. This community is not only significant in number but is also growing, with an inspiring 5.1% of those under 29 identifying as transgender and/or nonbinary. These statistics highlight a powerful movement towards visibility and acceptance, reflecting a younger generation's courage to embrace their true selves.

And within that, comes the increasing challenge.

Trans organizations have a profound insight into the barriers that trans people encounter, from healthcare access to discrimination in employment and education. When we invest in trans organizations, we empower those who have lived trans experiences and are committed to fostering change for their larger community.

While many lesbian, gay and bisexual organizations may have valuable contributions, they often lack the same level of understanding and connection. By investing in us and directing funding toward trans-led initiatives, we ensure that the voices of trans individuals are heard and that their needs are prioritized, as we move towards dismantling the systemic barriers that have marginalized transgender individuals for far too long.

Sure, this is about financial support; but it is also about recognizing the importance of representation and inclusivity in the services provided by trans-led and trans-centered organizations.

We need the Trans Equity Fund to be increased to at least 10 million dollars. This is a critical opportunity for NYCC to take meaningful action and demonstrate a commitment to equity and inclusion for transgender, nonbinary, and gender expansive people.

Trans formative Schools passionately stand in solidarity with the trans community, believing wholeheartedly in the urgent need for trans liberation. It is not just a matter of support; it is a call to action. We advocate for the direct distribution of resources and funding to trans-led organizations. These organizations are lifelines, offering hope and empowerment in the face of adversity.

As the committee on Women and Gender Equity, we urge you all to consider the profound impact that funding trans-led organizations can have on our city. Together, we can create a more inclusive and equitable community where every individual can thrive. Thank you.



Nadia Swanson, LCSW
Director of Technical Assistance and Advocacy
nswanson@aliforneycenter.org
Pronouns: They/Them

2/28/25

Hearing Testimony

The Committee on Women and Gender Equity

Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City

The Ali Forney Center

307 w.38th st 2nd Flr
NY NY 10018

Attn: Chair Farah Louis

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Agency Background:

The Ali Forney Center was created in honor of Ali Forney (he/him), who also went by the name of Luscious (she/her), a Black Gender Non-Conforming young person who became homeless at age 13 after experiencing family rejection, entering the NYC foster care system, and running away at age 15 due to lack of supporting foster homes. In 1992, at age 17, Ali accessed youth drop-in centers and City adult shelter programs, but due to the lack of LGBTQ+-affirming services at the time, Ali and many other youth would choose the streets or the train instead of a shelter bed. At this time, youth shelter programs ended at age 19. Ali and his peers engaged in street economies and substance use in order to survive.

Ali also was an activist for his community and would do street outreach with a backpack of condoms to prevent HIV infections in the LGBTQ+ and sex worker communities, most of whom were Black transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNCNB) youth who were at extremely high risk of experiencing violence and being killed. Within a few months of each other, Ali's best friends, also Black Trans youth, Kiki Freeman and Dion Webster, were murdered. A few months later, in 1997, at age 22, Ali was murdered. In Ali's honor and as a response to the lack of LGBTQ+ safe shelter and specialized services for their unique needs, The Ali Forney Center was created in 2002 by people who worked directly with Ali.

Each year, Ali Forney Center (AFC) serves 2,200+ unhoused LGBTQ+ youth, ages 16 to 24, living in NYC. Founded in 2002, AFC is the largest provider of housing and wraparound services for

unhoused LGBTQ+ youth in New York City (NYC) and the world. We are NYC's first drop-in center for unhoused LGBTQ+ youth and, in 2015, became the first around-the-clock LGBTQ+ drop-in center in NYC and the country. AFC's mission is to protect unhoused LGBTQ+ youth from the harms of homelessness and to empower them with the tools needed to be independent. At our 24/7 Drop-In Center in Manhattan and 13 Emergency and Transitional Housing sites in Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens; including NYC's only TGNCNB specific transitional housing program. AFC achieves this mission by providing LGBTQ+ young people with housing and a continuum of supportive services to help them thrive. AFC is the model and one of the few providers of specialized housing for LGBTQ+ youth and customized support services to the priority population of disconnected, unhoused LGBTQ+ youth in NYC.

Trans Equity Funding:

Problem: Out of a NYC Budget of \$111,000,000,000, only \$3,225,000 goes to the Trans Equity Fund. 62% of the Trans Equity Fund currently goes to cis-led organizations.

History: Since the creation of the Trans Equity Initiative Fund more Trans led organizations have been created. Due to the way the initiative funding operates, it is nearly impossible for new groups to join the fund or for any funded groups' award to increase.

In order for Trans led programs to receive enough funding to sustain and grow their work. The Trans Equity Initiative Fund must increase to at least \$10M so that new Trans led and missioned organizations have an opportunity to access the critical funds this initiative was designed for by Cecilia Gentili. Without it we are left to work from a scarcity mindset that does not move our community forward collectively and is definitely not equitable. This is why AFC along with the members of our NYC Trans and Queer Political Advocacy Coalition call on the council to ensure that:

1. The Trans Equity Initiative Funding is increased to at least \$10M
2. Prioritize Trans led and serving organizations especially BIPOC Trans Led Orgs
3. Fund technical assistance support for Trans led and serving organizations to be able to apply for future funding and/or manage contract requirements

Trans Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Transitional Housing for 21-24 year olds

Unhoused TGNCNB BIPOC youth ages 21-24 often experience disproportionate amounts of and types of harassment and violence from society and the police. Also, because of a severe lack of access to resources and support, they are more likely to become targets of traffickers and/or have to engage in street economies to survive. The lack of adequate city resources and long housing waitlists for this age group in particular increase their risk of physical and sexual abuse. DYCD funds 60 beds for youth ages 21+ across all RHY agencies in NYC, but this provision does not meet the need across all Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs in New York City. Simply put, there are not enough beds for these youth to access.

AFC's Lenox Emergency Housing site, located in Harlem, supports youth ages 21+ for up to six months as they begin to stabilize, work on addressing trauma-response behaviors, and graduate to Transitional Housing. AFC receives funding from DYCD to cover 15 of the 20 beds available at this housing site but privately funds the other 5 to keep them operational.

Ninety percent of youth in this Emergency Housing Program are BIPOC and about half are TGNCNB and we currently have a 280-person waitlist. On average, youth ages 21+ wait three to six months to be placed in this program, relying on drop-in centers, survival sex, and other dangerous options in the interim. The intersection of LGBTQ+ and BIPOC with all other areas creates compounded barriers to accessing stable, secure, and safe housing. Our bilingual Housing Voucher Navigator works with youth and landlords as a liaison to minimize discrimination, and our Vocational and Educational programs connect our youth to employment opportunities, job and skill training, high-school equivalency class/exams, and higher education. By providing our young people with mentorship in a variety of sectors and free training for various industries, we are opening more doors to stability and confidence for our TGNCNB BIPOC young people.

We operate the only RHY transitional housing program for TGNCNB youth ages 16-20 in an 18 bed site. This program has been incredibly successful in providing specialized services led by Trans Directors and staff to ensure youth are able to graduate on to stability after the two year length of stay. This model is desperately needed for TGNCNB youth ages 21-24. Without it our youth cycle in and out of crisis shelters without being able to stabilize long enough to work on their personal, professional and educational goals that will lead them to independence.

Int 1203-2025

Requiring the chair of the commission on gender equity to develop a plan to support newly arrived migrants 24 years old and younger and transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and intersex newly arrived migrants.

The Mayors plan for asylum seekers released in March 2023 left 16-24 year olds completely out and took away critical access to DHS. Because RHY programs are severely underfunded we rely heavily on referring youth to Marsha's House while they wait an average of 6 months to be placed in our housing programs. At this moment we have about 212, 21-24 year olds and 45, 16-20 year olds on our waitlists.

Trans youth leave HERRCs because they don't feel safe and would rather stay in our 24/7 Drop In Center, even though they are not able to have a bed in these spaces due to the No Sleep Directive in January 2023.

I have spoken to Marsha's House directly and they expressed being open to it but are bound by the Mayors order, especially because they have open beds that go unutilized. I have advocated at many council hearings on the issue, spoke directly to the Mayor at his roundtable last summer, who set up a meeting for us with Commissioner Parks, who could not change anything and provided a canned answer that they asked the HERRC providers about it and they said their sites are safe, so that was that and when I reiterated that it is not true they passed me on to the Mayor's Office of Asylum Seeker Operations, who was empathetic and tried to help but was ultimately unsuccessful. All asylum seekers should have access to DHS restored but especially Trans and Queer youth should have access to the services the city created for them.

We are in full support of Int-1203 and advocate for an exception to be made immediately for LGBTQ+ asylum seeking youth to be able to access Marsha's House DHS shelter.

Int 1200-2025

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to a public information and outreach campaign regarding legal rights and resources available to TGNCNB individuals

AFC is in support of Int-1200. It is important and necessary to ensure that information is provided in a variety of formats including social media including Tik Tok and paying TGNCNB influencers to deliver the messages , websites often frequented TGNCNB individuals, advertisements in businesses often frequented by TGNCNB NY's, MTA and LinkNYC ads.

Additionally it will be necessary to create specialized messages for a variety of intersectional identities. For example: minors, foster care, RHY, immigrants, disabled, BIPOC, incarcerated etc.

Int 1201-2025

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to access to gender-affirming care facilities and a cause of action related to interference with gender-affirming care.

AFC is in support of Int 1201. While this has not been an issue in NYC so far with the current climate of emboldened transphobia it is important that the TGNCNB community is able to take legal action if interference does occur. We want to encourage the council to be mindful of advertising this in the press as we do not want to put the idea in peoples heads that they now can harass TGNCNB individuals and medical providers from the legal distance of 15 ft away.

Int 1204-2025 and Res 0774-2025

A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring the commissioner of health and mental hygiene to develop a health agenda to promote the health and wellbeing of transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and intersex New Yorkers

Resolution calling on the New York State Department of Health to implement regulations requiring hospitals in New York City to adhere to the World Professional Association for Transgender Health's Standards of Care 8, to ensure medical professionals can provide high-quality and ethical treatment for individuals with gender dysphoria.

With gender affirming care under attack, especially for those 19 and under, it is critical that NYC steps up to ensure TGNCNB individuals can access the necessary healthcare safely and quickly. As outlined in the LGBTQIA+ Caucus's Pride and Policy Plan the city must baseline at least \$15 million annually in funding for nonprofits that provide transspecific, affirming, and competent services. This should also include funding for services that insurance and existing non-profit providers may not currently cover, such as cryogenic storage for semen or eggs for TGNCNB folks who may be interested in having a biological child after they transition. It should also cover LGBTQIA+ community outreach workers to engage with TGNCNB people in navigating affirming care, surgery, aftercare, insurance problems.

Additionally funding must be expanded to create more gender affirming clinics, while we have legal access to affirming care in NYC , TGNCNB NY's have to deal with very long lists to access the limited number of providers trained in gender affirming care. We need more clinics as well as ensure that medical students are getting the necessary training to provide gender affirming care regardless of their speciality. TGNCNB and LGB people will often not seek medical care for their other medical needs due to a lack of competent physicians.

For RHY we know that those with higher medical needs have the harder time exiting homelessness and maintaining stability. Our FQHC that we operate in partnership with The Institute for Family Health is reliant on federal funding and is in danger of being cut off. Our medical clinic is one of our most utilized services and youth will come to our clinic even after becoming stably housed until they turn 25 because it is often impossible to find quick and safe primary, obgyn and gender affirming care in NYC.

We know the life saving impact gender affirming care can have. It is our duty to keep TGNCNB people safe and healthy. Medical professionals must adhere to WPATH's Standards of Care which are backed by research, professional and personal experience. These Standards of Care must be a requirement for all providers to ensure safe and ethical care.

The Ali Forney Center also supports the following Resolutions.

Res 0771-2025

Resolution calling upon the New York State Governor to sign S.929/A.2141, which, having been passed by both the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly, would The New York City Council extend protections over personal health information.

Res 0781-2025

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to introduce and pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to prohibit out-of-state access to the New York State Prescription Monitoring Program's data for certain medications including abortion medications, hormone therapy, and puberty blockers.

T2025-3214

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.1633/A.2613, which would provide additional protections for the sensitive health information of patients, including information related to abortion or gender affirming care, and require all health information networks, electronic health record systems, and health care providers to provide patients with a right to restrict the disclosures of such patient's health information Preconsidered

City Council Hearing Testimony

Hello,

I am a New Yorker who is deeply concerned about the gender expansive people in our community. The rapidly growing violent anti-trans language and legislation from the president and others in power is extremely distressing. In both my professional and volunteer capacity, I provide direct mental health support the LGBTQ+ community. My colleagues and I have seen the fear and real impacts of the recent Executive Orders on our trans and gender expansive clients. I implore city council to take every possible measure to bolster our legal and systemic protections for gender expansive individuals.

Thank you for your time,

Abby Callaghan

Hello, Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee, my name is Allyssa Lamb and my pronouns are she/her. I live in District 38. I have a trans son who is a junior in high school. I came here today because I am terrified for his future and for the future of all LGBTQ+ youth, who are right now in danger of having their human rights taken away.

I want to express my support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

Since he transitioned at age 11, my son has become a happy, thriving human being. He plays in his school jazz band, goes out for falafel with his friends, loves cats and cat videos. He wants to be a musician when he grows up. He would not have had such a smooth and easy transition if not for the laws and protections that exist in New York City. Because of the way the NYC DOE and his teachers made it no big deal to change his name and pronouns, the way he had access to the medical care he needed with no judgement, and the way the city made it easy to change his legal documents without a hitch, he was able to become the person he always knew he was.

I urge the City Council to vote yes on all of these resolutions and bills. Bill **T2025-3093** sponsored by Councilmember Shanif resonates with my family as being particularly urgent, because I witnessed what happened just last month when hospitals and clinics in New York stopped providing health care to transgender youth, even for a brief period. Families were thrown into despair and kids had to be told that the care they need in order to be happy and healthy was not going to be provided for them. It is catastrophic for a transgender person to lose their gender-affirming care, and it would be devastating for my son. We're just waiting for the day when our clinic calls to tell us that he can no longer receive care there, because of the executive order. We have strongly considered leaving the country if that happens.

New York City has always felt like a special, safe place, but given the lengths the federal government is going to, to pressure New York to abandon its values, it feels like our bubble now has many cracks in it. I

don't feel that same sense of safety at all. (I do my best to shield him from the news, but his daily life has already begun to be impacted by anti-trans laws. The next time he renews his passport, the government will send him one with his name and gender reverted back to what they were five years ago. Although he continues to receive most of his gender-affirming care, the hospital that treats him already canceled one of his medical appointments, because of the "political climate" (their words, back in December). We are looking at colleges this year, but he can't safely go to college in over half the states in the country because of the anti-trans laws in place in those states. We're feeling pretty trapped, and we know that more laws like this, including laws affecting trans adults, are coming down the pike.)

When I read the description of these bills and resolutions that you have brought before us, I was reminded again of the reason I have lived in New York city for 27 years and chosen to raise a family here. New Yorkers welcome new people in, they value tolerance, and they don't run away from a fight. (I'm from Minnesota, and we fight differently there, but I think I've been here long enough to call myself a New Yorker). I'm so moved to see that our elected officials are willing to stand up for trans people. Thank you all for your time.

2/24/25

Written Testimony for Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City in the Committee for Women's and Gender Equity Hearing on 2/28/25

Hello to whom it may concern,

My name is Anna Goodhand, MHC-LP, and I have been a mental health counselor and psychotherapist for the past three years at several private practices in NYC since 2022 working with more than several dozen plus individuals and couples. Many of the people I worked with were young adults and adults who identified as Trans and/or Non-binary. I have personally seen the mental health struggles and issues that a dozen or so TGNCNB individuals have dealt with during the time of their lives before they began any kind of gender affirming journey or physical gender affirming treatment. I have also supported these clients through processing their experience of receiving gender affirming support and clarity about their transness or gender. I have also supported my clients along the process of receiving gender affirming medical treatment (HRT or gender-affirming surgery if they wished to pursue it. From these experiences of often being the first person to provide them trans-affirming and gender-affirming care from a professional, I witnessed that without fail, the receiving of affirming physical treatment and/or therapeutic support caused every TGNCNB client of mine to improve in their mental health issues with less symptoms over time.

During our treatment together, I worked with them to identify what mental health issues they were experiencing, what concerns or dysphoria they experienced around their gender/physical presentation and characteristics of gender. I worked with almost all of them to identify what they needed to improve their anxiety, depression, intrapersonal, interpersonal struggles. And often, exploring gender and seeking gender-affirming practices were a part of what they came up with based on their feelings and struggles. In many clients, depression and anxiety assessments taken periodically, showed drastic decreases in symptoms of anxiety and depression as they continued getting gender-affirming support from me alone or with added gender-affirming physical treatment especially. Every client after receiving gender-affirming treatment with me or with the addition of HRT or gender-affirming surgery, almost always described feeling the following: more secure in their gender, their self-esteem, often lower social anxiety, more safe and stable in their identity as a person, better at advocating for themselves, more able to protect themselves, and more emotionally resilient and confident in their ability to deal with what comes next. Every person in the trans and non-binary community I worked with and provided gender affirming therapy for experienced one or more of these improvements after 6 months or more time into treatment. I saw many of them go from meeting the criteria for PTSD, depression, social anxiety, generalized anxiety disorder, etc. to no longer meeting any criteria at all and occasionally being okay with no longer needing psychiatric medication for anxiety nor depression. These are not assumptions or inferences I've made but explicit comments, disclosures or concrete changes I experienced in over a dozen or so clients of mine that I was privileged to be a part of with them. The gender-affirming support and Trans-affirming knowledge and cultural competency I provided for them cannot be underestimated in

how much it benefitted them. I saw so many of them go from questioning, uncertainty, self-hatred, anxiety to certainty, confidence, lessened anxiety, healthier relationships, and more self-advocacy in practice. I never gave them unsolicited advice or coaching in one direction or the other, that was just from unconditional empathetic support and good psychotherapy that is knowledgeable of Trans-gender experience and trans-affirming.

Therapeutic and emotional supports for Trans or gender questioning or non-binary or non-conforming people should be a guarantee and a right for every trans person, especially given how dangerous and challenging it is to be a Trans or gender non-conforming person in this world and country right now. With the amount of Trans people deciding to end their life and the level of murders and hate crimes against Trans people, especially Black and Latine/Hispanic individuals rising, **access to gender-affirming care and supports are about survival and resistance** to the people trying to kill them or push them into the closet.

This support also unfortunately needs to cover safety and survival skills as well for these individuals to be supported and safe. This is the only way we can give holistic gender-affirming care and support. Mental health care, coaching, peer mentoring, community supports and groups along with HRT and gender affirming procedures and surgeries need to go hand in hand for holistically supportive Trans-affirming care that both defends and upholds their rights as people. We have to do better and we have the resources to better. And the training of therapists and mental health professionals and all medical professionals has to do better with being Trans and non-binary competent and affirming so more providers can actually do the work.

But providing access to care and supports means bridging the gap between mental health private practices and clinics and community health centers, because the waitlists and the insurance gatekeeping is preventing low-income and especially BIPOC Trans people from accessing competent and affirming mental health support. Usually for sliding scale and low-income individuals or those trying to use low-income health insurance, what private practices and/or clinics often offer is whatever therapist is available or entry level therapists with little or no experience. I've heard from many Trans and Non-binary clients about negative, ignorant, unsupportive previous therapists in New York and the city who were not gender-affirming or Trans competent at all. So there is a lot of work to be done, but I know firsthand that it is vital and hugely protective to invest in for Trans individuals.

Thank you,
Anna (Arianna) Goodhand, MHC-LP



Honorable Members of the New York City Council,

My name is Anne Lagamayo, and I reside in Sunnyside, Queens, New York City. I am writing not only as a concerned citizen but also as an advocate for the dignity and rights of all people in our community, especially those often marginalized.

Today, I am writing to you to speak in favor of the proposed bill requiring the city to administer a public education program about the legal rights and resources available to transgender, gender non-conforming, and nonbinary (TGNCNB) individuals. This bill is not just a measure of legal necessity; it is a beacon of hope for those who often face discrimination and misunderstanding in their daily lives.

The importance of this bill cannot be overstated. By updating our local laws to protect access to gender-affirming care and expanding the right of action for interference with such care, we send a powerful message that New York City stands as a guardian of rights and freedoms for everyone. It ensures that TGNCNB individuals are informed of their protections against hate crimes, discrimination, and harassment. Moreover, it provides crucial support by linking these individuals with community organizations that can offer guidance and support.

In recent months and weeks, we have witnessed a distressing rise in anti-trans rhetoric and actions that aim to erode the rights and dignities of TGNCNB people. This bill acts as a necessary countermeasure by not only protecting but also actively supporting our TGNCNB community through education and legal protection.

To the esteemed members of this council, I ask that you vote in favor of this bill. In doing so, you affirm that our city is a place of inclusivity and respect, a place where every individual can thrive without fear. This is about more than just policy; it's about the values we cherish as a community and the future we envision for our city.

Let us choose a path of understanding and support. Let us choose to protect and embrace the diversity that makes New York City great. Thank you for considering my testimony, and I urge you to act swiftly in favor of this crucial legislation.

Testimony of Brendan Cheney and Becky Eisenberg

Committee on Women and Gender Equity

March 1, 2025

Our names are Brendan Cheney and Becky Eisenberg and we use he / him and she / her pronouns, respectively. We live in Councilmember Yusef Salaam's district.

Thank you to Chair Louis, bill sponsors Tiffany Caban, Shahana Hanif, Chi Ossé, Erik Bottcher, Crystal Hudson, Lynn Schulman, and the members of this committee for their work and support of trans, non-binary, gender non-conforming and intersex NYers.

We are writing to support the proposed bills/resolutions discussed at this hearing – specifically Intros. 1200, 1201, 1203, 1204, Resos. 0771, 0774, 0781, and preconsidered Reso. 3214. These bills help protect transgender youth and adults and tell the federal government and the world that we will support all people and help them live their lives as who they truly are.

We also ask the Council to increase the budget of the Trans Equity Fund to at least \$10 million. As funding for trans healthcare comes under attack at the federal level, the city should be prepared to increase resources to ensure trans youth and adults have support and access to supports and the life-saving care they need.

We also ask the Council to work with the administration to create more transitional housing for trans youth age 21-24, as described by the Ali Forney Center.

Also, we ask the council to increase the budget for Project DOT, the Sexual Assault Initiative, and Outsmart New York City program to expand support for LGBTQ+ communities and sexual violence prevention.

And finally, we ask the Council to increase funding for The NYC Commission on Human Rights, which faces significant delays in processing discrimination cases, with one trans discrimination case pending since 2020 according to testimony.

This is a pivotal moment in our City and our Country to show that we care about all people, especially transgender youth and adults. We must stand up to the bigotry, hatred and ignorance coming from the federal government. The legislation and resolutions discussed at this hearing, and the other recommendations in our testimony, go a long way to showing our support and fighting back against hate. Thank you for your efforts and your support.

Hello. Chairperson Louis, members of the committee, my name is Brian Batka. I live in District 45. I want to express my support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

As an Eagle Scout, I've been part of the Outdoor Service Guides (formally the Baden Power Service Association), a gender inclusive scouting organization, in multiple leadership roles since 2018. I am also a proud father of a transgender son who has known who he was since he was 5 years old. Not because my wife and I had pushed a liberal woke agenda, but because we create a space for him to exist. And when he was ready and had the words to describe his inner most truth, I feel grateful that he trusted us enough to tell us.

I've seen him grown into a fine young person as he navigates complex social dynamics in middle school. All while showing himself to be a true friend. A solid person who can be counted on. We all want the same things for our kids. To allow them to thrive in a world that too often tried to beat the heart out of them. Speaking from person experience, I can tell you it took me decades to work through the toxic messaging I received, often from my own family and friends.

When our son came out and we informed his elementary school. His teacher undermined what we were trying to do and sowed confusion in the classroom. There was nothing wrong with him, but she somehow couldn't wrap her mind around this new fact, questioned his gender identity while at school, without us present. She was more concerned about upsetting parents than making sure our child felt safe and welcome.

In his second elementary school, the new principal actively dismantled the GSA Rainbow Club. She had no desire to grow outside her knowledge. Despite making suggestions about the gendered communication coming from the school, a low hanging fruit, she dragged her feet and didn't make some pretty easy changes to how the school communicates with parents. It's called "find and replace" in Word. Very simple.

In Middle School it became apparent that despite our desire to stay in our neighborhood, zoned school, because we believe in the public school system, despite bringing up some basic suggestions the school could be doing such as putting up signage for the GSA club, among other things, it became obvious that this middle school had the same mentality as his original elementary school. Some principals have no desire to grow and learn and become more than who they currently are. And

this was all before we found out that our son had been getting bullied for wearing a rainbow. Are we really stuck in the 1990's?

When we allow trans students to flourish, they become our teachers. They show us that there can be a better more compassionate world.

We need to strengthen transgender protections in this city. This is a special place, where people from all walks of life come to make something of themselves and to give back to their community. Trans people have been fighting for our rights and theirs since Stonewall and beyond. This city needs to remain a beacon of possibility not a limit of who we allow ourselves to be.

This is our moment to stand as a united city and say to the rest of the country – this is who we are and this is who NYC will always be. Mind your own business.

Briana Fitzpatrick
Committee on Women and Gender Equity
February 28, 2025

My name is Briana Fitzpatrick and I am a concerned citizen and social worker in New York City. I am testifying today to urge the city council to support bills that protect TGNCNBI New Yorkers and those who seek refuge in our state. The federal government is making it incredibly hostile for TGNCNBI individuals to get the care they rightfully deserve. Refusing to provide necessary medical care is in direct violation of the oaths doctors and nurses are required to uphold. TGNCNBI folks already have higher rates of mental health issues and physical health issues due to lack of inclusive providers. Allowing hospitals in New York to deny them access to life saving care that has been proven to lessen both of those rates says that our state doesn't care about them. In the face of discrimination and violence, we as New Yorkers must fight back and reaffirm our support for protecting all people who come to our state.

Furthermore, I urge the City Council to pass a bill that funds education opportunities TGNCNBI New Yorkers and their loved ones need to understand what rights they have and report when they are being violated.

New York has long been a safe place for individuals and communities to flourish and it would be a huge disservice to our history and the symbol we are around the world to stray from that and allow the federal government to intimidate us.

I felt compelled to testify today because people I love and my clients are being negatively impacted by this federal administration and I refuse to stand by and watch it happen. I love being a New Yorker and I want to be able to stand with pride and say that NYC is an accepting and affirming safe haven for those seeking to escape persecution, just as we have always been.

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. I hope you make the right decisions.

Best,
Briana Fitzpatrick

Testimony for Feb 28, 2024 Hearing

Hello Councilperson Tiffany Cabán and members of the Committee. My name is Danica S, and my pronouns are they/them. I am a registered voter who lives in NYC and who has two trans-masculine siblings who depend on knowledge of trans care to stay alive.

I'm part of several queer-focused organizations whose programming often focuses on sharing knowledge on our rights and resources. For many, this is the only entrypoint they have to this reliable and professional information. However, these events only reach a niche audience, either due to availability, limitations in reach, or safety against enemies infiltrating the resources. What this means is that often, the most vulnerable of us—the young, the homebound, those without social media—cannot access.

To make this local law an assurance from the city, supported by and provided by mandated professionals, corrects this. It increases availability.

Education is a tool of resistance. It is a basic right to knowledge. It is a basic tool to resist unlawful holding. It ensures a world in which those laws and rights must be upheld.

And most importantly, it allows queer people to see what their options are, which allows them to have faith that there is a path forward. It is a basic right to dignity and life.

Please ensure that this Introduction *and* the rest of the resolutions pass.

=====

Re: Int 1200-2025 *A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to a public information and outreach campaign regarding legal rights and resources available to TGNCNBI individuals*

March 3, 2023

Daniel W. Drew



Brooklyn, NY 11201

Farah N. Louis

District 45

Council Member

Legislative Office

250 Broadway, Suite 1810

New York, NY 10007

RE: Written Testimony in Support of Increasing the Trans Equity Fund

My name is Daniel Drew. My pronouns are he and him, and I live in Councilmember Lincoln Restler's District.

First, thank you to Chair Louis and the Committee for this opportunity to share my testimony in favor of the current bills and resolutions in support of

- ensuring New Yorkers maintain access to gender affirming care and
- know their legal rights and the resources available to them, among others.

In order to provide the necessary resources to achieve these goals, I believe the budget for the Trans Equity Fund needs to be increased from its current allocation to 10M.

I also ask you to consider budget increases for Project DOT, the Sexual Assault Initiative, and Outsmart New York City program to expand support for LGBTQ+ communities and sexual violence prevention.

Sincerely,

Daniel W. Drew

February 28, 2025

Testimonial in Support of Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

Dear Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee,

My name is Debbie Farrell, and my pronouns are she/her. I live in District 15, in the Park Slope neighborhood. With over 30 years of experience in nonprofit leadership roles, I have dedicated my life to advocating for vulnerable individuals. Today, I write to you as a passionate advocate for public education and as a professional with decades of experience serving homeless populations.

I am writing to express my **urgent support** for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183. These bills and resolution are **crucial** to ensure the health, safety, and vitality of New York citizens. Without them, more people will end up living on the streets or losing their lives.

Transgender individuals face unique challenges in securing stable housing. They experience higher rates of homelessness compared to their cisgender peers, and this number is skyrocketing due to increasing transphobia in the United States. The number of adult transgender individuals experiencing homelessness increased by 88 percent from 2016 to 2020, with unsheltered homelessness increasing by 113 percent. Can you imagine what the numbers look like now?

I **implore** the City Council to pass this resolution and these bills, and to form a special committee on Transgender Safety and Supports to explore additional guidelines, policies, and laws to protect and support transgender people.

Transgender individuals have been invaluable in ensuring that those who come to NYC to escape bigotry and hatred find a city of love ready to welcome their talent and contributions.

Transgender individuals can begin to experience mental health issues at a young age if they lack support from family and community. Research indicates that transgender youth often face significant mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, as early as adolescence. Creating a

supportive and affirming environment in NYC schools is crucial for their mental well-being.

I urge the City Council to take a stand **immediately** to demonstrate that our city is a safe and welcoming place for transgender individuals. Let our policies and guidelines in schools help protect the mental health of trans kids. Let us nurture and celebrate the talents of individuals who can bring NYC pride.

Thank you.

Debbie Farrell
Brooklyn, NY 11215



Dear Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee,

I am writing to you as a parent of a child who is good friends with a wonderful transgender girl. Our family has seen firsthand the importance of supporting transgender kids, and we feel compelled to share our perspective.

Our child's friend is an incredible person who brings joy and positivity into our lives. However, we have also witnessed the challenges she faces simply because she is transgender. These challenges are not just about acceptance but also about safety, mental health, and the ability to thrive in a supportive environment.

We strongly support Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183. These measures are essential to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all New Yorkers, especially those who are most vulnerable. Transgender individuals, particularly youth, face higher rates of homelessness and mental health issues due to a lack of support and increasing transphobia.

We urge the City Council to pass this resolution and these bills and to explore additional guidelines, policies, and laws to protect and support transgender people, ensuring that our city remains a place of love and acceptance.

Our child's friend, like many other transgender individuals, has so much to offer. By supporting these measures, we can help create a city where all children, regardless of their gender identity, can grow up feeling safe, valued, and celebrated for who they are.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Debbie Hsieh

February 24, 2025

Dear New York City Council,

I am so distressed that my beloved trans family member was turned away from gender affirming child care at Langone NYU on January 29, 2025. I fear that blocking such care could lead to dire consequences and mental distress for this person, even suicide, as it has for many in prior years. I beseech you to do all you can to protect trans children and adults (whether in school, in the military, or in prison) from the mean spirited, biased, uninformed Executives Orders of this administration. Please save my relative's mental health.

Sincerely,



Rabbi Deborah Prinz



NYC, NY 10021

I'm Dolores Weber and I use her pronouns and am in District 32 represented by Council member Joann Ariola.

I am writing to show my support for the proposed bills and resolutions discussed during the Committee on Women and Gender Equity's hearing held on February 28, 2025. As a Family Nurse Practitioner and Nursing Professor, I believe that gender affirming care is vital and access to it needs to be protected in NYC.

Please support the increased budget for the Trans Equity Fund to 10 million in order to support the organizations providing direct services to our city's trans population, which is only growing as those being denied care in other states come to NYC, a place that has always been a beacon of hope for those seeking a better life.

Also, I ask that you prioritize improving the conditions of incarcerated trans NYers and pass Intro 625-2024 to improve housing policies in city jails. Incarcerated trans women are targeted and at risk of physical and sexual violence when they are forced into male housing.

Thank you to Chair Louis and the Women and Gender Equity Committee.

Respectfully
Dolores Weber
She/her



Elijah R. Castle

Regarding the Committee on Women and Gender Equity Meeting

February 28, 2025

My name is Elijah Castle, and I am a resident of Long Island, and I work at Hunter College. I am writing this to testify to the importance of the bills being proposed at this meeting. I have both personal and professional investment and interest in these bills being passed, and here I aim to explain why.

When I moved to New York City in 2019, it was to work at Callen-Lorde, a community health center in Chelsea. I got a job as a medical case manager in the adolescent health program, Health Outreach to Teens – or, HOTT for short. We served patients ages 13-24, and I had a caseload of dozens of mainly transgender youth and young adults. While there, I helped patients learn more about the healthcare available to them and assisted with navigating the healthcare system. I helped patients get access to shelters when they needed a place to stay. I ran one of the few support groups in the city for transmasculine youth and young adults, where patients could offer support to each other and form social connections that would go beyond the hour or so a week we'd meet. I ran workshops and one-on-one patient education sessions to give patients the information they needed to make decisions about their own healthcare.

I then moved on to work at NYU Langone as a research associate in their gender-affirming surgery program. I helped coordinate studies about surgical outcomes and patient experiences, so we could learn more about how patients were doing and what they needed. I continued to help provide education to patients about their desired interventions, and what they would need to successfully recover from surgery, both in the short- and long-term. Now, I work at Hunter College, where I primarily help with projects about the experiences of patients accessing HIV care and gender-affirming care.

I am also trans myself. I have only ever accessed gender-affirming medical care in New York City. I started transitioning right before the first time Trump took office. New York City has been a haven for trans people - so many of my friends and loved ones have come from all over the country in order to access the high-quality healthcare we have here, and to seek the social support that exists here, unlike anywhere else. I am planning on moving back to New York City this year because it is a safe haven for people like me. I am grateful for the general ease with which I was able to access the care I wanted and needed, and I am invested in ensuring current and future generations of trans people continue to have the support and access they need to healthcare and all other social services they need to thrive.

Regarding Bill T2025-3179, I am fully in support and believe it is imperative that New Yorkers, trans or not, must be educated about the legal rights and resources available to protect trans New

Yorkers. New York City has wonderful protections, yet they are of little help if people do not know about them.

I believe Bill T2025-3093 is also vitally important. Due to the sociopolitical climate, I anticipate an uptick in anti-trans protests and other activities which may cause trans people to feel unsafe when going in-person to clinics for their healthcare. I hope that Bill T2025-3093 would help ensure continued access to healthcare facilities.

Regarding Bill T2025-3184 – many of the patients I worked with while a case manager at Callen-Lorde were migrants who came here to seek healthcare services and social support. This was a hard job; there were so few resources, and I often felt like I couldn't do much. I am heartened to see a bill which aims to address these gaps.

While the healthcare for trans people in New York City is high quality, relative to other cities and places where gender-affirming healthcare is offered, it is not perfect. It can be hard to find competent doctors, even among those who advertise themselves as trans friendly. It is often the case that the best care exists in silos, which means the providers in these silos are overworked and overwhelmed, leading to provider burnout and poorer quality care. This is even more so the case for intersex people. This is just skimming the surface of health disparities for trans and intersex New Yorkers, but I believe that Bill T2025-3183 would do a lot of good in improving the state of healthcare for trans people here in New York City. And, I believe that what is good for trans people is good for everyone - higher quality gender-affirming healthcare means that higher quality care is also available for cisgender individuals seeking similar care, and less burden for healthcare workers.

Bill T2025-3196 would ensure that gender-affirming care would be standardized throughout hospital systems in New York City. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health's (WPATH) Standards of Care (SOC) are evidence-based, scientifically robust guidelines for trans care providers. This bill would protect the ability of trans individuals to access the care they need, and limit confusion between hospital systems. The hospital systems in New York City who provide gender-affirming care often have different ways of getting patients this care, which can be challenging and frustrating for patients who are seeing different providers at various hospitals in the city. Following the WPATH SOC would mean that everyone, healthcare providers and patients alike, would have one central document to reference for how to go about accessing care. This would greatly improve the trans healthcare landscape here in the city.

Lastly, Bill T2025-3114 is vital for the privacy and protection of New Yorkers and others who may come here to access care they need that they cannot access in other states. With increasing restrictions on the autonomy of trans people and women to access gender-affirming care and

reproductive care, New York City should do all it can to protect people who access healthcare here, including not putting them at danger once they leave.

I am in full support of the bills proposed at this committee meeting today, and I am proud to have lived and work in a city that cares so much about protecting those who are most vulnerable. Especially in today's sociopolitical climate, where it feels like the entire country is against us, having these pockets, like New York City, where we can feel safe and where we can get the care we need and respect we deserve, is essential. It will set an important precedent for other cities to protect their own citizens as well. Once these bills are hopefully passed, I hope that the city will collaborate with trans individuals and the places that serve us throughout their implementation. To take a slogan from the disability rights movement: Nothing about us, without us.

In a world that increasingly wants us to disappear, I hope that those who hold the decision-making power will work to change this trend.

Thank you for your time in reading my testimony. Your consideration of these matters is very much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Elijah Castle

I am writing as a Bronx resident with transgender family members and transgender/non-binary/gender non-confirming friends and community. The federal executive orders have tried to redefine the identities and experiences of our trans, nonbinary, and intersex loved ones. I ask the City Council to do everything in its power to protect access to supports for trans, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming people across the city, and to stand up to Trump's hateful executive orders.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Wilson

[REDACTED]

Bronx, NY 10463

[REDACTED]

Hello, Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee, my name is Emily Raboteau and my pronouns are she/her. I'm a CUNY professor and I live in District 11 in the Bronx. I am the proud parent of a transgender son who attends public middle school and is the bravest person I know. I want to express my support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

Trans, nonbinary, gender non-conforming, and intersex people face many obstacles that cisgender people do not. For example, although we have a court order for a name and gender marker change, my child cannot legally have his gender reflected in his passport, nor on his social security card. Discrepancies in identification documents may make it difficult for him when he's older to apply for FAFSA, apply for a job, or get an apartment. Although there is one gender-neutral bathroom at his school, it is locked for "security" reasons, and he could only access it by getting a key from the school's main office, which would out him. Meaning, he is forced to choose between using a bathroom that makes him feel unsafe or not using the bathroom at all. Often, he refuses to drink water during the day so that he doesn't have to use the school bathroom, and winds up dehydrated. It took several weeks at the start of middle school for someone to correct the name in his email address, meaning he could not access the digital curriculum. I was told at the time that there were only two employees working in the DOE's LGBTQ+ support office, which is supposed to serve the largest public school system in the nation. Worst of all, my son's gender affirming care was recently revoked at NYU Langone hospital, one of the first hospitals in the nation to pre-obey Trump's EO, something we never thought would happen in New York City. Many families with trans kids have moved to New York from other states where their kids were unsafe, but now feel unsafe here, too. My husband and I are terrified of being criminalized for seeking gender affirming care for our child and have spent sleepless nights wondering if we need to leave the country to keep our son safe and free in his body.

I would like the Council to take action by voting yes on the proposed bills that protect personal health data, protect access to facilities offering gender affirming healthcare and reproductive care, ensure a public health education program that makes all New Yorkers aware of their rights and aware of the healthcare, legal advocacy, and other social support services they are entitled to by law, and reduce disparities in healthcare affecting TGNCNBI New Yorkers. It is urgent that we protect trans kids, in particular, who are most vulnerable. I also urge you to take action on increasing LGBTQ+ support staff within the city's DOE.

I want to be part of a city that continues to protect and stand up for trans people, championing bodily autonomy, freedom and equality.

I'm Erin Drew, I use she/her pronouns, and am a trans ally. I live in District 33. As a healthcare provider, I view access to care as integral to a person's well being both individually and as a member of their local community.

I write to show my support for the proposed bills and resolutions shared by the Women and Gender Equity Committee as a way to combat the barriers being introduced to limit NYers access to gender affirming care, and to ensure the protection of private health information. I also support the increased budget for the Trans Equity Fund.

I was unable to attend Friday's hearing due to work commitments, so I appreciate the Committee considering my written testimony as they move forward with their work on these matters.

With care,

Erin Drew
she/her



- Hello, my name is Dr. George Danias, and I'm a resident physician in psychiatry working in the New York City public hospital system. I'm also a proud member and delegate for CIR.
- Thank you to the Committee of Women and Gender Equity and Council Member Jewel R. Poyner.
- I'm here testifying in support of the resolutions meant to protect gender-affirming care for New York's patients.
- I came to this city for my residency for many reasons, but one of them was because New York is known as a beacon of gender-affirming care, and I wanted to work somewhere that made this essential care available to my patients.
- So when Trump was elected, and a close friend, who is trans, told me that he was considering leaving the country, I told him that we were in New York. I thought we should be fine here—this city is a haven for queer and trans people.
- But NYU's recent decision to halt gender-affirming care for youth defied what I thought I knew about my city. Right now, it feels like my friend was right.
- So it is very personal to me when I implore the City Council to pass these resolutions protecting gender-affirming care and helping to ensure that New York can continue to be the city we thought it was.
- Study after study show that gender-affirming care not only improves the well-being of trans youth, but saves lives. We know that trans youth who are able to receive this treatment have decreased depression, anxiety, and lower odds of suicidality. This is a core part of the standard of care.

PAUSE

- I just came out of a stint of working in an in-patient psychiatric unit, where a lot of my patients were trans.
- When I'm with my patients, I'm providing the best care possible, but aspects of my work almost feel disingenuous when I know they might not continue to have access to the treatments they rely on.
- What I want as a physician is to be part of a system that can help my patients in all the ways they need. We're already working inside of a profit-driven medical system in the U.S. The last thing that healthcare workers want or that patients need is to navigate yet another barrier to effective, holistic care.
- Still, I am grateful to be part of a union, where I can organize with my coworkers to defend patient care and stand up against the attacks on our communities. So on behalf of myself and CIR, I again ask this City Council to pass these crucial resolutions. Thank you.

To the esteemed members of the New York City Council, I write to entreat you to bolster and enhance all protections afforded to transgender New Yorkers. In this category I include all New Yorkers - this includes immigrants, children, people living with disabilities. As a transgender psychologist I know from both the provider and the patient side: access to healthcare for transgender people is an essential right. From my mental health training I have encountered countless patients whose health has been helped immensely by gender affirming care. Trans healthcare is protective against preventable mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and suicide. Again, those who are helped by these lifesaving interventions include immigrants, children, and people living with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention.

Jason Holloway PsyD
Psychologist in private practice

Dear NYC City Council Members,

I am a concerned New Yorker, writing to express my support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

As our new federal administration rolls back hard-earned protections for minorities and vulnerable communities, it's more important than ever for local and state governments to step up and protect the rights and dignity of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable among us.

I am a cisgender male and an ally of the transgender community. One of my son's schoolmates is transgender, and I've seen their family's fear and stress levels grow as politicians have shamefully and unfairly villainized transgender people. This must stop.

All humans deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. Please do the right thing and pass these crucial measures to ensure that this happens.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Mack

Date: March 3, 2025

I'm John Weber and I live in District 32. I appreciate the Committee on Women and Gender Equity addressing the needs of trans NYers at this time, and I write to share my support of the proposed bills and resolution that were the subject of yesterday's hearing. I ask the Committee to support the increase in funding for the Trans Equity Fund, as well at the NYC Commission on Human Rights. Thank you to the Committee Chair Louis and other members for your attention to these important issues.

Thank you

John Weber

Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee,

My name is Joy Madison and I'm the parent of a trans child.

I live in Flatbush and my child attends public school. Despite living in NYC and the DOE's policies on gender inclusion, the reality is that many families in our community struggle to find safe and supportive school environments.

My child is in 6th grade and we have transferred schools twice to find more inclusive environments. He currently commutes an hour to school because there are no schools closer that could provide even a modicum of support. He also commutes from South Brooklyn to an afterschool program in Manhattan that provides a safe haven for trans kids.

In February, the gender clinic where we have been receiving care for the last 1.5 years couldn't tell us whether they could provide the care we need when we need it. We do not know if we'll be able to receive puberty blockers at the hospital where we've built relationships for the last 1.5 years. We also don't know whether we'll be able to receive that care elsewhere in NY.

Today, I am writing to express my support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

I am calling on the committee to increase the budget to 10 million and to allocate those funds to trans-led organization which know best how to protect our kids.

I am also calling on the Committee to work with the DOE to increase protections in schools. My family has spent countless hours trying to raise awareness and sound the alarm about District 2 Resolution 248 and the CEC's attempt to restrict trans kids from playing school sports.

I would like to live in a city where TGNCNBI kids feel safe to attend their neighborhood school.

Thank you for standing up for trans kids.

Hello chair person Louis and members of the committee,

My name is Joyati and my pronouns are she/her. I lived in the North Bronx for many years. I am here because I am the mother of a young trans woman who grew up and went to school in NYC. I am here to express my support for the resolution and bills before the committee today because they will provide desperately needed protection and support to the trans community in New York especially for trans young people.

My daughter came out to me as trans about 10 years ago. That was an extremely scary and lonely time for her and also for me. Scary for her, because she did not know if her own mother would be supportive of her.

Scary for me, because I did not know how to protect her and find her the support she needed.

I thank God that we lived in NYC and I was able to find a group of supportive families of trans kids that we met with regularly. Those parents help me find the invaluable resources I needed to help my daughter. She attended a high school where she was able to be her authentic self. She found friends and I found a community that understood the challenges our family would face.

With help from these families we found a hospital in NYC that provided her with the care she needed to successfully make her physical and emotional transition to her authentic self.

Today she is in graduate school and making her way in this world. I can say with absolute certainty, that if NYC were not the safe supportive place that it was then, she would not be the successful, productive, happy person that she is now.

Trans kids are kids like any other kids. They need our protection and support to grow up and thrive. New York City was a safe and supportive place for my daughter to grow up. I want NYC to remain a safe and supportive city for all trans kids and their families.

I want parents of trans kids to have the resources they need to give their kids the best chance to be happy and successful.

This is a very frightening time to be a trans person in this country because the federal government chooses to attack and erase trans people.

Even more frightening to watch the institutions that were supportive, retreat in fear, instead of standing together to protect vulnerable communities.

I hope that NYC will not retreat but stand together courageously to protect all New Yorkers including our Transgender community.

Thank you for allowing me to address this committee.

Sincerely,

Joyati

Testimony

Hello, Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee. My name is Julia Davidson, my pronouns are she/her, and I am a cis woman. I was a high school teacher for 7 years and now I am in my 2nd year of law school at Fordham Law. I live in Councilmember Hanif's district.

Thank you for this hearing and your hard work on these bills. I want to express my support for all of the resolutions and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183. T2025-3093 is particularly important to me, to ensure that individuals do not have interruptions to their life-saving gender affirming healthcare, and to prevent NYC hospitals and healthcare providers from complying with Trump's unconstitutional executive orders in advance.

I am a member of Advocates for Trans* Law Students, a group of volunteers who help trans & nonbinary people file their name/ gender marker change petitions in civil court. This is the first step in the many bureaucratic hurdles. Since the election, we have helped 350 people. We are a small team now hosting multiple events per week. The tone of these events has shifted— once celebratory events where we could help people fill out paperwork, we now spend hours talking about worst case scenarios.

There are so many hurdles to transitioning— whether it is changing identity documents, accessing gender affirming care, accessing affirming therapists, finding support at work or at school. All of these steps require access to resources, money, and often require taking time off work. Now, with the outright, vicious, and relentless attacks coming from the federal government and those that support it, trans people need our open and loud support more than ever.

When I offered to meet people who wanted to testify, a few trans people told me that they were too anxious about going on public record. In order for our democracy to work, all people need to feel safe enough to come to a public hearing and share their experience, without fear of retribution.

I hope City Council passes these bills and resolutions to support our TNBGNC community members. I hope that cis people across the city stand up loudly and declare that they will not tolerate this kind of hatred and abuse coming from our government. I hope that cis women, like myself, will stop allowing transphobic rhetoric spread under the guise of protecting women.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Julia Davidson

Dear Committee Members,

I am extremely concerned about how recent federal executive orders are impacting transgender, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming New Yorkers. A slew of recent orders have staged an all-out attack on the rights of this already vulnerable group: An executive order has sought to revoke recognition of gender-nonconforming people's gender identity, potentially stripping them of legal protections. Another executive order seeks to ban gender-affirming care for people under nineteen, even though medical professionals agree that withholding this care puts these young people at serious risk of suicide. And finally, the latest executive order on this subject seeks to ban the discussion or recognition of trans and gender-nonconforming people's gender in K-12 schools, putting students in serious danger by seeking to force them to use bathrooms that don't match their gender and attempting to separate what are often vulnerable students from the adults who would support them.

New York has strong human rights and antidiscrimination laws that protect the rights of trans and gender-nonconforming people, yet I am alarmed that hospitals in New York City, where many families of trans and gender-nonconforming youth come to escape discriminatory state laws, have ceased providing children with this lifesaving care despite this being in violation of state laws. I am also dismayed that unlike many other school systems throughout the country, the New York City public school system has done nothing to protect trans and gender-nonconforming students' human rights or teachers' First Amendment rights. The New York City public school system has an obligation to continue to recognize students' gender identities and protect them from discrimination, and the failure to indicate it will continue to do so in the face of these federal attacks on trans and gender-nonconforming people puts our students in serious danger. The city council must act forcefully to protect the rights and welfare of trans and gender-nonconforming New Yorkers.

Sincerely,
Katherine Herman
public school parent

Dear NYC City Council Members,

I am writing to passionately support Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183. These measures are vital for protecting the rights and dignity of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable among us.

Resolution T2025-3200: Our health data is personal and should be protected. This resolution ensures our private health information remains ours, giving us control and peace of mind.

Bill T2025-3179: Knowledge is power. This bill will educate TGNCNBI individuals about their rights, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community.

Bill T2025-3093: Access to gender-affirming care is a fundamental right. This bill will protect individuals seeking such care from discrimination and interference.

Bill T2025-3184: TGNCNBI New Yorkers deserve focused health initiatives. This bill will address health disparities and promote well-being.

Bill T2025-3183: Empowerment through education. This bill will inform TGNCNBI individuals about their legal rights and resources, helping them navigate their lives with confidence.

Please pass these crucial measures. They are steps towards a more just and compassionate city.

Sincerely,

Kayla Shifter

Dear NYC City Council Members,

I am writing to passionately support Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183. These measures are vital for protecting the rights and dignity of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable among us.

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Please pass these crucial measures. They are steps towards a more just and compassionate city.

Sincerely
Kelli Kolodny

Good afternoon. My legal name is Kristine DiColandrea, but you can call me DiCo.

And don't mind the crutches - I'm fine, that's just what I get for playing rugby twenty years ago. I mean, look at me! But it was worth it because my college rugby team was the first place I felt safe to come out.

You see, I grew up in a blue-collar, conservative, Catholic family in Ridgewood, and when I was in middle school, I remember I asked my dad about what it meant to be gay, and he said it was disgusting.

When I was in high school, I remember not knowing why my parents got mad at me when I liked to cuddle with my friends who happened to be girls.

When I started going out with a girl in college, I didn't tell my parents about her. In fact, I didn't come out to them at all until two years later. I waited until the night before I graduated from Yale because I figured they would never be prouder of me than they were at that moment, and still, I remember my dad yelling at my mom in that conversation, telling her it was her fault for not wearing enough dresses in front of me.

Speaking of dresses, when I started teaching right after Yale, I didn't know what to wear. All of the men wore ties and all of the women wore blouses, and where did that leave me? When I cut my hair, my assistant principal demanded to know "who all the gay teachers were." When queer students were being outed by administrators, my principal told me I'd be "out by June" if I started a Gay Straight Alliance. When I put on my first tie, my dad saw it on Facebook and said it was the ugliest picture of me he'd ever seen.

But my students didn't flinch when I started wearing suits to work and told them it wasn't Ms DiColandrea anymore, it was just DiCo.

Kids in NYC stood up for me when I came out as trans 20 years ago, and now I'm standing up for them, and asking you to do the same. Pass these bills because our queer kids need us to have their back.

Hello, Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee, my name is Laurel L. and my pronouns are she/her. I live in District 39 in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn. I am a teacher of young children and a parent of two young adult men, one who identifies as trans, and another who identifies as gay. I want to express my support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

As a parent, I am fully aware of the social and structural obstacles that my children have had to endure their whole lives in spite of the fact that they have always had a loving and caring family. The pervasive cultural misunderstandings, fears and prejudice, and the lack of belonging in a mostly cisgender, heterosexual world have left their scars. I am fully aware of the health care obstacles they have had to face, including misunderstanding, stigmatization, and fear from medical facilities and poorly trained physicians and staff, and the extra steps they must continue to take to receive adequate mental and physical health care. And most importantly, I am fully aware of the anxiety and dread that they now have that their health care and their rights as taxpayers, as contributing members of society, and as human beings in this city and in this nation, may be revoked simply because of who they are. I share that same anxiety and dread and I fear for their safety.

As a teacher, I have seen the effects of peer exclusion, rejection, and family denial on TGNCNBI students. Their school days are spent working hard to just be who they are rather than learning and living with the freedoms of childhood. I have also seen the effects of peer acceptance and family acceptance on TGNCNBI students. The confidence and dignity they exude as they become healthy and productive members of society is the difference between surviving and thriving. I applaud and support them and will continue to do so.

I understand the resolution and bills at hand will help extend the protections over personal health information, will make sure that all New Yorkers are aware of their rights, will protect access to healthcare facilities that provide gender affirming care and reproductive care, and will support newly-arrived TGNCNBI migrants. I also understand that the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in collaboration with the chair of the commission on gender equity, will work to develop a citywide health agenda addressing health disparities affecting TGNCNBI New Yorkers. I urge you to pass these bills as soon as possible to prevent both a mental and physical health crisis within a population that is already at serious risk.

In closing, I wish to thank Council Members Bottcher, Cabán, Hanif and Ossé for proposing these resolutions and bills. I feel confident that the members of the Committee of the City Council will make the right choices for the health and well-being of all New Yorkers. Please continue to uphold the rights and protections that everyone deserves.

In solidarity,

Laurel L.

LYSSETT MARTINEZ, PSY.D.

New York, New York 10010

nycpsychological@gmail.com



**New York City Council
Committee on Women and Gender Equity**

Re: Oversight Hearing: Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City. February 28, 2025, 1:00pm

February 27, 2025

Hello, Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee, my name is Dr. Lyssett Martinez, and my pronouns are she/her. I work in Manhattan and have lived in New York City for over 16 years. I am a health provider for Transgender, Gender nonconfirming, and Nonbinary people, in addition to my family being Queer. My family and my patients are affected daily by the hate and persecution of this administration and their mission to erase transgender people by denying them basic human rights including safety, a proper education free from discrimination, their health needs by denying them lifesaving gender care, or even the use of restrooms that match their identity. It is hideous to pray on this 1% of the population, especially considering the uphill throughout history just to exist. Let transgender people youth and adults thrive, protect them from harassment, violence, and bullying from this presidency and the executive orders, condemning language, and relentless and unparallel targeting.

I want to express my STRONG support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

Among the many issues and obstacles that TGNCNB, and intersex people face, are increased violence as some people are now encouraged to identify, police, and question, or outright oppose the rights of people. In addition, I have seen how multiple medical services have been denied without much context given, appointments cancelled, and general changes in the existing healthcare scope of gender care. These changes socially and medically are causing uncertainty and fear. The Stone Wall Monument has now been altered, the T and the Q now removed; this is another form of invalidation and violence, another reminder that an entire community of people are unwanted on the basis of being Trans and/or Queer, no matter how significant their contributions have been historically.

I am requesting that this Council take immediate action and stop any bills that oppress TGNCNB and intersex people. Please vote and fight to protect the health and mental well-being of TGNCNB and intersex people. Require NY State to adhere to the World Professional Associations for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care 8, and continue to provide much needed health care and continuity of health care as clinically indicated. Vote and fight to preserve the rights and dignity of TGNCNB and intersex people.

In closing, protect the rights of New Yorkers, we care about LGBTQ+ people, we appreciate the freedoms and the diversity of our residents. What is happening now is inhumane. We are better than that, you are better than that. Oppose efforts to harm and discriminate against the TGNCNB and intersex community. My Queer family has a right to education, health care, dignity, and safety. Same as everyone else. That is all. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lyssett Martinez

Dear Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee,

My name is Marie Moore, pronouns she/her. I live in Kensington. I am the mom of a young transgender student. I want to express my support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

Specific protections like these are needed right now as our community has been turned upside down by the President's cruel executive orders, and the early and illegal compliance by many institutions like NYULangone. It's left the trans community, the parents who love and accept their kids, reeling, unstable and scared. I remember starting my kid in kindergarten—it was the first time we were using new pronouns. I didn't know what would happen—would I have to explain things to teachers, would I have to fight? I was so new to all this and so anxious. But blending into school was seamless. This community was way ahead of me. I can't tell you what relief I felt, and how lucky I felt to live here. I hate thinking of all the kids and anxious parents that won't have that same support if we let this current unjust climate affect our laws and our values. We need protections in the law and we need to defend them.

This is a tricky issue for people—I understand. It can be really hard to wrap your head around it if it isn't your personal experience of the experience of someone you love. That's why as our representatives, it's so imperative that you protect this vulnerable population now, so that they have a place where they can be safe. This issue isn't going away, I fear. But NYC can still be a place where people can be themselves and have control over their own body and health. TGNCNB people aren't asking for any right that other citizens don't already enjoy.

I went to the first protest against the NYU Langone pause on Gender Affirming Care. It was striking how many young transgender kids spoke about having to leave the states they grew up in because they were unsafe. They came to NYC. I don't want to live in this city if it ceases to be a beacon for people. People need a place to go and that is what NYC has always been. Please support these Resolutions for the future of this city, and the real values of its vast and diverse population.

Thank you,
Marie Moore



Rabbi Mark Hurvitz

הרב מארק הורוויץ

مارك هرفيتز



Feb 24, 2025

כו שבט תשפ"ה

Dear New York City Council,

I am deeply troubled that my beloved trans family member was turned away from their scheduled gender affirming child care. I fear that blocking such care could lead to dire consequences for this person, even suicide, as it has for many in prior years. I beseech you to do all you can to protect trans children and adults (whether in school, in the military, or in prison) from the mean-spirited, biased, uninformed Executive Orders of this administration. Please save my relatives mental health.

שלום

سلام

Rabbi Mark Hurvitz

2/25/25

To the NYC Council:

I am writing in support of the following items:
T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, T2025-3183

One of my children is a non-binary 11-year old whose psychological well-being has been helped by being in environments where their gender identity is accepted, celebrated and believed, and they have been harmed by messages that seek to alienate them or deny their existence. As a parent, I feel strongly that we should endorse the items indicated above, as they work toward facilitating a society that is non-discriminatory and supportive to the health and well-being of trans and gender-nonconforming youth and adults.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Matthew Singer

**Testimony to Committee on Women and Gender Equity
Oversight Hearing - Ensuring Access to Supports for Transgender, Gender Non-
conforming, and Nonbinary (TGNCNB) People in New York City**

Submitted February 26, 2025 by Melinda Wang

My name is Melinda Wang, and I'm a member of the queer and trans community here in New York. I also volunteer as a peer counselor for the LGBTQ+ community. In my work and in my life, I hear stories of trans New Yorkers struggling to find housing and trying to leave abusive households. I also hear stories of trans New Yorkers putting on art shows or fundraising to help their friends get healthcare. I want to thank the committee members for hosting this hearing, and I fully support all of the legislation that is being introduced today. I also want to share some of the issues our community is facing and how I think the city can help.

Supportive housing and employment for trans New Yorkers

I often hear the phrase that the trans community keeps on passing around the same \$20. We are struggling to survive, yet do what we can to help each other. So many of my friends and clients are couch surfing or living on the streets, or are forced to live in abusive households since they cannot find stable employment or a way to move out. The Council can:

- Support workforce development programs for LGBTQ+ youth and adults
- Explicitly include discrimination protections for transgender identity in New York City Human Rights Law
- Pilot a Guaranteed Income program for TGNCNB New Yorkers. [Research on guaranteed income](#) shows that it makes long-term improvements in the quality of recipients' lives. Recipients could use the money to fund gender-affirming care, to further their education, to start small businesses, to pay rent, and more.
- Expand single-room shelters, which are safer for trans New Yorkers who experience violence and harassment in the shelter system

Protect trans youth and support educators

Trans youth are experiencing the brunt of this attack. NYC hospitals have already started to roll back gender-affirming care for youth. Federal attacks on education are threatening to censure educators and force them to misgender and bully children.

- Provide training for educators on supporting LGBTQ+ students
- Support and fund organizations that provide programming for LGBTQ+ youth and their families
- Include LGBTQ+ history in public school curriculum
- Increase mental health resources for LGBTQ+ youth

Trans healthcare is vital, and includes more than just transition care

Transgender New Yorkers are disproportionately relying on Medicaid to access healthcare, and there are threats that Medicaid could no longer support gender-affirming healthcare. Waitlists for

gender-affirming healthcare have already been extraordinarily long and will grow longer. Transgender New Yorkers experience, in addition to barriers to receiving transition care, worse health outcomes in general. This includes mental health, as the TGNCNB community experiences higher rates of suicide and depression.

- Increase funding and other support for LGBTQ+ community health centers and other trans healthcare providers
- Legislate medical discrimination protections for trans people– often, trans people are denied care even outside of transition care
- Support training for healthcare professionals on LGBTQ+ competency
- Include holistic mental healthcare as part of the proposed TGNCNB health agenda
- Include gender-affirming care and mental healthcare as part of NYC Care
- Create a city-run public health insurance option that covers gender-affirming care and mental healthcare

Thank you for holding this hearing and introducing the important pieces of legislation. I hope that you will continue to fight for your constituents.

To Committee on Women and Gender Equity,

I'm submitting testimony as a parent of a trans 10 year old residing in Council District 33.

I'm encouraged to see this packet of bills to that will take decisive action to support and protect trans people.

Given the Mayor and the Department of Education's weak response to the onslaught of transphobic policies by the federal government, parents need assurances that New York City will remain a safe place for our children to live and to receive gender affirming care.

Parents were disappointed to see that the Chancellor, only after being pushed for weeks, issued an extremely weak statement about school protections that did not once include the word "transgender." And at this Committee's 2/28 meeting the representative from NYC's Unity Project made it clear they were totally unprepared to answer questions about the emergency state of gender affirming care for children at the city's hospitals.

I'm among a group of parents attempting to closely monitor the status of gender affirming care. I can tell you that we are facing a critical shortfall of providers, despite the AG's actions to pressure the large hospital groups to continue care.

NYU Langone, the largest clinic in the city, has decided to reopen doors to new patients but is not writing new prescriptions for hormones or puberty blockers. Mount Sinai continues to only see children older than 9 years of age and we have been unable to confirm whether they are writing new prescriptions. The latest from NY Presbyterian (Compass) is that longtime patients are being informed that the future of the program is highly uncertain.

That leaves us with Jacobi and Judson. While H&H has remained committed to keep their doors open, do they have the capacity to absorb all of the patient from the three big clinics that could close their doors at any moment? Even at NYU where my child has been a patient for almost three years I need to schedule each appointment three months ahead. It took me six months to schedule my child's DEXA bone scan, a required diagnostic test for puberty blockers. How many appointments does H&H have for new patients? How many pediatric DEXA scan appointments? How many implant surgery appointments are available?

Adding to this constraint is the fact that Judson sees only teens, which locks out the large number of patients who need puberty blockers before the age of 12. When will Judson commit to opening up care for younger children?

Parents who are fearful about losing access to care are already

investigating traveling abroad or even permanently relocating. Families should not have to worry about the status of their child's next appointment. We need the city to invest immediately in expanding the care that H&H provides.

In addition to funding healthcare institutions, we need to increase funding for the trans led organizations who are providing direct support and advocacy for trans children and adults via a \$10m increase to the Trans Equity Fund.

One of the groups that will benefit greatly from such an increase in funding is Trans formative Schools, the trans and queer educators working to build a free middle school for trans children. My child has been attending their free afterschool program since 2024 and has benefitted greatly from learning and socializing in a space designed to uplift trans identities.

Despite the city's strong legal protections for trans kids, DOE schools on the whole are far from affirming. I have heard too many stories of children being bullied, teachers refusing to use preferred pronouns, and principals who make excuses and refuse to shift their school's culture in a more inclusive direction. Having just gone through the middle school application process, I can say there are very few schools that are making a sincere effort to provide a truly welcoming spaces for trans kids. A

middle school might be following the letter of the law by providing a gender neutral bathroom, but what kind of message does it send to a child if that bathroom is three floors down from the classroom and only accessible with a key?

A child's feeling of safety and well being at school should not depend on their zip code or the strength of their lottery number. Especially in middle school where social relationships are volatile, trans kids need better options like Transformative Schools. I trust trans educators to know what's best for my child. By investing in trans led organizations the city can show real commitment to improving trans lives during this time of emergency.

Thank you for your attention.

Raina Bien

Dear Council,

I'm incredibly thankful that you are taking up these bills and resolutions to protect our children and our rights as citizens of New York. I am the father of a trans boy and for years, we have engaged with teachers and administrators in a supportive and caring school community. This is what New York should be, decency and kindness for children. The federal administration has supplanted a sense of empathy and consideration with foreboding and fear.

Amid a February where we celebrate leaders who stood against oppression and bigotry to fight for the rights of those who would come after them – we are being told not to teach our children about what those fights were about, that oppression was not real, that the rights of the few can be trampled by the fears of the ignorant. Under this onslaught on decency, I urge you to support the bills and resolutions before you today.

Singling out trans people is not only discriminatory, not only against the law and principles of New York City, but it is a test balloon for future discrimination. The trans community is roughly 1% of the population. There is no existential threat as portrayed by a willfully ignorant group of conservatives. If we cannot turn their hearts, then we can aid our communities as best as possible to know how to protect our rights. **Vote yes for a public information outreach campaign regarding legal rights.**

Discriminating against care for trans people is an invasion of privacy, a flouting of civil liberties, in contrast with well-researched medical practice, and the first step to see who will back down. It is time to refute these false assertions, backed only by extortion, threats, and intimidation. **Vote yes for access to gender-affirming care facilities/cause of action to interference.**

Fear that the federal government would abuse access to private medical information cannot be taken lightly. This is another in-road to denying care through illicit means and it is imperative to have a bulwark in place. **Vote yes to extend protections over personal health and to prohibit out-of-state access to NYS Prescription monitoring.**

There is not another community that could be attacked in this way without engendering horror and indignation. Will you sit idly by and watch as children and families are told they are not people, they are not wanted in the greatest city in the world? That you, when you had the chance, passively allowed it to happen. As a father, as a New Yorker, if you aren't will to fight back, why are you in New York?

I leave you with the famous quote from Pastor Martin Niemoller, "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, but I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me."

Thank you,

Ryan Clark

Dear NYC City Council Members,

I am writing to passionately support Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183.

Even though I'm not a member of the TGNCNBI community, I care very deeply about the rights of all New Yorkers and believe strongly in protecting everyone from discrimination and allowing all people to feel safe, supported, and free to live their lives in our great city. Protecting TGNCNBI New Yorkers has unfortunately become even more important considering the recent attempts of the federal government to restrict or take away the rights of this community.

Resolution T2025-3200: Our health data is personal and should be protected. This resolution ensures our private health information remains ours, giving us control and peace of mind.

Bill T2025-3179: Knowledge is power. This bill will educate TGNCNBI individuals about their rights, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community.

Bill T2025-3093: Access to gender-affirming care is a fundamental right. This bill will protect individuals seeking such care from discrimination and interference.

Bill T2025-3184: TGNCNBI New Yorkers deserve focused health initiatives. This bill will address health disparities and promote well-being.

Bill T2025-3183: Empowerment through education. This bill will inform TGNCNBI individuals about their legal rights and resources, helping them navigate their lives with confidence.

I urge you to pass these crucial measures. They will go a long way towards making New York City a place where anyone from anywhere is able to thrive – even the most vulnerable among us.

Sincerely,

Sarah Cullen

A New Yorker for 30 years and counting!

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for allowing transgender athletes to compete with cisgender athletes in sports. Transgender people have always been in our presence, but they are now receiving a disproportionate level of attention and scrutiny from the current administration and their right to exist, threatened from myriad angles. I've lived in NYC since 2004 and have been proud to love it here because of its progressive policies and inclusivity. I also have a trans child, who came out to our family 5 years ago. My family has spent a lot of time with doctors and other medical professionals, learning to understand my own kid and the larger TG community. Please show New Yorkers that we can be proud of our city and state officials and side with science and your community. But that is my personal plea, and I don't just rely on my own experience when formulating this.

When making these very important decisions on whether to discriminate, we need to look to science, and not measure by the “man on the street” standard, or what “sounds” right. Myriad studies have shown that contrary to what people might think, research fails to find advantages for transgender women in sports when compared to cisgender women. The Journal of Endocrine Science published a review of nearly two decades worth of literature on transgenderism in sports and concluded “There does not seem to be any reason to expect advantage for transgender people prior to puberty or for transgender people whose gender-affirming treatment begins at the onset of puberty...”

Interestingly, that same review noted: “To date, the only established driver of athletic advantage in men over women is testosterone.” To that end, another recent study published in the British Journal of sports, that compared transgender athletes to cisgender athletes, found that transgender woman had similar testosterone concentration to cisgender women (TW 0.7 ± 0.5 nmol/L, CW 0.9 ± 0.4 nmol/), suggesting that the gender assigned at birth was not advantageous. So, cisgender girls are not threatened or disadvantaged by competing with transgender women, despite what the “man on the street” might think is the case.

Stephanie Unwin-Kuruneri, PsyD

Sources:

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2023-108029>

J Endocr Soc. 2022 Mar 17;6(5):bvac035. doi: [10.1210/endo/bvac035](https://doi.org/10.1210/endo/bvac035)

Sec. Exercise Physiology, Volume 5 - 2023 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2023.1224476>

Hello. My name is Thom Loubet, I use He/Him pronouns, and I live in District 7.

I am writing to show my support for the proposed trans/non-binary resolutions discussed on February 28, 2025 during the Committee on Women and Gender Equity's hearing. Thank you to Chair Louis and committee members for their work and support of trans, non-binary, gender non-conforming and intersex New Yorkers.

1. I support the increased budget of the Trans Equity Fund to 10M
2. There is a need for more transitional housing for trans youth age 21-24
3. Please consider budget increases for Project DOT, the Sexual Assault Initiative, and Outsmart New York City program to expand support for LGBTQ+ communities and sexual violence prevention.
4. Pass Intro 3183 with amendments to address potential loss of Medicaid coverage for gender-affirming care.

Thank you,

Thom Loubet

Veronica Schanoes

[REDACTED]
Brooklyn, NY 11226
[REDACTED]

To the New York City Council:

My name is Veronica Schanoes and I am a lifelong New Yorker. I have lived in Brooklyn for the past decade, and I am writing to express my strong support for ensuring that all trans, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming people in this city, *including children*, have access to the health care and other supports they need to flourish and live happy lives.

I have several trans friends; I know more than one trans and/or nonbinary and/or gender-nonconforming child. My son is a fourth-grader at public school and the older sister of one of the other kids at his school-bus stop is trans. I was outraged when her mother told me that NYU-Langone had cancelled her schedule procedure with only 24 hours of notice and the “explanation” that they would no longer provide gender-affirming care to minors. How dare they?! How dare these hospitals take advantage of all our city has to offer and then abandon our children?!

Trans, nonbinary, intersex, and gender-nonconforming children who do not get the care they so desperately need and want are at high risk for suicide; they feel miserable about themselves. Puberty and adolescence are difficult enough for cis people; imagine going through it trapped in a body permanently transforming in a way opposed to your self-image; imagine knowing that there are adults out there who know how to help you; imagine knowing that they are withholding that help and don’t care about your suffering.

There are those who claim that trans/nonbinary/gender-nonconforming/intersex children do some kind of injury to cis women and girls. That is nonsense. A city that provides support to trans/nonbinary/gender-nonconforming/intersex children is a city that is safe for cis girls too, from the most conventional to the most unusual. I am a cis woman. I have had many friends who are trans women, or nonbinary, or are in some way gender-nonconforming. They have only enriched my life, and helped me better understand my own experience of being a woman as well. It is not trans people or nonbinary people or gender-nonconforming people who threaten and injure cis women. Over the course of my life, I have been followed home, harassed, grabbed, threatened—but never, as far as I know, by trans people. Never by nonbinary people or gender non-conforming people.

I love New York City. I have grown up here and intend to spend the rest of my life here. And what makes this city great, what makes this city a place that I am proud to be from, is the diversity of its people. We are New Yorkers, and we accept people of all backgrounds, all gender identities, and all gender expressions. I had a wonderful childhood in this city. I want that available to trans, nonbinary, intersex, and gender-nonconforming children as well. We must make our city a safe place for those children, and we must, as a city, go to bat for our children

against hospitals only too willing to kowtow to despots. The bottom line is this: trans New Yorkers, nonbinary New Yorkers, and gender-nonconforming New Yorkers are all New Yorkers, and we must not allow anybody to deny them health care and supports.

Sincerely,

Veronica Schanoes

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing to express my strong support for Resolution T2025-3200 and bills T2025-3179, T2025-3093, T2025-3184, and T2025-3183. These legislative measures represent critical steps towards protecting the rights and well-being of all New Yorkers, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Resolution T2025-3200 calls upon the Governor to sign S.929/A.2141, extending protections over personal health information. In an era where digital platforms and wearable devices collect vast amounts of health data, it is imperative that individuals have control over their personal information. This resolution will ensure that health data cannot be sold without explicit consent, safeguarding privacy and empowering individuals to manage their own health information¹.

Bill T2025-3179 aims to educate the public about the legal rights and resources available to transgender, gender non-conforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) individuals. By providing information on protections against discrimination and harassment, this bill will help create a more inclusive and supportive environment for TGNCNBI New Yorkers².

Bill T2025-3093 seeks to enhance access to gender-affirming care facilities and establish a cause of action for interference with such care. This legislation is crucial for ensuring that individuals seeking gender-affirming care can do so without fear of obstruction or discrimination. It also provides legal recourse for those who face interference, reinforcing the city's commitment to bodily autonomy and gender equality³.

Bill T2025-3184 requires the Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene to develop a health agenda focused on the needs of TGNCNBI New Yorkers. This agenda will address health disparities and set citywide health goals, promoting the well-being of TGNCNBI individuals and ensuring they receive the care and support they deserve⁴.

Bill T2025-3183 mandates the creation of a public education program to inform TGNCNBI individuals about their legal rights and available resources. This initiative will empower TGNCNBI New Yorkers by providing them with the knowledge they need to navigate legal protections and access necessary services².

In conclusion, I urge the City Council to pass these important measures. They represent a significant advancement in protecting the rights and health of all New Yorkers, particularly those who are often marginalized. Thank you for your attention to these critical issues.

As the father of a 15-year-old trans boy I am shocked and dismayed by New York hospitals denying health care to transgender youth.

I urge the City Council to put all its weight behind forcing these institutions to resume the life saving care for this battered minority.

The people at the providers who are in charge of making these destructive decisions are fully aware of the science and medical realities behind gender affirming health care. Most importantly the fact that the suicidality rate is 86 percent amongst young people who do not receive this care versus 13 percent for kids who do receive it – according to many studies. Furthermore suicidality rates are even higher for people who have received health care and are forced to give it up. The psychological harm for all people effected, including family members, classmates, colleagues is highly destructive to the entire community.

The leaders at NYU and other hospitals are aware of the dire consequences of their actions including elevated risk off suicide attempts. At least that's what their advertisements claimed in which they promised to have our backs – apparently only in order to lure our business in.

Unfortunately they threw our community under the bus first chance they got: In anticipatory obedience to the Trump regime they refuse to fulfill their most basic duty which is to help people in need. Short term profits seem to be more valuable then the well being of trans people.

Trump's EO regarding transgender healthcare is vicious, vile, fascistic, based in utter ignorance of science and illegal by all measures. Most importantly, the EO is not legally binding.

And yet, the leadership at New York hospitals has decided to be complicit in the ethnic cleansing of trans people that seems to be the goal of the Trump regime. Does the Hippocratic oath include anticipatory obedience to a wannabe fascist dictator for financial gain?

Shame on everyone at those hospitals who is responsible for the cowardish neglect of their responsibilities towards a minority under siege.

As a therapist who works with transgender individuals I see first hand how crucial access to medical care is for this community. I have seen individuals suffering deeply with anxiety and depression and watched as they have been able to become fully functional, happy and active citizens after transitioning socially and medically with gender affirming medical care. I work with transgender young people as well and with in this group I am witness to the suffering of trans kids and teens and then the joy and liberation they experience when able to transition medically. Trans young people with gender affirming care have the opportunity to pause puberty and then have the puberty that matches their gender identity. This not only eases the extreme pain they are suffering from but in a society that unfortunately is transphobic allows many of these kids to grow into adults without stigma related to their physical appearance. I wish we didn't live in a world in which the safety of an individual was compromised based on their perceived gender but sadly we do. TGNBI individuals are an especially vulnerable group in so many ways and providing legislation to protect and support this community is crucial to allowing TGNBI individuals to thrive and become contributing citizens. It is basic human rights and nothing more.

Please continue to uphold New York City policy and New York State constitutional law by treating gender identity as a protected class. In the face of federal overreach, please carry on with just policies including sports participation for trans youth and supporting medical providers to provide gender-affirming care unless and until losing all possible court interventions. Please push backsliding medical institutions, like NYU Langone Hospital, to return to providing the care for which they were known and celebrated before their cowardly retreat this month. The Trump administration is counting on scaring people into doing what they say even when they don't have the right to enforce it, so please stand up for our most vulnerable. Thank you, and keep up the good work.

- Hello, my name is Victoria and I am a resident physician here in New York City and a member of my union, the Committee of Interns and Residents, or CIR. Thank you to the Committee for holding this hearing and to the council members who sponsored these critical resolutions.
- I'm testifying today in favor of the bills and resolutions protecting access to gender-affirming care for our city.
- Before I came to New York, I started my medical training in Virginia, and today, I'm thinking of the patients I met there.
- I remember my patients who traveled hours to see us for gender-affirming care and my patients who reached out in fear when state policies were changing in 2022 and my patients who tried to end their lives when their dysphoria became too much.
- But I also remember celebrating with my patients when they started the medications they needed.
- I remember getting to watch my patients grow into themselves.
- I ended up coming to New York to finish my training because I wanted to keep celebrating and caring for my patients in their whole selves.
- Patients of all gender identities deserve well-trained physicians to care for them, and I knew I would get strong training in this city. And I have!
- Since coming here, I've taken for granted that this is an environment where I'm able to do life-saving care for patients. I get to celebrate normal milestones with my patients, like when they graduate college or get a new job, instead of brainstorming ways to cope with their dysphoria when there's nothing else we can do.
- In New York, we follow global guidelines and local values because we know our gender diversity makes us better.
- **We cannot let that go.** I urge my city council members to protect access to gender-affirming care, and I hope the council will ultimately choose to pass these bills and resolutions.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

27

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sam Skaller

Address: 11 Park Place

I represent: NYC Alliance Against Sexual

Address: Assault

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1260-202 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jacmina Salimova

Address: 572 Sackett St Brooklyn, NY

I represent: Girls for Gender Equity

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

25

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vladimir Martinez

Address: _____

I represent: The LGBT Community Center

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: Diana Adams

Address: _____

I represent: Chosen Family Law Center

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

23

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1201 Res. No. 2025

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/23/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tiffany Jade Munroe

Address: _____

I represent: Caribbean Equality Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 3200

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kathryn Tishus

Address: _____

I represent: Collective Public Affairs

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

20

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bryan Ellicott-Cook

Address: 305 7th Ave

I represent: SAGE

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: 2/28/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kimberleigh Joy Smith

Address: 356 West 18th Street

I represent: Callen-Lorpe Community Health Center

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 3187, 1200 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ethan Lin

Address: 49 Thomas St

I represent: Legal Aid Society

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

12

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

Date: 2/28/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICTORIA NGO

Address: 375 PLEASANT AVE NY NY 10035

I represent: Committee of Interns and Residents

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: Mason Crawford

Address: _____

I represent: Safe Horizon

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: Aspen

Address: _____

I represent: _____

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: Julian Castronovo

Address: 105 Court Street Brooklyn NY 11201

I represent: Brooklyn Legal Services

Address: 105 Court Street BK 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: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ro Peña

Address: _____

I represent: Transformative Schools

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: Alaina Daniels

Address: _____

I represent: Transformative Schools

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: FEBRUARY 25, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: QUEEN JEAN

Address: 239 THOMPSON ST

I represent: THE PEOPLE OF NYC - BLACK TRANS US

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: Zephyr Merkur

Address: _____

I represent: GMHC

Address: 307 W 38th ST NYC 10018

**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: Nadia Swanson

Address: _____

I represent: The AliForney Center

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: 2/28/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Donald Parcelli, Executive Director.

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Unity Project

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: 2/28/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Soren Reck

Address: _____ LIC, NY 11101

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1200-2025 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jasmina Salimova

Address: _____ SI, NY 10312

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

11

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dahlia Abrams

Address: _____

I represent: My self

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. T 2025 3200 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jayati Ray-Chaudhuri

Address: [Redacted] Yonkers 10707

I represent: Myself & Family

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. T 2025 - Res. No. 3093

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DEBI RAY-CHAUDHURI

Address: [Redacted]

I represent: MYSELF

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. 72025-3093 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Allyssa Lamb

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn

I represent: My family

Address: [REDACTED]

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 3093 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Julia Davidson

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn 11217

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. 72025-3020

in favor in opposition

Date: 72025-3179
72025-3093

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jacklyn Blake

Address: [REDACTED] Bronx 10471

I represent: _____

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: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michael Sarvela

Address: _____

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

24

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kristine Di Colandrea

Address: _____ 11385

I represent: myself

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: Julia Dannis

Address: _____

I represent: myself

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: AUDALIA RAY

Address: _____

I represent: ANTI-VIOLENCE PROJECT

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

27

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Krist Tiskos

Address: _____

I represent: Collective Public Affairs

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: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Poonam Srivastava

Address: _____

I represent: self

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

25

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

Date: 2/28/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paul Rivers

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

28

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

Date: 2/28

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Leslie Brown

Address: _____ Jamaica NY 11436

I represent: Rose of Sharon Enterprises

Address: 43 Madison Street Bldg
NY 11238

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