



Thursday, February 26, 2026

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS ALPS
EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE PATROL SERVICES BUREAU
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND SMALL BUSINESS**

**250 BROADWAY – 8TH FLOOR – HEARING ROOM 1
FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

Good morning, Chair Feliz, Chair Thomas-Henry, and Members of the Council. My name is Thomas Alps, and I am the Executive Officer of the Patrol Services Bureau for the New York City Police Department. On behalf of Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch, I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about retail theft.

The mission of the New York City Police Department is to protect the safety and well-being of everyone in our city. This includes maintaining conditions in which our city’s businesses and commercial retailers can thrive. Retail theft undermines that goal.

Under Commissioner Tisch, the Department has developed and implemented a new policing strategy to respond to retail theft. The NYPD utilizes real-time crime statistics to identify patterns driving retail theft, allowing us to respond with focus and urgency. The Department launched new holiday zones to deploy officers daily to high-need retail corridors during peak hours, and the Department shifted from pass-through enforcement to sustained investigation.

The results speak for themselves. Retail theft declined by 14 percent citywide in 2025, and nearly half of all retail theft complaints resulted in an arrest, which was the highest rate since 2019. In our holiday zones, retail theft declined by 37.5 percent during deployment hours compared to last year. Year-to-date, there has been a 22.5 percent decrease in reported retail theft incidents compared to the same time-frame last year. This continued downward trend further demonstrates that data-driven strategic deployment and precision policing produces measurable results for business and communities alike.

The Department is also proud to partner directly with retailers and small business associations. Through crime-prevention seminars, precinct community councils, and direct outreach, we provide best practice guidance on surveillance placement, inventory control practices, and incident reporting protocols. While enforcement remains a critical component to reducing crime, meaningfully reducing retail theft requires continued collaboration between retailers, the community, and the NYPD.

Turning to the bills being heard today, **Intro. 623** requires the Commissioner of Small Business Services to create a small business security measures pilot program, in consultation with the Police Commissioner. The pilot program would be limited to New York City zip codes with high rates of crimes associated with retail theft, which would be determined by the Police



Thursday, February 26, 2026

Commissioner. The Department supports the goals of this legislation, and we look forward to working with the Council to craft a version of this legislation that most effectively achieves those goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

February 26, 2026

Testimony of the New York City Hospitality Alliance to the New York City Council’s Committee on Public Safety on [Int 0553-2026](#), Feliz: Establishing a program to provide financial assistance to small retail businesses for the purchase of security system technology.

On behalf of the New York City Hospitality Alliance, a nonprofit trade association representing thousands of restaurants, bars, and nightclubs across the five boroughs, we support Int. 0553-2026, which would establish a financial assistance program to help small retail businesses invest in security system technology.

Restaurants, bars, and nightclubs are cornerstones of our neighborhoods. They provide jobs, generate tax revenue, and create vibrant community spaces. But many of our members – particularly small, independent establishments operating on thin margins – face ongoing safety challenges, including theft, property damage, and threats to staff and patrons. Upgrading security systems can be costly and often out of reach for small operators.

This legislation would provide meaningful support by helping eligible small businesses offset the cost of critical safety investments such as surveillance cameras, panic buttons, and other protective technologies. These tools not only deter crime but also help protect workers and customers, improve coordination with law enforcement, and enhance overall neighborhood safety.

We appreciate the Council’s recognition that small businesses need practical support to address security concerns. By investing in prevention and protection, this bill strengthens both public safety and the long-term vitality of New York City’s hospitality industry.

We thank the Council for advancing this important measure and look forward to working together to ensure it is effectively implemented and accessible to the small businesses that need it most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have comments or questions, we are reachable at arigie@thenycalliance.org



Testimony of Jessica Walker, President and CEO, Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
Before the New York City Council Committees on Small Business and Public Safety
Hearing on Retail Theft and Storefront Security

February 26, 2026

Good afternoon, Chairs and members of the Committees on Small Business and Public Safety. My name is Jessica Walker, and I am the CEO of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the urgent issue of retail theft and its profound impact on the small businesses that serve as the backbone of our local economy.

The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce has been working closely with local owners to address the unprecedented challenges they face daily. To advocate for their needs, our Storefront Business Coalition developed **The Main Street Deal**, a comprehensive "Bill of Rights for Neighborhood Storefronts". A primary, non-negotiable pillar of this agenda is the right to "Safe Storefronts". Simply put, our neighborhood operators cannot thrive—or even survive—if they cannot keep their employees, customers, and merchandise safe.

Because the physical safety of our commercial corridors is critical, the Chamber strongly supports both pieces of legislation being heard today:

- NYC Council Int. 0553-2026 (Security System Technology Financial Assistance): We fully support this proposed local law to establish a program providing financial assistance to small retail businesses. This program is vital because it will help offset the costs of purchasing and installing security system technology (like digital video surveillance, plexiglass, and panic buttons) to prevent, detect, or respond to retail theft and criminal property damage.
- NYC Council Int. 0623-2026 (Small Business Security Measures Pilot Program): We also strongly back this bill requiring the Commissioner of Small Business Services, in consultation with the NYPD, to create a targeted pilot program installing security measures at small businesses located in zip codes with high rates of retail theft.

Looking forward, we urge the Council to build on today's momentum by advancing two additional legislative proposals from our Main Street Deal to ensure lasting security:

- **Retail Theft Data Transparency:** We need legislation requiring the NYPD and District Attorneys to publish quarterly data specifically tracking organized retail theft rings and repeat commercial burglaries, creating public accountability for fast-tracking these cases.
- **The Neighborhood Retail Safety & Coordination Act:** We propose a bill to establish a dedicated "Small Business Director for Safety" within the Department of Community Safety (if established) or the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. This director would be legally required to coordinate with the NYPD to develop an annual "Retail Corridor Safety Plan" focusing on lighting, visible presence during peak hours, and rapid-response protocols.

While these legislative measures perfectly align with the priorities of our Main Street Deal, we know that legislation must be paired with strong, on-the-ground operational coordination. To that end, we strongly recommend that the Mamdani administration continues the Retail Theft Task Force established under the Adams administration. This task force was highly effective because it successfully brought together law enforcement with the private sector and community leaders. Maintaining this active, multi-stakeholder framework is essential to share intelligence, coordinate rapid responses, and effectively combat organized theft rings.

We urge the Council to pass both Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 swiftly. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the city to protect and uplift New York's neighborhood storefronts.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to our small business community.

Appendix: The Main Street Deal

What is The Main Street Deal? The Main Street Deal is a "Bill of Rights for Neighborhood Storefronts" developed by the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce Storefront Business Coalition. It serves as a comprehensive legislative agenda designed to protect, support, and uplift local retail businesses across New York City.

Full Legislative Agenda

I. Safe Storefronts

- 1. Retail Theft Data: Legislation requiring the NYPD and District Attorneys to publish quarterly data specifically tracking organized retail theft rings and repeat commercial burglaries, creating public accountability for fast-tracking these cases.
- 2. NYC Council Int. 0553-2026 (Security System Technology Financial Assistance): A proposed local law to establish a program providing financial assistance to small retail businesses. This would help offset the costs of purchasing and installing security system technology (like digital video surveillance, plexiglass, and panic buttons) to prevent, detect, or respond to retail theft and criminal property damage.
- 3. NYC Council Int. 0623-2026 (Small Business Security Measures Pilot Program): A proposed bill requiring the Commissioner of Small Business Services, in consultation with the NYPD, to create a targeted pilot program installing security measures at small businesses located in zip codes with high rates of retail theft.

- 4. The Neighborhood Retail Safety & Coordination Act: A bill to establish a dedicated "Small Business Director for Safety" within the Department of Community Safety (if established) or the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. This director would be legally required to coordinate with the NYPD to develop an annual "Retail Corridor Safety Plan" focusing on lighting, visible presence during peak hours, and rapid-response protocols.

II. Fair Leases + Less Vacancy

- 5. The Commercial Tenant Right-to-Know Act: Legislation requiring property owners to provide a standardized "Pre-Lease Disclosure Packet" before a commercial tenant signs a lease. By law, this packet would have to include the Certificate of Occupancy status, any open building violations, and a history of the space's former uses.
- 6. The Commercial Lease Fair Notice Act: A bill mandating a minimum 120-day written notice from landlords for lease non-renewals or significant rent increases. The law could also require SBS to publish a model "Fair Commercial Lease Rider" that standardizes repair obligations and limits unfair cost pass-throughs.
- 7. The Storefront Vacancy Transparency & Incentive Act: A bill requiring landlords to register long-term vacant ground-floor commercial spaces with the city, paired with local tax abatements or grants for property owners who sign long-term leases with independent small businesses.

III. Fair Enforcement (Not a Fine Trap)

- 8. The "Cure-First" Small Business Protection Act: A sweeping local law mandating that all city enforcement agencies (DOB, DSNY, DOHMH, etc.) issue a warning with a "time-to-cure" period for all first-time, non-hazardous violations before any fines are levied.
- 9. The OATH Modernization and Default Reduction Act: A bill requiring the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) to implement a mandatory SMS and email reminder system (at 7, 3, and 1 days) before hearing deadlines to drop the default judgment rate. It would also mandate plain-language summonses and a centralized, mobile-friendly dashboard for businesses to submit photo proof of cured violations.
- 10. Small Business Ombuds Office Creation: Legislation to formally establish an independent Small Business Ombuds Office with the statutory authority to intervene in multi-agency permitting gridlock and temporarily pause financial penalties while a good-faith cure is in process.

IV. Affordable Taxes + Fees

- 11. Commercial Rent Tax (CRT) Threshold Adjustment: A bill to further raise the base rent threshold for the Commercial Rent Tax (which currently hits businesses south of 96th Street in Manhattan), completely exempting more mom-and-pop shops from the tax burden.
- 12. The Main Street Mandate Offset Act: A legislative rule requiring that any new local law introducing a fee, surcharge, or mandate on local businesses must automatically include a small-business phase-in period or financial offset.

V. Economic Accountability (Ensuring Our Fair Share of Opportunity)

- 13. The Small Business Impact Statement Law: An amendment to the City Council's legislative process requiring an independent cost-and-compliance analysis to be completed and published before the Council can vote on any new employer mandate or regulatory burden.
- 14. The Storefront Operator Review Board Act: Legislation establishing a permanent Small Business Review Panel made up of active, local storefront operators. The bill would mandate that city agencies present any new compliance-heavy administrative rules to this panel for a mandatory review and comment period before the rules can be officially enacted.
- 15. The "Summer of Opportunity" Exception Act: A proposed local law to enact a narrowly tailored, time-limited exception to Local Law 18 short-term rental regulations from June 1 to July 31, 2026. This bill would temporarily waive the two-guest limit + host-presence requirements for registered, owner-occupied homes. By expanding accommodation capacity during the unprecedented convergence of the World Cup, Sail4th 250, + Fleet Week, this legislation ensures storefronts throughout the five boroughs capture their fair share of overnight visitor spending instead of losing it to the New Jersey.



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

Testimony of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce

Joint Hearing: Committee on Public Safety & Committee on Small Business

February 26, 2026

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Consultant

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance & Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Paul Ramirez, Bronx Beer Hall
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Angela Pinskey, Amazon
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Yesenia Quinones, JP Morgan Chase
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Zodet Negron, Mercy University
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc.

To Chair Feliz, Chair Thomas-Henry, and Honorable Members of the Committees on Public Safety and Small Business:

My name is Lisa Sorin, President of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce. The Bronx Chamber serves as a vital lifeline for our borough's commercial corridors, providing the resources and advocacy necessary for our entrepreneurs many of whom are first generation business owners to grow, thrive, and remain competitive in an increasingly challenging landscape.

I am here to express the Chamber's strong support for Intro 553 and Intro 623, two pivotal pieces of legislation that offer proactive, common-sense solutions to the escalating crisis of retail theft and public safety.

Our small business owners are resilient, but they are currently operating on razor-thin margins. Between rising costs and the persistent threat of retail theft, many are being pushed to a breaking point. While the desire to modernize security is high, the capital required for high-definition cameras, reinforced entry points, and advanced monitoring is often out of reach.

- **Intro 553 (Financial Assistance for Security Infrastructure):** This bill addresses the "affordability gap" head on. By providing direct financial assistance for the purchase and installation of security technology, the City allows business owners to protect their livelihood without sacrificing their payroll or inventory budgets. It moves safety from a luxury to a standard.
- **Intro 623 (Retail Theft Prevention Pilot Program):** Safety is not one-size-fits-all. We applaud the creation of a pilot program that targets high incidence areas. By pairing infrastructure investment with dedicated outreach and a streamlined enrollment process, this bill ensures that resources are not just available, but accessible to the "mom and pop" shops that need them most. We specifically support the reporting requirements included in this pilot. For our members, results matter. Gathering data on the effectiveness of these interventions will allow the City to scale what works and spend taxpayer dollars efficiently.

Small businesses are more than just storefronts; they are the backbone of the Bronx. When a local shop is targeted by theft, it doesn't just affect the owner it destabilizes the entire block, threatens local jobs, and diminishes the vibrancy of our neighborhoods.

The Bronx Chamber of Commerce urges the Council to pass both Intro 553 and Intro 623.

We thank the Committees for their focus on these practical, impactful solutions and for your continued commitment to the safety of our business community.



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Budharie Brijcoomar, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Shamo and Mala Fashion- Budharie Brijcoomar



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Francesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, George F. Vermenton, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Vermenton Pediatrics Private Clinic - George F. Vermenton



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Francesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, George D. Vermenton, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Vermenton Pediatrics Private Clinic - George D. Vermenton



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Ashonda Culcleasure, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Fix It With Piggy - Ashonda Culcleasure



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Catina Sims, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

KC Photo Booth LLC - Catina Sims



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Francesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Daniela Gordillo, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Vermenton Pediatrics Private Clinic - Daniela Gordillo



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Swannie Batista, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Paralegals FTC - Swannie Batista



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Sheena McNeill, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

RiverBay Corporation Residential Sales - Sheena McNeill



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Christian Ramos, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Blue Chus Shoe Shop - Christian Ramos



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Alejandro Cuevas, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief
Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program
This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Chevere Tax - Alejandro Cuevas



THE NEW BRONX CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE, INC.

PRESIDENT

Lisa Sorin, The New Bronx Chamber of Commerce

OFFICERS

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Joseph Kelleher

February 26, 2026

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust Co.

VICE CHAIRPERSON

Phillip Grant, Armand Corporation

SECRETARY

Elizabeth Figueroa, The New York Botanical Garden

TREASURER

Gilbert Vega, TD Bank

VICE PRESIDENTS

John Bonizio, Eye Mind Strategies
Sandra Erickson, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Inc.
Jessica Gonzalez, American Maintenance 3 Janitorial Services & Supplies Corp.
Greg Gonzalez, Manhattan Parking Group
Stephen Jerome, Monroe College
Madeline Marquez, Ponce Bank
Liz Neumark, Great Performances
Joanna Simone, Simone Development
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty

LEGAL COUNSEL

Jeff Underweiser, Underweiser & Underweiser, LLP.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kevin Alicea, Havana Café
Kenny Burgos, New York Apartment Association
Dr. Susan Burns, College of Mount St. Vincent
John Calvelli, Wildlife Conservation Society
Cleon Chung, Optimum
Eve Colavito, The Dream School
Dr. Fernando Delgado, Lehman College
Franchesca Diaz, Con Edison
Taryn Duffy, Tarsam Public Affairs
Joseph Gallitto, DJ Ambulette Service
Ivan Garcia, DoorDash
April Horton, Verizon
Rhonda James, E218 Events Management
Kathleen Kearns, Montefiore
Michael Max Knobbe, BronxNet
Clarence Lildharrie, Certified Alarm Tech Systems, Inc.
Kyle Munoz, Munoz Insurance Services
Adil Najib, RiteCheck Cashing
Mike Nuñez, JP Morgan Chase
Susan Parish, Mercy University
Angela Pinsky, Amazon
James Quent, State Public Affairs
Paul Ramirez, Mainland Media/Bronx Beer Hall
MarySol Rodriguez, Distinctive Public Affairs
Barbara Selesky, The Woodlawn Cemetery
Brian Smith, New York Yankees
Steve Squitieri, D-J Ambulette Services, Inc

To the Small Business Committee jointly with the Committee on Public Safety,

I, Paul Klien, stand firmly with The Bronx Chamber of Commerce in a call for immediate legislative action. We are calling on our business leaders to join us in signing this collective letter of support for two critical New York City Council bills designed to provide the financial relief and protection our community deserves.

- Int. 0553-2026 (Sponsored by Oswald J. Feliz): Direct Financial Relief Small businesses should never have to choose between meeting payroll and securing their storefronts. This bill establishes a financial assistance program to offset the costs of high-tech security systems, ensuring that even those with the thinnest margins can protect their livelihoods.
- Int. 0623-2026 (Sponsored by Farah N. Louis): Strategic Pilot Program This legislation launches a targeted pilot program in high-theft zip codes. By collaborating with the NYPD and SBS, it funds the installation of cameras and protective barriers, utilizing a data-driven approach to reduce crime in our most vulnerable commercial corridors.

We respectfully urge City Council leadership to pass Int. 0553-2026 and Int. 0623-2026 immediately. Stand with us in demanding a safer Bronx.

Kaleidoscope Gallery - Paul Klien



Brooklyn Defender Services
177 Livingston St, 7th Fl
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Tel (718) 254-0700
Fax (347) 457-5194
info@bds.org

TESTIMONY OF:

Gina Mitchell

Attorney-in-Charge of Law Reform and Policy

BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York City Council

Committees on Public Safety and Small Business

Oversight Hearing on Retail Theft

February 26, 2026

My name is Gina Mitchell and I am the Attorney-in-Charge of Law Reform and Policy at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). BDS is a public defense office whose mission is to provide outstanding representation and advocacy free of cost to people facing loss of freedom, family separation and other serious legal harms by the government. We want to thank the Committees on Public Safety and Small Business, and Chairs Feliz and Thomas-Henry, for the opportunity to testify today about retail theft.

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

Background

In recent months, there has been heightened media attention on retail theft which has sensationalized the rates and magnitude of shoplifting in the city. The city's own data

demonstrates that, while there was a spike in rates of arrest for theft during the COVID-19 pandemic, rates of retail theft have reduced to pre-pandemic estimates.¹ Further, rates of theft at small businesses and bodegas are lower than projected.² At today's hearing, the NYPD repeatedly stated that those most impacted by retail theft are not New York City's small businesses, but rather national and international brands and businesses that already possess vast security tools.

Under the prior administration, the NYPD increasingly prioritized policing poverty and untreated behavioral health needs through its launch of the "quality-of-life" policing teams (Q-Teams) and targeted retail theft intervention. These policies are based on long-discredited theories like "broken windows policing" and serve only to increase arrests for minor transgressions, which in turn worsen the issue that often brought the person into the system, such as mental health, drug or alcohol use, food insecurity, houselessness and lack of opportunity and affordability in New York City. Instead of expanded policing, the city should address waitlists and backlogs to access social services, such as housing or food, improve access to medical and mental health treatment, invest in job training and specialized educational services, including training in skilled trades, to provide historically underserved communities a fighting chance to survive in this city. These policing measures do not address the affordability crisis or social issues that are driving most cases of retail theft. As public defenders, we routinely see the people we represent being arrested for taking basic necessities from stores: food items, deodorant, toothbrushes, or diapers. Most of the people we represent who are arrested for retail theft are living in poverty and navigating complex issues including serious mental health concerns, substance use, and housing instability.

The challenges people face are compounded when there is criminal legal system involvement. In Brooklyn and Queens, we see widespread use of trespass notices following a petit larceny arrest. This means that if a person is arrested for shoplifting, even if it's for food or basic necessities, they are given a notice that says they cannot return to the store. As a result, these trespass notices can be used to increase subsequent shoplifting charges from misdemeanors to felonies. The increased charges can put the person at risk of serving a prison sentence, making it even more difficult for them to access diversion programs and get the help and services they need.

In one instance, a woman we represent was arrested for taking hygiene items from a store. She is chronically unhoused and navigating complex physical and mental health conditions. After being issued a trespass notice, she was arrested a second time for taking basic necessities from the

¹ New York City Council analysis of *NYPD Complaint Data Current (Year To Date)* and *NYPD Complaint Data Historic* from NYC OpenData. See https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Public-Safety/NYPD-Complaint-Data-Current-Year-To-Date-5uac-w243/about_data and https://data.cityofnewyork.us/Public-Safety/NYPD-Complaint-Data-Historic/qgea-i56i/about_data

² See New York City Council *Committee Report*, <https://nyc.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=15266490&GUID=413155B3-7DB9-4D3F-804E-314DEF46C2FD&G=2FD004F1-D85B-4588-A648-0A736C77D6E3>

same store. While she was in the process of getting connected to supportive housing and the healthcare and treatment she needs, she is now facing a prison sentence and the collateral consequences of criminal legal system involvement, such as increased housing and job insecurity, and a criminal record. These compounding arrests have destabilized her mental health condition more and have created further barriers to getting the supportive services that may help lift her out of poverty.

Surveillance Does Not Create Safety

BDS is concerned with Int. 533, which would create financial assistance for small businesses to buy surveillance technology, and Int. 623, a bill that would require the Commissioner of Small Business Services and the Police Commissioner, to create a pilot program to install security cameras in areas identified by the NYPD. We respectfully oppose this \$24 million initiative.

New Yorkers are already subject to a vast and sophisticated surveillance network run by the NYPD and other local agencies. Although the city’s surveillance network largely operates in the shadows, our work, community activism, investigative journalism, and public interest litigation have brought pieces of it into public view.³ The city’s invasive and growing surveillance program poses a dangerous threat to the constitutional and civil rights of New Yorkers. While technology and its attendant insights and conveniences are alluring in their seeming objectivity and infallibility, real-world application—divorced from marketing claims—demonstrates that technological solutions to law enforcement’s surveillance agenda merely replicate the biases and failures of our historical *Handschu* and stop-and-frisk past.⁴ However, technological surveillance brings with it a world of expanding harms that far outstrips traditional surveillance.

The involvement of the NYPD in the installation of cameras, including those that monitor people walking within 15 feet of a small business, raises concerns about the vast network of surveillance that will be installed in communities across the city. We are particularly concerned about the use of faulty, racially biased facial recognition software. Facial recognition technology has been found to have higher error rates for people of color. The troubling impact on already-marginalized communities is all the more disturbing when this bias-laden data is placed in the hands of an agency often linked to pervasive racism and bigotry. Indeed, numerous recent studies reveal the ways that facial recognition technology perpetuates bias and leads to inaccurate identifications. For instance, The National Institute of Standards and Technology (“NIST”) found that facial recognition systems revealed higher false positive rates for women, particularly

³ See for example Elizabeth Daniel Vasquez, Opinion: Reining in the NYPD’s Use of Surveillance Technologies, City Limits (Feb. 22, 2022) at <https://citylimits.org/2022/02/22/opinion-reining-in-the-nypds-use-of-surveillance-technologies/>.

⁴ See “*Handschu v. Special Services Division (Challenging NYPD Surveillance Practices Targeting Political Groups)*” at <https://www.nyclu.org/en/cases/handschu-v-special-services-division-challenging-nypd-surveillancepractices-targeting>.

Black women⁵ and that depending on the algorithms used, Black and Asian people were 100 times more likely to be misidentified than white men.⁶ Facial recognition systems have also been found to demonstrate “demographic differentials” based on age, producing higher error rates amongst children and the elderly.⁷ Given the high levels of policing aimed at communities of color and LGBTQ+ individuals, and the reality that the criminal legal system disproportionately impacts these communities, the people we serve are part of the communities most likely to be unjustly targeted by these faulty surveillance systems.

Today’s hearing highlighted a number of our concerns. The NYPD was not able to provide answers to many questions, including:

- Will the NYPD have real time access to cameras or other surveillance technology purchased or installed through these programs?
- Will small businesses be required to store, maintain, or turn over this video to NYPD or district attorneys?
- Will the NYPD be permitted to use facial recognition technology to review this widespread surveillance of people who access—or walk past—small businesses?

We ask the council to seek answers to these questions when evaluating whether or not to move forward with proposed legislation.

Recommendations

To meaningfully address retail theft, the Council can take action to invest directly in communities. The most resourced communities are the safest communities. And when people can meet their basic needs, they are less likely to resort to theft to meet their basic needs.

Expand Access to Low-Cost Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment

Many of the people we represent have tried for years to access mental health and substance use treatment but have faced barriers to appropriate care. For people with co-occurring SMI and substance use treatment needs, there is only one long-term, inpatient treatment facility in New York City that accepts Medicaid. This lack of access means many people spend months waiting for an opening, and for those with pending criminal cases, they may be required to wait while being held in custody on Rikers Island. Due to the shortage of program beds, people who are incarcerated waiting for treatment may choose to take a plea in order to get out of jail, instead of

⁵ Patrick Grother, Mei Ngan, Kayee Hanaoka Face Recognition Vendor Test: Part 3: Demographic Effects. *National Institute of Standards and Technology, US Department of Commerce* (December 2019), Available at <https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/ir/2019/NIST.IR.8280.pdf>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

receiving the treatment they need. The Council should work to encourage dual-diagnosis providers to accept Medicaid or offer low- or no-cost treatment options. The creation of a wide range of mental health treatment options, particularly for people with co-occurring conditions, would go a long way towards addressing the mental health crisis that we see in New York City and likely would be very cost effective as it would reduce arrests and reduce the population of Rikers Island. This includes creating more supportive housing programs with supportive services and mental health treatment which offers people long-term stability and reduces involvement in the criminal legal system. We would also like to see New York City expand access to Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), a team-based mental health service for people living with SMI which aims to support people in their recovery and integration into the community. This will help people living with mental illness and struggling with housing and food insecurity to get the services they need without the use of the criminal legal system.

Expand employment training and paid programming for young people

Many young people first become involved in the criminal legal system due to an arrest for retail theft. Poverty, lack of access to employment and education increase the likelihood of criminal legal system involvement, especially for young people. The city must expand access to after-school programs, job training and mental health support. Programming and resources that help alleviate these conditions are alternatives to incarceration, as they prevent young people at risk of system involvement from encountering the system in the first place. Many people we serve are only able to gain access to community-based programs after their contact with the criminal legal system. The people we serve are often eager to take advantage of any resources that we can connect them with. Being able to do so before participation is mandated by a court is paramount to building a safer New York. It should not take being charged with a crime to get youth connected to resources that they are eager to make the most of and desperately need.

We urge the council to support passage of the Youth Justice Innovation Fund (A.10264-Romero/S.643-Cleare), which would direct \$50 million from the annual state-wide Raise the Age appropriation to community-based organizations to provide a continuum of services from prevention, early intervention, to alternatives to detention, placement and incarceration for youth aged 12 through 25. The Fund would direct dollars to the kinds of services across the state and New York City which are designed for adolescents and young adults and have been shown to reduce rearrest.⁸ Research shows that program models like credible messenger mentoring, family focused multidimensional therapy such as Multisystemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, restorative justice and wraparound programs that include education, mentoring, job placement and care coordination produce better results for young people and community safety over more punitive approaches, including jail, placement and prison.

⁸ Richard Mendel, Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration, The Sentencing Project. June 2023.

Pass a New York City Council Resolution in Support of the NYS Treatment Court Expansion Act

New York City should commit to creating more off ramps from the criminal legal system. The City Council should call on the state legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the Treatment Court Expansion Act (S.4547-Ramos)/A.4869-Forrest).

In 2009, as part of the Rockefeller Drug Law Reforms, New York passed the Judicial Diversion Program legislation. Under Criminal Procedure Law Article 216 (CPL §216), this legislation created a pathway for a small subset of people with substance use disorders to avoid prison and potentially have their charges reduced or dismissed after engaging in a course of treatment. This treatment is monitored by specialized court parts in every county in New York. Judicial diversion has successfully enabled thousands of individuals to minimize or avoid a criminal record while receiving the benefit of potentially lifesaving substance use treatment.

Judicial diversion has also realized the saving of tax dollars, from both reductions in reoffending and the decreased costs per capita of treatment versus incarceration. Unfortunately, CPL §216 diversion is limited to people with substance use disorders charged with a short list of crimes related to substance use. The current law leaves behind people who do not live with substance use disorders, but experience other mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, or cognitive impairments that can be effectively addressed through treatment.

People living with mental health issues deserve treatment, not jail. Mental health intervention through courts can decrease the jail population and provide people with access to treatment they would not otherwise receive if incarcerated. This has been shown to increase mental health program enrollment and completion of these programs reduces homelessness, psychiatric hospitalizations, and rates of recidivism.⁹ New York can become a leader in diverting people with mental health issues out of the criminal legal system and into treatment by passing the Treatment Court Expansion Act.

Streamline access to benefits and city services

The city has invested in a vast network of social services to meet the needs of New Yorkers. Too often, people do not know about these programs, struggle to complete opaque application processes, or are denied benefits they are entitled to.

⁹ Nazisha Dholakia and Daniela Gilbert, What Happens When We Send Mental Health Providers Instead of Police, *Vera Institute of Justice: Think Justice Blog*, 2021, Available online at <https://www.vera.org/blog/what-happenswhen-we-send-mental-health-providers-instead-of-police>.



CityFHEPS vouchers, for example, can be the path to securing safe, affordable, and permanent housing, but pervasive administrative hurdles make these vouchers difficult to access and use. There are several immediate administrative fixes to the CityFHEPS program that would help New Yorkers access vouchers and expand the pool of apartments available to voucher holders. We encourage this administration to authorize additional social service providers to submit CityFHEPS applications and streamline the approval process by eliminating unnecessary steps and establishing time guidelines.

Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to testify before the City Council and engage in the public discourse regarding retail theft and raise our concerns about the criminalization of poverty and the proliferation of surveillance in low-income communities of color. We recognize the need to support small businesses, and we urge the city to invest in services that meet the needs of people in our communities, and discourage any investments that expand policing, surveillance, and criminalization of those living in poverty.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to contact me at gmitchell@bds.org.



Testimony on Behalf of the Retail Council of New York State

New York City Council

Committees on Public Safety and Small Business

February 26, 2026

Testimony Submitted by:

Kelsey Dorado Bobersky

Director of State and Local Government Relations

Retail Council of New York State

kelseydorado@rcnys.com

Good afternoon, Chairs Feliz and Thomas-Henry and honorable Committee members:

My name is Kelsey Dorado Bobersky; I am the Director of State and Local Government Relations for the Retail Council of New York State. Our organization is the state's leading trade group for the retail industry, representing member stores in New York City and across the state, ranging from the smallest independent merchants to national and international brands. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on retail theft prevention and introductions 553 and 623.

Store and community safety is our organization's top priority, and it has been for years. Our work in this space is focused on organized retail crime syndicates and those engaging in habitual retail theft. This criminal activity goes well beyond the obvious financial loss for retailers – it is a serious issue that compromises the safety of store employees and customers.

At the state level, we joined the Governor, the Attorney General and lawmakers in 2024 to support and advance new laws and related funding to address the rise in retail theft throughout the state. These efforts have proven to be effective, as Governor Hochul in August announced that retail theft has declined across New York.

In New York City, the Retail Council has partnered with elected officials, district attorneys, the NYPD, businesses and community groups through the New York City Retail Theft Task Force. The effective and consistent collaboration among dozens of participants at each meeting cannot be understated. Since the first meeting at Gracie Mansion in December 2023, retail theft was added to the weekly CompStat report – giving local businesses and communities the data necessary to respond in a meaningful way. According to the most recent CompStat report on February 22, 2026, retail theft has declined 24.2% since 2024.

We strongly encourage Mayor Mamdani to continue the work of the task force, with the support of the City Council. The progress that has been made, to date, is important to promote a safe and enjoyable shopping experience for residents and tourists alike.

As it relates to the bills being heard today, the Retail Council supports each bill, as they would offer valuable assistance to small stores throughout New York City. We are more than willing to partner with the City Council and the designated city agencies to promote the programs, should the bills be approved.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

**THE
LEGAL AID
SOCIETY
CRIMINAL
DEFENSE**

TESTIMONY

The Council of the City of New York
Committee on Public Safety
Jointly with the Committee on Small Business

An Oversight Hearing on Retail Theft

February 26, 2026

The Legal Aid Society
Criminal Defense Practice
49 Thomas Street
New York, NY 10013

By: Laura Moraff
Digital Forensics Unit
Staff Attorney
[REDACTED]
LMoraff@legal-aid.org

I. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Since 1876, The Legal Aid Society (LAS) has provided free legal services to New York City residents who are unable to afford private counsel. Annually, through our criminal, civil and juvenile offices, our staff handles over 180,000 matters for low-income families and individuals. By contract with the city, LAS serves as the primary defender of indigent people prosecuted in the state court system.

In 2013, the Digital Forensics Unit (DFU) at LAS was created to serve and support our clients in the Criminal Defense Practice by providing expertise and analysis of digital evidence and electronic surveillance issues. Through investigation, research, and FOIL requests, DFU maintains leading expertise of the surveillance technologies and practices used in New York City to serve our current and future clients in criminal, juvenile, and civil cases. The DFU's attorneys and analysts also work to educate clients, attorneys, judges, and the public on digital forensics issues, and advocate for legislation to protect the privacy of all New Yorkers, including the most vulnerable among us. Our role and expertise uniquely position us to provide testimony to this Committee regarding Intro 623.

II. OPPOSITION TO INTRO 623, A BILL THAT WILL LEAD TO INCREASED SURVEILLANCE OF EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES AND IS NOT TAILORED TO ADDRESS RETAIL THEFT.

Intro 623 provides for a pilot program that will install security measures at small businesses “in zip codes of New York [C]ity with high rates of crimes associated with retail theft as determined by the police commissioner.” Section 1(b). The bill provides no guidance on what constitutes a *high* crime rate, which crimes are *associated* with retail theft, nor how the police commissioner will determine the appropriate thresholds. This is particularly concerning given that reference to “high rates of crime” is often put forth as a justification for discriminatory surveillance

that is actually based on race or socioeconomic status.¹ For example, “High Crime Area” was one of the most cited reasons that NYPD officers unlawfully stopped people from 2004-2009 under the City’s stop-and-frisk program (including in areas with crime rates below the average).² Surveillance cameras are already clustered in majority nonwhite neighborhoods,³ and affording the police commissioner complete discretion to determine which areas should be subject to increased surveillance will only perpetuate existing patterns of over-surveillance and over-policing of Black, brown, and low-income New Yorkers.⁴

The bill also requires that security cameras installed pursuant to the pilot program be able to “record all activity in front of and within 15 feet of either side of each entrance or exit of a small business that is used by patrons.” Section 2(a). This means that the surveillance will likely extend not only throughout the entire business, but also out onto public sidewalks and streets. Surveilling New Yorkers as they *pass by* small businesses will not decrease retail theft; instead, it will capture individuals as they sip coffees, take smoke breaks, hug their loved ones goodbye, or protest political causes on the street. The minimal benefit that might be achieved by this bill is outweighed by the heavy cost of surrendering New Yorkers to a ceaseless surveillance state.

As the federal government ramps up its surveillance efforts,⁵ it is more crucial than ever

¹ See Barton Gellman & Sam Adler-Bell, *The Disparate Impact of Surveillance*, The Century Foundation (Dec. 21, 2017), <https://tcf.org/content/report/disperate-impact-surveillance/#easy-footnote-bottom-58-23787>.

² *Stop and Frisk: The Human Impact* at 20, Center for Constitutional Rights, July 2012, <https://ccrjustice.org/sites/default/files/attach/2015/08/the-human-impact-report.pdf>

³ Sidney Fussell, *The All-Seeing Eyes of New York's 15,000 Surveillance Cameras*, *Wired* (Jun. 3, 2021), <https://www.wired.com/story/all-seeing-eyes-new-york-15000-surveillance-cameras/>; Amnesty International, *Inside the NYPD's Surveillance Machine*, <https://banthescan.amnesty.org/decode/>.

⁴ See generally Eleni Manis et al., *Seeing Is Misbelieving: How Surveillance Technology Distorts Crime Statistics*, Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (Jun. 12, 2024), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c1bfc7eee175995a4ceb638/W/6661bd7cd67b9b30b6283f1c/1717681533006/2024-06-06+Seeing+is+Misbelieving.pdf>.

⁵ See, e.g., Sheera Frenkel & Aaron Krolik, *How ICE Already Knows Who Minneapolis Protesters Are*, *New York Times* (Jan. 30, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/01/30/technology/tech-ice-facial-recognition-palantir.html>; Joseph Cox, *Ice Spends Millions on Clearview AI Facial Recognition to Find People 'Assaulting' Officers*, *404 Media* (Sep. 8, 2025), <https://www.404media.co/ice-spends-millions-on-clearview-ai-face-recognition-to-find-people-assaulting-officers/>; Joseph Cox, *DHS Gives Local Cops a Facial Recognition App to Find Immigrants*, *404*

that local governments step in to protect our privacy and freedom. Instead, Intro 623 contributes to an ever-expanding trove of footage that can be weaponized to identify and deport immigrants and build dossiers on any individual or group whose activities are of interest to the government.⁶

While Intro 623 does not expressly mention facial recognition technology, it will inevitably lead to increased biometric surveillance unless the Council acts.⁷ The NYPD routinely uses surveillance footage from bodegas and other businesses with its facial recognition technology to identify and arrest people. As detailed more thoroughly in The Legal Aid Society's forthcoming testimony for next week's hearing on facial recognition technology and the collection of biometric data, the NYPD's use of facial recognition technology has led to wrongful arrests and should be banned.⁸

But even when surveillance footage is not used in combination with biometric recognition technology, it still chills lawful and constitutionally protected activity. Intro 623 requires that the footage produced by pilot program cameras be viewable on other devices, including phones, computers, or closed circuit television monitor (CCTV). This means that someone—the bill does not disclose who—could be watching live feeds at any moment. As a customer shops for diapers,

Media (Nov. 4, 2025), <https://www.404media.co/cbp-quietly-launches-face-scanning-app-for-local-cops-to-do-immigration-enforcement/>; Craig McKee, *DHS Proposal Would Expand Biometric Data Collection in Immigration Cases, Including for Some U.S. Citizens*, ABC 15 (Jan. 2, 2026), <https://www.abc15.com/news/national/dhs-proposal-would-expand-biometric-data-collection-in-immigration-cases-including-for-some-u-s-citizens>.

⁶ See, e.g., Jake Offenhartz, *NYPD Shared a Palestinian Protester's Info with ICE. Now It's Evidence in Her Deportation Case*, AP News (May 2, 2025), <https://apnews.com/article/nypd-ice-leqaa-kordia-trump-palestinian-protests-90c6f446f431e8cec23a93172e1eb0b8>; Kevin Collier et al., *How ICE Is Using Facial Recognition to Bring Surveillance to the Streets*, NBC New York (Feb. 6, 2026), <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/national-international/ice-facial-recognition-surveillance-streets/6456164/>; Faiza Patel & Matthew Ruppert, *ICE Wants to Go After Dissenters As Well As Immigrants*, Brennan Center (Nov. 21, 2025), <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/ice-wants-go-after-dissenters-well-immigrants>; Makena Kelly & Vittoria Elliott, *DOGE Is Building a Master Database to Surveil and Track Immigrants*, Wired (Apr. 18, 2025), <https://www.wired.com/story/doge-collecting-immigrant-data-surveil-track/>.

⁷ The Legal Aid Society urges the Council to pass Intro 213 (banning biometric surveillance in places of public accommodation) and Intro 428 (banning biometric surveillance in residential buildings) and to introduce a bill to ban the use of biometric recognition technologies by the government.

⁸ See, e.g., Maria Cramer & Kashmir Hill, *How the N.Y.P.D.'s Facial Recognition Tool Landed the Wrong Man in Jail*, New York Times (Aug. 26, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/26/nyregion/nypd-facial-recognition-dismissed-case.html>.

lotion, or bread, or attends a protest in a park across from a shop, a government official might be closely watching their every move on a screen miles away.

Moreover, the bill requires that footage be maintained for a minimum of 30 days so that it can be made available to the NYPD and other government agencies. Section 2(i). Most retail theft incidents will be identified shortly after they occur, so retaining footage for a full month is unnecessary. Additionally, the bill requires that the cameras record “continuously during all hours of operation and for 6 hours after a small business equipped with such cameras closes.” Section 2(h). It is difficult to see how recording the street outside a shop 6 hours after it closes would prevent retail theft. The lengthy retention period and extended recording period instead suggest that the data will be used for other purposes, such as building a massive bank of footage capturing thousands of New Yorkers that can later be used—alone or in combination with other data sources—to retroactively track any one of them.

In order to guard against that dystopian future, we urge the Council not to enact Intro 623 or any other pilot program that will incentivize the installation of additional surveillance cameras. At the very least, the footage should be retained only for 72 hours,⁹ it should not cover any areas outside the premises of the business, and law enforcement should obtain a warrant before accessing it.

III. CONCLUSION

The Legal Aid Society thanks the Council for considering this testimony. We urge you not to pass Intro 623, and to instead focus on protecting New Yorkers from unnecessary and intrusive surveillance.

⁹ See, e.g., Martin Bastius, *The 72-Hour Rule: Privacy Regulations Fine-Tune Video Data Retention*, Medium (Aug. 18, 2023), https://medium.com/@martin_19004/the-72-hour-rule-privacy-regulations-fine-tune-video-data-retention-4cce69d2c7b3.

**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: 7/26/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: THOMAS ALB HARRIS KHAN

Address: _____

I represent: SBS

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: 7/26/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: THOMAS ALB HARRIS KHAN

Address: _____

I represent: NYPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 623 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/26/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Moraff

Address: 49 Thomas St.

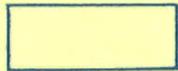
I represent: The Legal Aid Society

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: 02/26/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Thomas Aips (Executive Officer)

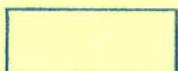
Address: 1 Police Plaza

I represent: NYPD

Address: 1 Police Plaza

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card



I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 553+623 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Matthew Bauer

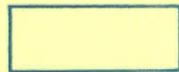
Address: [Redacted] Forest Hills, NY 11375

I represent: NYC BID Association, Inc.

Address: 60 29 East 61 St 3rd Fl NY, NY 10065

**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: 02/26/2026

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alyse Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: Surveillance Technology Oversight Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 5531623 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/26/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kelsey Dorado Bobersky

Address: 258 State St., Albany, NY 12210

I represent: Retail Council of NYS

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

in favor in opposition

Date: 2/26/26

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gina Mitchell

Address: 177 Livingston St. Brooklyn

I represent: Brooklyn Defenders Services

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

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

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FRANK GARCIA

Address: _____ NY

I represent: AVU SCH 71

Address: _____