

**City Council Committee on Finance  
Hearing on the Department of Finance  
FY 2027 Preliminary Budget**

Testimony of  
Acting Commissioner Jeffrey Shear  
March 11, 2026

## **I. Introduction**

Good afternoon, Chair Lee and members of the Finance Committee, and members of the City Council.

My name is Jeffrey Shear, and I am the acting commissioner of the New York City Department of Finance. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on DOF's Fiscal Year 2027 preliminary budget.

I am joined today by Jacqueline James, our chief financial officer and deputy commissioner for administration and planning. Deputy Commissioner James oversees DOF's budget, procurement, facilities, and operational planning, and I am grateful for her leadership and support.

Since this is the first time many of you are hearing from me in this role, I will begin with a brief introduction. I've spent my career in New York City public service and have been with DOF for twenty-eight years over two tours of duty, most recently serving as first deputy commissioner. My first job in City government was working as an office associate in DOF's Tax Audit and Enforcement Division. I'm honored to serve as acting commissioner of this great agency, and I look forward to working closely with this Council on the issues that matter most to you and your constituents.

## **II. Department of Finance overview**

DOF is responsible for collecting the revenue that makes city government possible. We administer the City's tax and revenue laws and perform a range of other responsibilities that touch nearly every New Yorker, including homeowners, renters, drivers, entrepreneurs, and more:

- We value more than one million properties each year and produce the annual assessment roll that determines property tax liability.
- We bill and collect property taxes, business taxes, and other charges.
- We grant property exemptions, abatements, and relief to developers, businesses, homeowners, and renters.
- We also record deeds and other property-related documents; adjudicate parking tickets; manage the City's banking and payment services; and represent the mayor on the boards of the City's five pension systems.

In his inaugural address, Mayor Mamdani said that his administration "will answer to all New Yorkers." In its range of services, the Department of Finance plays an essential role in delivering on that commitment.

Our mission is to administer the tax and revenue laws of the City fairly, efficiently, and transparently; to instill public confidence and encourage compliance; and to provide

exceptional customer service. Whether a New Yorker is purchasing a home, starting a business, applying for a benefit, or disputing a parking ticket, our responsibility is to make that interaction clear, accessible, and as easy as possible.

That responsibility is especially important at a time when the City confronts significant fiscal challenges. As we face and make tough budgetary decisions, effective revenue administration is essential to maintaining public trust. The work we do supports the services New Yorkers rely on and ensures that compliance is fair—in other words, that those who *can* pay *do* pay, and that those who cannot pay are connected to meaningful options for relief.

### **III. Fiscal Year 2027 preliminary budget**

Turning now to our preliminary budget. DOF's Fiscal Year 2027 preliminary budget is \$378.5 million, following a Fiscal Year 2026 budget of \$387.6 million. Our budget supports core revenue administration, frontline customer service, public safety functions carried out by the Sheriff's Office, and the technology systems we rely on to do our work.

The preliminary budget reflects an authorized headcount of 2,015 positions. As with other agencies, we are operating below authorized levels, and as of the release of the preliminary plan, our active headcount was 1,726. We continue to recruit and hire aggressively, within civil service rules and Citywide hiring processes, to fill critical titles and sustain service levels.

In Fiscal Year 2025, DOF collected more than \$50 billion in taxes and other revenues, including property taxes, business taxes, and a wide range of charges and fines that support City operations. Our budget is, at its core, an investment in the people, systems, and customer-facing services that ensure the fair and efficient collection of those revenues.

### **IV. New initiatives**

The Fiscal Year 2027 preliminary budget includes several key items that will help us meet our responsibilities and respond to emerging needs.

We are working with the Mayor's Office to establish the Office of Deed Theft Prevention, which will increase outreach, prevention, and enforcement for this priority issue.

We also will be expanding our outreach efforts to various communities and populations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank City Register Colette McCain-Jacques and Deputy City Register Carmelita Horton for recently appearing at a "Safeguard Your Finances" community forum organized by State Senator James Sanders. DOF staff stands ready to assist any Council Member who needs help spreading the word in their community.

Next, we have made technical adjustments to right-size our other-than-personal-services budget to better represent the annual costs of our property and business tax computer systems. These adjustments will make our budgeting more transparent and consistent year to year.

Finally, as part of the Citywide efficiency exercise, we will do our part to work with the Office of Management and Budget to identify savings and operational efficiencies, while protecting core revenue functions and customer service.

## **V. Highlights from the last year**

Even as we manage staffing and fiscal constraints, DOF has continued to make meaningful progress across our operations.

We continue to meet our customers wherever they are: at our walk-in centers, through in-person events across the five boroughs, and through direct mail and digital communications.

Last year, we surpassed our prior record for in-person outreach, participating in 272 events citywide and meeting more than 2,600 taxpayers.

We are also working to strengthen our email outreach efforts. We have set a goal of increasing the number of emails we send to customers by 50%. I am pleased to share that we are well on our way to meeting this goal. In the first two months of this year, we have reached 74,000 customers with targeted, timely information designed to help them take action, apply for benefits, and comply with the City's tax laws. This is 50,000 more emails than we sent through the same period in 2025.

We have also made improvements to critically important, customer-facing operations. For example, in our commercial parking violation hearings work, we have reduced the number of outstanding cases and implemented video hearings to give commercial vehicle operators a more convenient option to contest violations.

We have also continued to strengthen our procurement practices. The City Comptroller's Fiscal Year 2025 *Annual Report on Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise Procurement* reflects strong performance by DOF, including a meaningful improvement in the number of M/WBE small purchase registrations with our agency.

Specifically, we achieved a 50% M/WBE utilization by contract value for Local Law 74-eligible contracts and purchase orders, compared with the Citywide average of 8%, and we ranked among the top five most improved agencies by volume of M/WBE Small Purchase registrations. I'd like to thank CFO James and Agency Chief Contracting Officer Roman

Shpolyansky for this work. We remain committed to expanding opportunity and ensuring that City contracting dollars reach the diverse businesses that power New York.

As many of you know, a major focus of the past year has been implementing reforms to property tax enforcement that were enacted by the Council when it re-authorized the tax lien outreach and sale process through Local Law 82 of 2024. I want to thank you for your partnership in strengthening protections for homeowners and improving the City's approach to debt resolution.

Ahead of last year's lien outreach and sale process, we undertook an unprecedented effort to ensure that owners understood both the risks of leaving unpaid taxes and charges unresolved and their expanded options to address their situation without having their liens sold. Working with the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit and with our partners at HPD, DEP, and the Center for New York City Neighborhoods, we combined direct outreach, events, and communications to connect owners with property tax exemptions, targeted payment plans, and other options to help them avoid the lien sale.

As a result of these efforts, 85 percent of owners with properties on the initial outreach list were able to take action to be removed from the at-risk pool before the sale of liens, a higher rate than in previous years. In addition, the property tax delinquency rate fell by about half a percentage point—approximately \$150 million—compared to Fiscal Year 2024.

## **VI. Looking ahead**

Looking ahead, Mayor Mamdani has paused the lien sale for 2026 so that the Department of Finance can conduct a comprehensive six-month review and determine next steps.

We also remain committed to property tax reform. As the Council knows, the current property tax system is complex and widely viewed as inequitable. DOF supported the work of the New York City Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform, which issued a report in December 2021 calling for significant change. Since then, we have continued to analyze how the current system is falling short and the implications of different options to improve the system.

Mayor Mamdani has been clear that reform is a priority, and we are working to create a legislative proposal based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Commission. We will continue the work underway to advance reforms that make the system fairer and more transparent, while protecting the stability of the City's revenue base.

In addition, we have been tasked with preparing to run an Environmental Control Board amnesty program in Fiscal Year 2027. ECB debt consists of unresolved violations issued by several agencies, but most notably those issued by the Departments of Buildings and Sanitation that have become judgments and been referred to DOF for collection. If

authorized by the Council, an amnesty program will help owners and businesses resolve long-standing debt, come into compliance, and avoid escalating penalties. We look forward to working with the Council on the legislation that would be necessary to implement this program.

Finally, in the context of the City's budget gaps, we will continue to assist City Hall and the Office of Management and Budget with revenue and tax policy initiatives that meet the needs of the City, while staying focused on fairness, customer service, and efficient administration.

## **VII. Closing**

In closing, I want to thank the Council for your partnership and constructive engagement. The Department of Finance's work is invisible when it is done well—but it is foundational to everything the City does.

We remain committed to treating New Yorkers with respect and courtesy, improving how we communicate and deliver services, and administering the City's tax laws fairly and effectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.



March 11, 2026

**Testimony of Louisa Chafee, Director  
New York City Independent Budget Office  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Finance  
January 2026 Preliminary Budget and 2026-2030 Financial Plan**

Good morning, Speaker Menin, Deputy Speaker Williams, Council Finance Committee Chair Lee, and members of the committee. I am Louisa Chafee, Director of the Independent Budget Office (IBO). I am joined today by my colleagues Sarah Parker and Sarita Subramanian, IBO's Senior Research and Strategy Officers. We appreciate the opportunity to testify today on the Mamdani Administration's first Preliminary Budget.

This testimony will address three topics:

1. IBO's estimates of the City's revenues, expenditures, and gaps.
2. Ideas on ways to begin to close the gap with additional revenues, operational efficiencies and additional State funds to address unfunded mandates.
3. Framing potential lines of inquiry for the Administration.

**IBO Estimated Revenues, Expenditures, and Gaps**

The Mamdani administration's first budget is noteworthy because it reverses years of underbudgeting practices by prior administrations. IBO applauds the Administration's move to acknowledge the true cost of programs and services.

The Administration's budget is grounded in two optimistic revenue assumptions. First, it assumes that very robust growth will propel personal income taxes and business income taxes to greater heights. Second, while the Administration does not include new personal income tax revenues that would require State approval, it does include new property tax revenues that can only materialize if this Council approves such a change. Given these two assumptions, the Administration's forecasts exceed IBO's for almost every major tax category throughout the financial plan period.

The City's PIT collections have been bolstered in recent years by high earnings in key sectors and increased capital gains, amidst strong Wall Street performance. This trend continues, as shown by the very large bonuses issued in the financial sector at the end of calendar year 2025. IBO's PIT forecast is modestly lower than the Administration's.

Mayor Mamdani has proposed a 2 percentage-point increase to the rate for individuals with incomes over \$1 million. Last year's Federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)/H.R. 1 made permanent a set of significant tax breaks for the highest earners, tax breaks granted during the first Trump Administration that would have expired, but that were made permanent by OBBBA, significantly lowering the tax burdens on high earners.

Back when those tax breaks first took effect in 2019, NY State took action to recover for the State some of the funds high-income taxpayers were no longer paying federally. This points up a key distinction in how income taxes are structured at the State and City levels.

As detailed in IBO's February 10, 2026 PIT report:

- The City only has four tax brackets. NYC applies an identical tax rate of 3.876% to the New Yorker whose AGI is \$60,000 as it does for the New Yorker who earns over \$5 billion (which was the highest income in 2023, the most recently reported year).
- By contrast, the State's PIT imposes higher and more progressively increasing rates across *nine* brackets. The State's tax rate for income of \$60,000 is approximately 5.5%, while at \$25 million, it climbs to approximately 10.9%.

The Administration's outlook for corporate tax collections is also quite rosy. It is boosted by Governor Hochul's call for NY State to decouple from certain federal tax code provisions that were also enacted as part of the OBBBA this past summer. But after two years, the Administration projects corporate tax revenue to drop substantially, below recent levels. IBO projects somewhat lower corporate tax collections this fiscal year and next, but continued growth throughout the financial plan period.

Mayor Mamdani has proposed increasing the average property tax rate from 12.283% to 13.450% (a 9.5% increase). Yesterday, IBO published a report describing the structure of the property tax rate setting system. Reflecting strength in the tentative roll for 2027, IBO forecasts higher property tax revenue of \$36.9 billion in 2027 rising to \$41.2 billion in 2030.

In general, IBO's economic outlook is consistent with the Mamdani administration and the broader macroeconomic consensus: the national economy has generally held up. However, there are conflicting signals for future performance, such as the strength of Wall Street and consumer behavior, extremely weak job growth and continued threats to the global economic order, stemming from tariff chaos and the war in Iran.

**Rainy Day Funds to Be Used for 2026 and Replaced in 2028.** The Administration is using \$980 million from the Rainy Day Fund to balance 2026 and intends to replace those funds in 2028. This points up the need for clear rules on use of the Rainy Day Fund, rules that are at the discretion of the Council and Administration to set. IBO applauds the Administration's decision to reduce the allocation for the Retiree Health Benefits Trust, now \$229 million lower than in the November Plan. This fund, often used by past mayors

to set aside excess funds and avoid much of the scrutiny normally afforded by the public budgeting process.

**IBO Estimates Substantial Gaps for Next Year and Beyond.** IBO projects that if spending stays constant total revenues will grow by an annual average of 2% a year from 2025 through 2030, and that – partly as a result of the Administration’s laudable corrections to previously underbudgeting – expenditures will increase an average of 4.5% a year. Thus, IBO projects gaps of \$535 M in current year and almost \$6B in FY 27. These forecasts cannot yet factor in the impact of tariff issues or the war with Iran, nor of likely additional cuts to federal aid or the next round of collective bargaining, all of which contribute to uncertainty 2027 and beyond.

**Figure 1. IBO and Mamdani Administration Estimates of Revenues, Expenditures, and Budget Gaps**

Dollars in Millions

	Fiscal Year									
	2026		2027		2028		2029		2030	
	OMB	IBO	OMB	IBO	OMB	IBO	OMB	IBO	OMB	IBO
<b>Revenues</b>	\$122,370	\$121,415	\$127,001	\$122,676	\$128,933	\$125,573	\$130,203	\$127,539	\$133,024	\$130,528
<b>Expenditures</b>	\$122,370	\$121,950	\$127,001	\$128,615	\$135,595	\$137,078	\$136,957	\$138,501	\$140,133	\$141,578
<b>Budget Gaps</b>	\$0	(\$535)	\$0	(\$5,939)	(\$6,662)	(\$11,505)	(\$6,754)	(\$10,962)	(\$7,109)	(\$11,049)

SOURCES: Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Independent Budget Office (IBO) February 2026 Budget Forecasts  
 NOTES Revenue and expenditure estimates do not include intra-city transfers.

**Closing the Gap: Controlling Expenditure Growth**

Several categories of expenses are continuing to drive the scale of total expenditures and are areas that have experienced substantial growth in recent years.

CityFHEPS is already the second largest rental assistance program in the nation, second only to Section 8. Spending has grown from under \$300 million in 2021 to almost \$1.3 billion in 2025, with an assumption in the Preliminary Budget that it will rise to almost \$3.5 billion by 2030. It is doubtful that there is sufficient housing supply in New York City to absorb that level of spending. IBO has concerns about this steeply increasing level, but recognizes that the Council and the Administration are working to establish a sound budget footing for this important program.

Spending on uniformed services overtime in Police, Fire, Correction, and Sanitation has been chronically underbudgeted in the past, with the NYPD’s spending as the largest driver of total costs. NYPD spending in this area has trended downwards under the leadership of Commissioner Tisch. As of the November Plan, NYPD was on pace to spend \$971 million this year, and as of the Preliminary Budget, that pace had slowed to \$894 million. The Mamdani administration has also realistically budgeted both NYPD and Fire Department personnel spending for future years, which is a stark departure from budgeting practices of past administrations.

At the Department of Correction (DOC), spending on uniformed overtime has trended steadily upwards over the past few years, and is on pace to be as high as it has ever been in 2026 at \$330 million. The Mamdani administration did not add money to DOC's budget in 2027, citing uncertainty around the ongoing situation with the court-ordered Federal Remediation Manager. IBO correspondingly projects that DOC will require more money in its budget next year.

The New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has also experienced an increasing trend in uniformed overtime expenditures from \$140 million in 2024 and \$178 million in 2025, with expenditures unusually higher this year due to two major snow storms.

**Due process cases.** Spending on these cases—which are filed by public and nonpublic students seeking special education services outside of the public school system—has grown from \$807 million in 2021 to \$1.2 billion in 2025. The Preliminary Budget adds additional funds to this program's budget for a total budget of \$1.6 billion in 2027 and beyond. Two areas drive this spending: 1.) tuition payments for private schools; and 2.) spending on educational services for nonpublic school students. Between 2021 and 2025, spending on nonpublic students, who are entitled to services under a 2007 amendment to State law, grew by 91%. Those state-eligible cases accounted for 59% of all due process cases settled between August 2021 and February 2026 and account for 29% of total payments for that time period.

### **Unfunded State Mandates**

Large growth in due process cases is but one example of the unfunded mandates NY State imposes. NYC is also being required to bring class sizes into compliance by September 2028 or risk losing a portion of state education aid. In December 2025, IBO estimated that NYCPS needed to budget for almost 7,000 additional teachers. The Mamdani administration added \$3.6 billion for 2027 through 2030 to meet this mandate, only \$228 million of which would come from state aid.

As the Mayor cited in his presentation of this Preliminary Budget, the City contributes almost 55% of the total revenue collected by the State but only receives less than 41% of State funding. As described earlier, the State increased its personal income collection from the wealthiest earners in the State—most of whom reside in New York City—when it needed new revenue. But this funding has not been directed back to the City, even to assist with areas where the State is requiring services the City must struggle to fund.

Another area where the State has imposed significant and disproportionate costs on the City is that of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) paratransit services.

The City is required by State law to reimburse the MTA for Access-a-Ride. Before 2024, the City was only required to reimburse 50% of paratransit operating costs after fares and dedicated taxes. Starting in 2024, State law increased that to 80%, through at least 2027.

Similarly, for foster care, the City paid about 30% of costs prior to 2017 and 60% in 2027, while the State share declined from 54% to 26%, as the State has shifted more costs onto the City. The Preliminary Budget projects that the City will spend \$523 million (60%) in 2027 rising to \$579 million (60%) in 2030.

### **Closing the Gap: Operational Efficiencies**

The Administration is working to find savings through operational efficiencies. The newly-appointed Chief Savings Officers (CSO) at every Mayoral agency are tasked with the responsibility to identify 1.5% in savings for 2026 and 2.5% in savings for 2027 and beyond. The plans are due on March 20, 2026. The Preliminary Budget reflects the hiring of 50 new auditors at the NYC Department of Finance, which IBO has long-estimated could generate \$165 million annually. Similarly, it reflects the addition of 200 lawyers and 100 support staff at the NYC Law Department, also with the goal of generating savings. There are many other areas, such as supplies and materials, where it is likely that savings could be generated, and IBO looks forward to reviewing the CSO reports as they emerge.

### **Closing the Gaps: Generating Revenues**

IBO has published on additional ideas to raise revenues, both by eliminating or reducing existing tax breaks and by increasing various other specialized taxes. These ideas, which would all require NYS legislation to change, include the elimination of various tax abatements and exemptions, either immediately or over time. These would include the Industrial and Commercial Abatement Program (ICAP), the Relocation and Employment Assistance Program (REAP), the Relocation Assistance Credit for Employees (RACE), and the property tax exemption currently enjoyed by Madison Square Garden (MSG). IBO has estimated the impact of various other potential tax changes. The City also may choose to reassess the structure for fees and fines. These ideas are not sufficient to close the currently estimated gaps, but could contribute to an ultimate solution.

### **Potential Lines of Inquiry for the Administration**

Given the unusual timing of IBO's testimony this year, I will conclude by listing some of the topics where IBO continues to have questions, and looks forward to hearing from OMB and City agencies in the weeks to come. These include:

#### Revenues

- Why does the Administration remain as optimistic about the national and local economy in light of such events as the Supreme Court on tariffs and the war in Iran?
- Why does the Administration project such an optimistic outlook for corporate taxes through 2028, and then, by contrast, a precipitous falloff in later years?

#### Expense

- How is the Administration factoring into its budget planning the impact of a wide array of federal changes that are already impacting New Yorkers and will continue to grow in significance this year? These include: hunger for New Yorkers no longer

eligible for SNAP, the loss of Essential Plan health coverage by hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, plummeting vaccination rates, caps on student loans and severe declines in the numbers of foreign students coming into NY City, increased work requirements for public benefits, and federal cutbacks in climate and infrastructure resilience.

- This Administration appears to re-investing in environmental programs such as composting, but it is unclear why the Administration continues to projecting the costs of waste export and organics processing lower than IBO's estimates.
- How do childcare vouchers factor into the Mayor's plans to expand free or reduced-cost care for children ages birth-6? Given the Governor's additional funding, what level of voucher usage is anticipated going forward, and what are the plans given the large waitlist?
- What is the plan to address pay parity for community-based organizations under contract with NYC, whose employees are paid much less than City counterparts?

#### City Workforce

- What is this Administration's approach to dealing with vacancies and hiring?
- Currently, the Labor Reserve has budgeted funding for 1.5% annual raises for collective bargaining agreements, which is about half of the increases negotiated by the Adams administration. Does the Mamdani administration anticipate increasing the Labor Reserve for the next round?
- What is the basis of the saving assumptions that support the budgeted lower costs for health insurance through the NYC Employees Preferred Provider Organization (NYCE PPO)?

#### **Conclusion**

In sum, I would like to again commend the Mamdani administration for its commitment to clarity, honesty, and transparency at the outset of the 2027 budget process. This Council now will navigate this very challenging budget environment, even as the issues mount every day with weakening job growth and chaos in the global economy. IBO looks forward to continuing to work with you in the months ahead, and we are available to address any questions you may have this morning.



**CAMBA Inc.**

**Testimony Before the New York City Council**

**Preliminary Budget Hearing**

**Committee on Finance**

**March 11, 2026**

Council Member Linda Lee and members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Valerie Barton-Richardson, and I serve as the President and CEO of CAMBA, Inc. and CAMBA Housing Ventures, Inc.

Each year, CAMBA proudly serves nearly 80,000 individuals and families across New York City through more than 180 programs at over 100 locations in all five boroughs. Our work is rooted in a comprehensive, client-centered approach designed to help New Yorkers achieve stability and self-sufficiency. For decades, CAMBA has strengthened communities through programs focused on housing stability, education and youth development, economic development and workforce initiatives, and community support services.

However, the City's Preliminary Budget leaves significant gaps that directly affect the communities we serve. While the City recently released a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Comprehensive After School System (COMPASS) elementary school programs, the Preliminary Budget does not appear to include sufficient funding to support the updated contract structure and rates outlined in the RFP. Providers are being asked to operate under a new procurement framework without clear assurance that the necessary funding is reflected in the City's financial plan. Without adequate baseline funding, organizations may struggle to deliver high-quality afterschool programming, sustain staffing, and meet the program expectations established in the new contracts.

The Preliminary Budget also fails to address shortfalls in the Learning to Work (LTW) program for overage, under-credited students pursuing their high school diplomas. Additionally, it does not provide cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for the nonprofit workforce that delivers these essential services. Continuing to fund a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for City-contracted human services workers from 2026-2027 to uphold the City's multi-year COLA deal commitment must be included.

CAMBA's workforce development programs play a vital role in helping New Yorkers access meaningful employment and contribute to the city's economic growth. Our efforts focus on three key areas:

- **Job Training Programs:** Equipping individuals with the practical skills needed to succeed in today's workforce.
- **Career Counseling:** Providing guidance that helps participants identify and pursue viable career pathways.
- **Placement Services:** Connecting qualified job seekers with employers to bridge the gap between talent and opportunity.

To ensure these programs remain strong and accessible, the City must:

- Restore and baseline \$31 million for the Department of Education's Learning to Work (LTW) program; and
- Ensure that new FY27 afterschool contracts include COLAs and cost escalators over the life of the contract to sustain a stable afterschool system and fairly compensate staff.

In addition, the City Council must:

- Restore \$16.5 million for adult literacy providers. Currently, the Council fills a significant funding gap by supporting a large portion of the City's adult literacy programs through one-year allocations after the Department of Youth and Community Development's most recent Adult Literacy RFP restricted program eligibility.

#### Conclusion

At CAMBA, our mission is to connect people with the opportunities they need to enhance their quality of life. Achieving that mission requires strong partnerships with the City and a funding structure that ensures programs are adequately resourced, staff are equitably compensated, and nonprofit providers are paid on time. Investing in these systems is not only an investment in organizations like CAMBA—it is an investment in the stability, workforce, and long-term prosperity of New York City.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact Drew Gabriel, Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs, at [Drew.Gabriel@camba.org](mailto:Drew.Gabriel@camba.org).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Valerie Barton-Richardson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Valerie" being the most prominent.

Valerie Barton-Richardson  
President and CEO  
CAMBA, Inc.



**Submitted Testimony of Con Edison to the New York City Council Committee on Finance on the  
Proposed NYC FY 2026 Executive Budget  
March 11, 2026**

Con Edison respectfully submits this testimony regarding Mayor Mamdani's proposed FY 2027 Executive Budget for New York City.

Con Edison serves approximately 10 million people across New York City and Westchester, delivering safe and reliable electric, gas, and steam service to households, small businesses, hospitals, airports, the country's largest transit systems, and critical public infrastructure. Our system underpins nearly every aspect of daily life in New York City, from public health and emergency response to housing, transportation, and economic activity.

We welcome this opportunity to affirm our *Clean Energy Commitment* as New York advances its transition to a sustainable energy future. This strategic framework guides our investments in the development and operation of a resilient, innovative, and reliable energy infrastructure. Central to this mission is our dedication to the large-scale electrification of heating and transportation, and our overall commitment to providing customers with access to 100% clean energy.

**Con Edison's Local Economic Impact and Investment**

Over half of Con Edison of New York's 10,800 employees live in our service territory, and 57% of those employees are union members—a rate nearly three times higher than the industry average. Our commitment to representation is reflected at every level: 59% of our total workforce are people of color, while women and people of color hold 45% and 30% of our leadership positions, respectively.

**NYC Property Taxes and Direct Impact on Customer Bills**

Under New York City's 4-Class property tax system, utility infrastructure is classified as Class 3 property and taxed at a standalone utility rate. These property taxes are a cost of service and are passed directly to customers through the delivery portion of their utility bills. As a result, every increase in Class 3 property taxes translates immediately and directly into higher customer bills.

Con Edison is the single largest taxpayer in New York City, and property tax costs borne by customers have grown at an alarming pace. Between 2019 and 2024, property taxes paid by our customers increased by approximately 45 percent. In 2025 alone, those taxes totaled more than \$2.6 billion. These increases compound other affordability pressures facing New Yorkers and disproportionately affect customers who rely on energy for basic needs such as heating, cooling, and medical equipment.

In addition to these rising property tax obligations, Con Edison carries a substantially higher overall tax burden than comparable utilities across the country. Industry data shows that Con Edison's taxes, excluding income taxes consistently exceed those of peer utilities by a wide margin, reaching approximately 21 percent in 2023, compared to a peer average of about 12 percent. Other major utilities serving New York and similar jurisdictions operate under far lower tax loads, typically ranging between 5 and 17 percent. This disparity illustrates that Con Edison's customers are uniquely exposed to elevated tax-driven charges that utility customers in other regions simply do not face. ***As property taxes imposed on Con Edison flow directly and immediately into customer bills, any increase in these taxes results in higher costs for ratepayers.*** These charges are fixed components of delivery rates and customers have no ability to avoid or reduce them. Every additional tax assessment on Class 3 utility property is reflected in the bills paid by households, small businesses, and essential service providers.

This structure places property taxation at the center of energy affordability in New York. Utility infrastructure is taxed at a standalone rate and does not receive the relief mechanisms available to other property classes. We appreciate the NYC Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform report but note that it was silent on Class 3 properties. If property tax reform discussions remain silent on Class 3, these tax-driven pressures will continue to intensify.

### **Energy Affordability**

In 2025, the company provided \$243 million in total bill discounts to 530,000 eligible customers through its Energy Affordability Program (EAP). In January 2026, Con Edison launched the Enhanced EAP (EEAP). EEAP expands access to monthly bill discounts for the first time to moderate- and additional low-income customers, not enrolled in the government benefit programs which have traditionally been required to qualify for this assistance.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with elected officials to host customer support days in their respective districts. During these events, we offer in-person assistance with Con Edison accounts, educate and guide customers through enrollment in various programs such as EAP and payment plans, and share information about energy efficiency rebate programs. Members of the NYC Council interested in hosting an event can reach out to our Government or Regional Community Affairs teams.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Mayor Mamdani's proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Preliminary budget for the City of New York.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please reach out to Sheelah Feinberg, City Government Relations, at [feinbergs@coned.com](mailto:feinbergs@coned.com)



Freedom  
Agenda

## Testimony to the City Council Committee on Finance

Submitted March 11, 2026

Chair Lee and Council members,

I'm submitting this testimony as the Co-Director of Freedom Agenda. We are led by our members who have experienced incarceration themselves, or through a loved one. We're one of the organizations leading the [Campaign to Close Rikers](#).

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. Unfortunately, key investments to promote well-being and reduce incarceration are missing from the Preliminary Budget. We urge the City Council to ensure the adopted budget aligns with the City's legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, by increasing funding for mental health resources, diversion and reentry programs, and jail oversight. Specifically, we've identified a need for:

- **\$21.2M to meet critical mental health needs in the community** through investments in Intensive Mobile Treatment, Forensic Assertive Community Treatment, an outpatient competence restoration pilot program, Crisis Respite Centers, and capital funding for new dual-diagnosis residential treatment beds.
- **\$48.5M for diversion and reentry programs** including restoring cuts to and expanding funding for alternatives to incarceration and reentry programs, expanding mental health programs for court-involved youth, and opening new units of low-barrier housing for people with court involvement and mental health diagnoses.
- **\$3M to increase the Board of Correction's oversight capacity.**

In recent years, the City Council fought hard for investments in evidence-based programs that strengthen communities, improve public health, and keep people out of Rikers. These programs are not only effective; they are also popular. [A recent survey](#) of crime survivors in New York City showed that 3 of 4 preferred alternatives to incarceration and mental health treatment instead of jail.

We thank you for your advocacy, and we need to do more. The truth is these recent investments still pale in comparison to the cost of Rikers, which is set to operate at a cost of **\$2.99B in FY27**. Hundreds of people still sit on waiting lists for community-based mental health treatment like Intensive Mobile Treatment, Forensic Assertive Community Treatment, and Justice Involved Supportive Housing. In the meantime, too many spiral into crisis, are met with police instead of healthcare workers, and end up at Rikers, where their health almost always deteriorates.

We believe this Council is also aware that we absolutely do have the resources needed to make these investments. Recently, the *Nunez* federal monitor pointed out what our members know far too well – that the *“enormous resources—that the City devotes to a system that is at the same time overstaffed*

*and underserved—are not being deployed effectively.”* The Council recently identified that some long-standing vacancies in City agencies could provide opportunities for cost savings. Nowhere is this more appropriate than the Department of Correction. DOC has 7,060 authorized positions for uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2026 they employed 5,759 and 1,301 positions were vacant. These vacancies have been growing for years, despite [lowering eligibility requirements](#), [increasing pay and benefits](#), and conducting extensive recruitment efforts, including a [\\$5M recruitment campaign](#) in FY26.

Filling these vacancies would cost an additional \$174M annually. Given the administration’s stated commitment to reducing incarceration and cutting wasteful spending, these uniformed vacancies should be eliminated. Cutting these vacancies is also a first step to right-sizing the department. With approximately 6,800 people in custody, DOC's authorized headcount amounts to a **staffing ratio that is 4 times higher than the national average**, and more than **2 times more officers** than will be required to operate the borough jails.

**The plan to close Rikers Island approved by this Council in 2019 marked a commitment to take a more effective approach to public safety. That shift requires spending our money differently.** With an administration in place that has firmly expressed their commitment to closing Rikers, and meeting public health needs with public health responses, this is the year to finally shift those resources.

Included with this testimony is [full budget analysis](#) that outlines the amendments to align the FY27 budget with closing Rikers Island.

We also strongly support the proposal put forward by the People’s Plan to collect on the billions owed to the City by the largest lawbreaking corporations.

Thank you,

Sarita Daftary

Co-Director, Freedom Agenda

[Sdaftary@urbanjustice.org](mailto:Sdaftary@urbanjustice.org)

[attached – FY2027 Campaign to Close Rikers Budget Analysis]



## FY2027 City Budget Analysis & Priorities

At a cost of nearly half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create community safety. Unfortunately, key investments to promote well-being and reduce incarceration are missing from the Preliminary Budget. To align the FY2027 budget with the City’s legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, it must include:

1. **An additional \$21.2M to meet mental health needs outside of Rikers, including:**
  - a. **\$11M more to eliminate the waitlist for [Intensive Mobile Treatment \(IMT\)](#) teams.**  
Though \$11M was added in last year’s budget, the waitlist to access this evidence-based program was last reported as [672 people](#). The proposed funding would allow for 8 more teams, each serving 27 people.
  - b. **\$2M more to create four more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment \(FACT\)](#) teams.**  
Though \$4.5M was added for ACT teams in last year’s budget, the combined waitlist for all ACT teams was last reported at [682 people](#), and there is particular need for teams that serve people returning from jail and prison (FACT). The City should also work with the state to eliminate the waitlist for all ACT teams.<sup>1</sup>
  - c. **\$1.7M to establish an outpatient competency restoration pilot program for 50-75 people who might otherwise be waiting at Rikers for [transfer to a state hospital](#).**
  - d. **\$3M in capital funds to support 60 new residential treatment beds for people with serious mental illness and with co-occurring addictions.**<sup>2</sup>
  - e. **\$3.5M to open more crisis respite centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.**  
Though \$2.5M was added in last year’s budget, New York City still does not have four more crisis respite centers than it did in 2023, when Local Law 118-2023 was passed.
2. **An additional \$48.5M for diversion and reentry services through the Office of Criminal Justice (OCJ), including:**
  - a. **\$1.3M to restore cuts to Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs, and \$3.3M to restore cuts to Reentry Services.**
  - b. **\$10M in additional funds for ATI programs and \$10M in additional funds for Reentry Services, as recommended by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#), to bring these evidence-based models to scale.**
  - c. **\$6.89M to expand programs serving court-involved youth with mental health needs.**
  - d. **\$20.3M<sup>3</sup> to establish at least 150 units of low-barrier housing for people with court-involvement and mental health diagnoses.**
  - e. **OCJ should also publish an analysis of the full need for transitional reentry housing, and conduct a data match to generate an updated eligibility list for [Justice Impacted Supportive Housing \(JISH\)](#), a permanent reentry housing model.**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ACT teams are typically funded and licensed by the State. For FACT teams, the City adds approximately \$675,000 per team, to offer focused reentry services.

<sup>2</sup> State funding through OASAS would provide operational funds.

<sup>3</sup> Approximately \$135,000 per unit, based on similar Safe Haven models.

<sup>4</sup> While JISH funding would come through DOHMH, OCJ coordinated the first (and only) data match, when the program was launched.

3. **An additional \$3M to increase the Board of Correction’s oversight capacity.** The Board of Correction has testified that they need at least 27 more staff roles than they currently have<sup>5</sup> to adequately carry out their oversight responsibilities, and would ideally have a budget set at a minimum percentage of the Department of Correction.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile, DOC remains over-resourced. With new management in place, the focus should be better deployment of resources, not hiring more staff. The FY2027 budget should:

4. **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff, to begin to rightsize the agency**
  - a. The Department of Correction has 7,060 authorized positions for uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2026 they employed [5,759](#) and [1,301 positions were vacant](#).<sup>7</sup> Filling these vacancies would cost an additional **\$174M annually**.<sup>8</sup> Given the administration’s stated commitment to reducing incarceration and cutting wasteful spending, these uniformed vacancies should be eliminated.
5. **Reduce overtime spending** by consolidating operations and permanently closing jails on Rikers, starting with the vacant Anna M. Kross Center, where 109 officers are still assigned.<sup>9</sup>
6. **Conduct a staffing analysis before the release of the Executive Budget**, to determine how many staff DOC actually needs to operate the facilities it currently manages.

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## DOC Budget Breakdown

- The Preliminary Budget proposes spending at least **\$2.99 billion**<sup>10</sup> for jail operations in FY2027. This represents a 5% increase from last year’s adopted budget.
- The Preliminary Budget shows an authorized headcount of [7,060 uniformed DOC officers](#). With approximately 6,800 people in custody, this amounts to a **staffing ratio that is 4 times higher than the national average**, and more than **2 times more officers** than will be required to operate the borough jails.<sup>11</sup>
- DOC is on track to spend **over \$370 million on overtime** for uniform staff in FY26, 132% above their adopted budget.<sup>12</sup>
- New York City spent at least [\\$485,801](#) annually to incarcerate one person at Rikers in FY2025.
- Most of DOC’s costs are driven by staffing. The FY2027 budget projects that [87% of DOC expenses](#) will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

**Does the Department of Correction have a shortage of staff?**

No. In her [contempt order](#) issued in November 2024, Judge Laura Swain wrote “*enormous resources—that the City devotes to a system that is at the same time overstaffed and underserved—are not being deployed effectively.*” In [A Shrinking System with Similar Spending](#), the Independent Budget Office reported that

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<sup>5</sup> Based on testimony from the Board of Correction on March 7, 2025 that approximately 60 staff are needed to fulfill their mandate. BOC’s proposed staffing in the F27 budget is 33 people, and total agency budget of \$3.67M, per [Departmental Estimates](#).

<sup>6</sup> Board of Corrections representatives [previously advocated](#) increasing their budget to a minimum percentage of DOC’s.

<sup>7</sup> Per Independent Budget Office

<sup>8</sup> Based on \$133,756 per officer, as calculated by the Vera Institute.

<sup>9</sup> [February 2026 Departmental Estimates, Fiscal Year 2027 - All Volumes](#) p. 1379

<sup>10</sup> Including expenses, associated fringe benefits, pensions, and debt service. [February 2026 Preliminary Budget Expense Revenue Contract](#)

<sup>11</sup> The Independent Rikers Commission estimates [3,240 officers](#) will be needed in the borough jail system.

<sup>12</sup> Per Independent Budget Office

between 2014 and 2023 “DOC staffing declined by 24%, while the jail population fell by 45%.” Mismanagement has resulted in excessive overtime for officers - that is bad for the workforce, for people in custody, and isn’t fiscally responsible. The solution for this is better management, not more hiring. Reducing DOC’s headcount is an important first step to [rightsizing](#) the department.

**If they are not understaffed, why is there a shortage of officers to cover posts and provide services?**

The Board of Correction’s [death investigation reports](#) give an insight into the most serious failures at DOC. They do not show that staffing shortages led to these tragedies - rather, they describe instances in which officers did not complete their required tours, or left their assigned posts (not to cover another post, but to socialize with other officers).

**Does DOC need to replace officers who are retiring?**

Eliminating vacancies would not prevent DOC from replacing officers who quit, retire, or are terminated. It could push DOC to more effectively supervise and manage their very large staff. In 2025, 470 uniformed staff left the Department, but DOC was able to hire [only 445 officers](#), despite [lowering eligibility requirements](#), [increasing pay and benefits](#), and conducting extensive recruitment efforts, including a [\\$5M recruitment campaign](#) in FY26.

**How does NYC’s jail spending compare to other cities?**

DOC’s budgeted headcount of more than one uniformed officer for each incarcerated person is more than [4 times higher than the national average](#). NYC’s is the only jail system among the nation’s 50 largest cities that has nearly as many officers as people in custody.

**What will we do about those jobs? Aren’t a lot of correction officers people of color, and women?**

DOC has provided a good-paying job for many New Yorkers of color, and women. But many of these workers share honestly that they would have preferred other career paths, and would not recommend the job to others. Incarceration also should be maintained to preserve jobs, and our City should work to create more good-paying jobs in the sectors where we need them, like behavioral health and human services. Because of DOC’s attrition rate, they are not likely to implement substantial layoffs, even as they transition to the borough jails. Rather, New Yorkers may increasingly choose other careers, including as we scale up the kind of work that the Department of Community Safety will carry out.



**Testimony of Alia Soomro, Deputy Director for New York City Policy  
New York League of Conservation Voters  
City Council Committee on Finance  
FY27 Preliminary Budget Hearing  
March 11, 2026**

My name is Alia Soomro and I am the Deputy Director for New York City Policy at the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV). NYLCV is a statewide environmental advocacy organization representing over 30,000 members in New York City. Thank you, Chair Lee, and members of the Committee on Finance for the opportunity to comment.

We recognize the budget challenges our city is facing. At the same time, the federal government is rolling back decades of bipartisan environmental protections and drastically cutting funding for clean energy. However, budget deficits should not mean cuts to critical environmental, climate, and public health programs. In fact, [studies show](#) that climate adaptation investments not only save lives and money but yield high returns.

As our city experiences heat waves, extreme rainfall and flooding, droughts, and sea level rise—which disproportionately impacts vulnerable New Yorkers—local environmental leadership matters more than ever. As the FY27 budget cycle is underway, the City Council and Mamdani Administration has the opportunity to invest in New Yorkers by funding city agencies that advance proven climate solutions, whether it's building out more renewable energy infrastructure, electrifying our fleet, funding our parks system, or investing in stormwater resilience.

**While we plan to submit detailed written comments for the City Council's various Preliminary Budget hearings over the next few weeks, below is NYLCV's top FY27 environmental budget priorities. We look forward to working with the City Council and Mamdani Administration.**

**NYC Department of Parks and Recreation:**

Mayor Mamdani's Preliminary Budget Plan for NYC Parks is \$654 million, which is \$33 million less than the FY26 Adopted Budget. The Mayor's Preliminary Budget eliminates 100 Parks staffing lines as a condition of the end to the hiring freeze. In addition to the 600 staffing lines cut since 2023 under the Adams Administration, these cumulative losses greatly limit the agency's ability to rebuild its workforce.

It also fails to safeguard the 276 parks workers set to lose their jobs at the end of the fiscal year, critical Parks staff dependent on annual one-shot City Council funding. These positions must be baselined to ensure stability and consistent service.

In accordance with the Play Fair for Parks Coalition, our FY27 budget requests are:

- Baseline the 276 parks positions currently funded by one-year contracts (Parks Enforcement Patrol, Rangers, Forestry, etc.) to retain staff long-term.
- Restore 600 eliminated full-time baselined union parks positions (City Parks Workers, Forestry, Capital Projects, frontline staff). These positions were eliminated under the Adams Administration
- Add 460 Parks 2nd-shift cleaners to staff 400 high-use sites and keep parks and restrooms clean.
- Add 227 forestry staff to address a backlog of 20,000+ uninspected tree conditions and 35,000+ open work orders.
- Create borough-specific mowing crews by adding 80 dedicated lawn-care positions to address the agency's documented inability to care for park lawns and playing fields.
- Restore 59 capital team positions and add 60 more so that the nearly 100 stalled capital projects can resume, unlocking ~\$450 million in neighborhood green space and resiliency investments.
- Increase trades staffing by 40% (130 tradespeople: plumbers, electricians, carpenters, masons, roofers, painters, etc.) for faster repairs and violation clearing.
- Invest \$21.2 million to expand hours/services at all 36 recreation centers so 22 centers can operate 7 days/week, providing more programming and access.
- Add 250 PEP officers to increase the uniformed presence at 120 high-need parks.
- Increase overtime funding to \$40 million so Parks can respond to storms, emergencies, and routine repairs outside regular hours.

In accordance with the Forest for All NYC Coalition:

- \$1 million for the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice to publicize and begin to implement the NYC Urban Forest Plan, including funds for non-NYC Parks agencies tasked with heightened maintenance and expansion of trees in their jurisdictions.

### **NYC Department of Buildings & NYC Fire Department**

- Fund and staff a new Local Law 97 Compliance Delivery Pilot Program to deliver technical and financial assistance for LL97 covered buildings. The program should aim to lower the costs and reduce complexity through city bulk purchasing of equipment and services to comply with the law.
- Fund additional staff lines to support DOB's Office of Technical Certification & Research and FDNY in streamlining battery energy storage system (BESS) permit review to ensure applications can be handled expeditiously. These systems can help meet grid reliability needs amid growing electricity demand, cut costs by mitigating the need for costly traditional infrastructure upgrades, and dramatically increase the grid's ability to onboard new renewable energy. According to the *New York 6 GW Energy Storage Roadmap*, NYC will need approximately 2 GW of energy storage capacity within the five

boroughs by 2030. Currently, there is just over 100 MW of energy storage deployed in NYC. This means ~380 MW of energy storage must be installed in the city *annually* between 2026 and 2030 to meet the 2 GW need. These agencies will need significantly more staffing to process applications.

### **NYC Department of Transportation**

- Hire more staff for DOT bus and bike lane projects, and prioritize building the mandated miles of protected bus lanes required by the NYC Streets Master Plan to make buses faster and more reliable and bike lanes more accessible.
- Expand eligibility for Fair Fares to increase transit access and affordability, including:
  - Expand Fair Fares to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
  - Fully free for households under 150% of the FPL
  - Expand Fair Fares with half-priced fares on MTA Express Buses and CityTickets on the LIRR and Metro-North railroads within New York City
  - Automatic enrollment of qualified households so Fair Fares is easily accessible
- Commit long-term funding for DOT's Vision Zero street safety projects, including funding for outreach, education, and staffing.

### **NYC Department of Sanitation:**

- Increase funding and staffing for DSNY to implement the Zero Waste Act of 2023. This should include robust funding for outreach and education on DSNY's Residential Curbside Composting Program and Community Composting programs to increase participation rates.
- Fund the purchase of Empire Bins, a European-style stationary on-street container for use by larger buildings, and automated side-loading trucks as the city continues to expand waste containerization.

### **NYC Department of Environmental Protection:**

- Restore agency staffing to pre-Covid levels and fill 800 vacancies at DEP.
- Eliminate the NYC Water Board Rental Payment, in which the City plans to charge the Water Board more than \$1.3 billion in rent from 2026 through 2029, taking money away from DEP water-related infrastructure improvements. This includes \$315 million proposed for FY27.
- \$10 million in funding for the Bureau of Coastal Resilience to ensure that the City is ready for the next storm. This funding would provide \$5 million to fully staff the office with 45 new positions in planning and operations, and provide an additional \$5 million to develop a compound flood model to model coastal flooding in real time.
- Fund the Stormwater Masterplan and provide \$10 million for three contracts. DEP has begun work on the Stormwater Masterplan as mandated by legislation, but they have not been funded to do so, leaving this planning process in limbo.
- Invest in and expand NYC's Green Infrastructure (GI) Program, particularly when it comes to maintenance of GI, in order to absorb stormwater, purify the air, and mitigate the urban heat island effect.

- Dedicate \$4 million to fully implement the Unified Stormwater Rule (USWR), including \$3 million for 20 additional staff at DEP to support implementation of the Rule, permit processing and site inspection to ensure compliance, as well as \$1 million for the development of a new application platform and 2 IT staff to maintain it. When the USWR was expanded to apply to the entire city in 2021, DEP never received additional staff or funding for implementation, and this has led to a longer timeline for permitting approval of new sustainable development.

**NYC Department of Education:**

- \$2.2 billion for clean energy upgrades in NYC Public Schools which would expand solar installation on schools and electrification projects, insulation repairs and upgrades to HVAC systems.

**NYC Office of Emergency Management**

- Allocate \$1.2 million for the implementation of Local Law 128 of 2025, which codifies the NYC Cooling Centers Program. This should include funding for maintenance, staffing, increased hours of operation during extreme heat events (including weekends), and a public education campaign on extreme heat awareness and mitigation.

This city needs our elected leaders to take climate action seriously. And with leaders in Washington denying the very existence of climate change, local action and investment in our city's agencies and programs is more important than ever.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**Testimony to New York City Council Finance Committee  
Executive Budget FY27**

**Public Hearing**

**March 10, 2026**

Tanya Krupat  
Vice President, Policy & Advocacy  
Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations



**Osborne**  
ASSOCIATION

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Finance Committee for the upcoming FY 2027 Budget. My name is Tanya Krupat and I am the Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at the Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations. As many of you know, Osborne Association is one of the oldest and largest criminal justice service organizations in the state. Our services reach over 18,000 individuals each year, assisting them and their families in navigating arrest, courts, incarceration on Rikers and in state prisons, and reentry. Through advocacy, direct service, and policy reform, Osborne works to create opportunities for people to heal, grow, and thrive. Osborne also now provides a variety of reentry housing, including transitional housing at the Fulton Community Reentry Center in the South Bronx and permanent supportive housing at Marcus Garvey Apartments and The Rise in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Fulton, a former prison that we opened in 2024, houses 140 men returning from DOCCS, and Marcus Garvey and The Rise provide apartments for older adults returning from long-term incarceration.

Osborne is a longstanding member of the 12 member ATI & Reentry Coalition. Together, we are seeking City Council funding in the amount of \$2.4 million; \$200,000 for each member organization. We remain grateful for the flexibility Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) funding provides to our organizations as we work to decarcerate our jails and prisons with a particular focus on reducing the population on Rikers Island and moving towards its closure. For the cost of detaining one person on Rikers for one year (around \$507,000) – a year in which they are separated from their family, are likely to experience or witness violence, may lose their job and home, and experience deteriorating health and mental health – ATIs can serve more than 30 people, and yield positive and life-changing results that make us all safer. These programs are critical to closing Rikers as detailed in a [report](#), issued last year, entitled: *Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC: A Pathway to Safely Closing Rikers Island*.

To strengthen New York City's families and communities, and contribute to public safety and a brighter City, we have submitted the following requests for FY27 City Council funding:

**Court Advocacy and Mitigation Services (CAS)**, funded in large part by City Council ATI funding, continues to demonstrate how effective court mitigation services are in human and economic terms. In Fiscal Year 2025, CAS programs:

- Conducted **804 intakes**—73.3% of which were felonies, 25.3% percent misdemeanors, and 1.5% violations.
- Submitted **490 court reports/work products**, and had **2,387 case management contacts** with CAS clients.
- Achieved an **89% success rate for program exits**, and **98% of clients met all court conditions**.

This resulted in a total of **1,674 years of reduced incarceration**, as well as an estimated **\$226,827,970 of cost savings** due to reduced incarceration.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cost savings estimate calculated using per-year incarceration cost data from Vera Institute of Justice (2022), The cost of incarceration in New York State. <https://www.vera.org/the-cost-of-incarceration-in-new-york-state>

## **Safeguarding Children**

For the past 4 years, the City Council has funded Osborne to work with the NYPD to **Safeguard Children at the Time of Their Parent's Arrest**. The funding allowed us to assist NYPD in complying with Local Law 1349-A, enacted to reduce trauma to children when NYPD arrests the parent or caregiver of a child. Our role has been to assist in developing and delivering training, provide technical assistance to the NYPD regarding data collection, and build a network of community-based providers who can offer post-arrest support to children and families. While we have trained more than 8,000 recruits and newly promoted Sergeants and Lieutenants, as well as Youth Coordinating Officers, there remains much more to do, and much that is currently in progress.

In FY27, with continued and expanded funding, we can train Training Sergeants, create practice tools for Officers to access on their phones via NYPD's intranet, equip scenario-based training rooms with props to indicate the presence of children, and reach many more of the 30,000 members of service. We can also work to create sustainable training plans and ensure this work continues and is embedded in NYPD policy and practice. As mentioned, the funding we received from the City Council also allowed us to build a consortium of service providers that can address the needs of children and families after a parent's arrest. Sustained funding would allow this work to continue; without a dedicated focus on this vital component and funding for it, these efforts would end. FY27 funding would also allow us to pursue aspects of this work that are critically important but we have not yet addressed: safeguarding children present when warrants are executed through pre-arrest planning, and confronting the ongoing lack of data. We are requesting \$500,000 to continue this work, and to expand it to the NYC Department of Correction to improve staff interactions with children visiting NYC jails.

## **Improving the Health & Well-Being of NYC's Youth**

The impact of a parent's or family member's arrest and incarceration on young people is often overlooked, yet is a very common and significant experience: one in 14 children have experienced the incarceration of a parent. Racial disparities in the criminal legal system transfer to children as well: one in 4 Black children, one in 10 Latino/a children, and one in 25 white children experience parental incarceration.<sup>2</sup> We seek renewed funding for our Improving Behavioral Health and Well-Being of NYC's Youth services, which assess and address mental health and trauma in youth impacted by the criminal legal system. We are requesting \$158,000 (funded through the Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative) to assess and connect young people with treatment options that alleviate stress, improve functioning, and reduce trauma symptoms. Specific deliverables include conducting 60 assessments, and connecting youth via at least 120 referrals.

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<sup>2</sup> Turney & Goodsell (2018); The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center reports that in fiscal year 2019-2020; Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American Inequality. Wakefield & Wildeman (2009).

- With support from the **Court-Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative** in FY25, 29 young people were assessed for mental health needs, and Osborne made **134 internal and external referrals** for services.
- In Calendar Year 2025, Osborne's programs engaged **125 children of incarcerated parents** and **8 grandchildren** of incarcerated grandparents.

## Gun Prevention

### Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention (BOGAP) Program

Osborne has submitted a funding request of \$20,000 to expand a program developed with the Bronx DA for 16- to 30-year-olds that provides an accountability-based alternative to the 3.5-year mandatory minimum prison sentence for carrying a loaded gun in the absence of any other crime. This funding would supplement funding we have received from other sources, and allow us to serve 75 young people this coming fiscal year. It costs about \$110,000 per year for one person incarcerated in an NY State prison, and about \$507,000 per year per person detained on Rikers. BOGAP successfully keeps young people out of jail and prison, saving millions of dollars and achieving positive outcomes and brighter futures for young adults, as demonstrated by our extraordinarily high retention rate (98%) and described in [this feature article by the Bureau of Justice Assistance](#). With our requested funding, we'll be able to provide hot meals to program participants, stipends for internships, and additional supportive services to increase young people's success in the program and beyond.

- In FY25:
  - **67** BOGAP participants were served
  - BOGAP consistently maintained an **84% success rate**
  - 100% of participants enrolled in FY25 reached their **3-month-retention** rate
  - Staff facilitated **876 unique group sessions**

## Reentry Housing

The housing crisis in the City remains significant and those reentering the community from jail and prison encounter not only the shortage of affordable housing, but also housing discrimination due to their conviction histories, which we hope will be mitigated with the passage of the Fair Chance for Housing Act. Thank you to the City Council for passing this landmark bill in December 2023, which went into effect in January of last year!

According to the *State of the Homeless 2023*<sup>3</sup> report, every year since 2015, between 45 and 55 percent of those leaving state prison were discharged to the NYC shelter system. To address the dire need for reentry housing, Osborne opened the **Fulton Community Reentry Center**, where we are providing transitional housing beds for 140 older men returning from prison, and an array of reentry services in the former state-owned Fulton Correctional Facility. We are

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<sup>3</sup> Coalition for the Homeless, June 2023, [State of the Homeless 2023. Compounding Crises. Failed Responses](#)

grateful for past Council funding for Fulton, and this year we are requesting funding for our innovative Kinship Reentry Housing program in the amount of \$250,000.

Osborne launched the **Kinship Reentry Housing Program** (Kinship) in 2021 in response to the desperate need for reentry housing and a support system for families housing their returning loved ones. Inspired by kinship foster care model, Kinship's services for families include:

- \$500 monthly cash assistance payments for up to 12 months to offset the economic impact of housing a formerly incarcerated family member;
- Case management and counseling to support families in the reunification process, delivered by credible messenger staff who draw from their own experiences with welcoming a loved one home;
- Home visits and advocacy for families, including addressing unsafe living conditions with landlords;
- Financial literacy education and financial planning for the end of the 12-month cash assistance program; and
- Service coordination with the formerly incarcerated person's reentry services provider.

The maximum \$6,000 cash assistance distributions (which do not affect an individual's benefits) provided to Kinship families per year are significantly less than the costs associated with housing a person in a city shelter, which are estimated to be \$50,370 annually.<sup>4</sup> The annual cost of serving a Kinship family is approximately \$12,000, resulting in shelter diversion savings of \$38,370 for every family served.

With support from the City Council, Osborne will be able to sustain this innovative, cost-effective program, and strengthen clinical support offered to families, including a focus on supporting older caregivers.

## **Elder Reentry**

The numbers of older people- age 50 and older- detained on Rikers continues to grow. As of January 2026, 1,038 people in DOC custody were over 50 years old, with 114 of these people being over 65. This represents a 10% increase from the same time the prior year, showing an increased need for services. The numbers of aging people in prisons across New York State have also climbed steadily over decades even as the overall prison population has fallen, due to harsh sentencing laws and repeated parole denials<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, elders in jail are likely to have experienced repeated incarceration, often for acts related to mental illness or substance use disorder (SUD), which affect more than half of people on Rikers Island.

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<sup>4</sup> NYC Independent Budget Office (2022). *Focus On: The Preliminary Budget, Adams Increases Funds for Homeless Shelters, But More Needed for Shelters and Other Programs*. Retrieved from <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/adams-increases-funds-for-homeless-shelters-but-more-needed-for-shelters-and-other-programs-fopb-march-2022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.osborneny.org/assets/files/Osborne\\_HighCostsofLowRisk.pdf](https://www.osborneny.org/assets/files/Osborne_HighCostsofLowRisk.pdf);  
<https://www.vera.org/news/new-yorks-parole-system-is-broken>;  
[https://fortunesociety.org/media\\_center/opinion-addressing-the-plight-of-new-yorkers-aging-behind-bars/](https://fortunesociety.org/media_center/opinion-addressing-the-plight-of-new-yorkers-aging-behind-bars/)

Osborne's Elder Reentry Initiative (ERI) provides cognitive-behavioral interventions and transitional planning services to older adults in DOC custody, as well as reentry support for older people returning from incarceration. While the numbers of people in State custody is going down, 22% of people in custody are now over age 50, and the numbers of people in DOC custody as well as those over 50 are, unfortunately, increasing.

On Rikers, ERI staff travel through all 8 jails and prioritize housing areas with the greatest concentration of older, high-risk individuals. ERI staff will assist SLE with participant referrals and linkages to community resources. Funded by the Council in the past, we request continued funding in the amount of \$125,000 to support two related program areas: (1) The Elder Reentry Initiative's participant screening, intake and assessment, reentry service plans, community case management, and technical assistance; and (2) Osborne's advocacy and public education on behalf of older adults.

- On **Rikers Island**, a DCJS-funded program centered on a cognitive behavioral intervention curriculum, Interactive Journaling, supplements the City council funding for elder detainees. The curriculum is delivered in both in-person group sessions and one-on-one sessions via video conference.
- ERI facilitators also discuss with participants their plans for discharge from custody and complete a basic discharge plan. Follow-up for those released to the community is performed by Osborne's Community Reentry Justice Network staff.
- **105** individual participants were served by the program on Rikers Island in CY25.
- Last year, **172** older individuals were provided with transitional plans upon release from custody.

Funding for Osborne's ERI program addresses a critical need to support older people as they come home from lengthy incarceration and make the very challenging adjustment into a fast-paced, digital world, as well as those on and returning from Rikers. Not only does this benefit public safety, but it also benefits us all as older people have much to contribute and teach us.

### **Health & LGBTQIA+ Reentry Services**

We have submitted a renewed funding request for \$110,000 to support formerly incarcerated people who are living with or at high risk of contracting HIV and come from low-income communities of color, with a focus on LGBTQIA+ people. Osborne will provide sexual health education, referrals to prevention and treatment services, trauma support, and other supportive services. In FY25, this program's staff:

- participated in **18 outreach events** (both virtually and in person) in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens, **averaging about 47 attendees** per outreach event and distributing over **450 educational pamphlets**.
- facilitated **51** educational sessions, with an estimated **130** participants served through the groups.

Please see our full list of nine (9) funding requests in the attached document.

In closing, we urge the City Council to invest in community-based solutions with demonstrated track records of achieving positive outcomes that drive public safety. The proposed cuts to these very services while increasing the police and corrections budgets just make no sense if the goal is truly public safety. With a robust ecosystem of ATI and reentry providers standing ready and organized as the NY ATI/Reentry Coalition, we need an “all hands on deck” approach to decarceration, including investing in ATDs and ATIs, expanding treatment and mental health services, improving court processing times and court production, funding Second Look efforts, and expanding an array of housing options.

And in the midst of all of this, we thank the Council for standing strong against allowing ICE onto Rikers and not reopening the shuttered ICE facility on the island.

It will take all of us working together along with critical investments to transform Rikers from a place that is filled with terror, trauma, and tragedy to a smaller, fairer, safer place. Investments in community programs and in communities – including alternatives to detention and incarceration, but also core services for young people, and addressing mental health and addiction needs – will help fewer people end up on Rikers in the first place and make us all safer.

Thank you.

## The Osborne Association

### New York City Council FY27 Discretionary Funding Requests

Program	Description	FY27 Request	FY26 Funding
<b>Alternatives to Incarceration (Ref. 2155808)</b>	Osborne’s portion of the ATI & Reentry Coalition request, which will support multiple programs: (1) court advocacy and mitigation services; (2) video visiting and family strengthening activities; (3) expansion of job training and placement; (4) elder reentry services; and (5) the Osborne Center for Justice Across Generations.	\$2,152,074	\$1,952,074
<b>Bronx-Osborne Gun Accountability Project - BOGAP (Ref: 2242267)</b>	To support BOGAP—an innovative diversion program developed with the Bronx DA. Funds will be used to provide hot meals to program participants, stipends for internships, and additional support services to participants to increase their chances of success in the program.	\$25,000	\$20,000
<b>Elder Reentry Initiative Services and Advocacy (Ref: 2242507)</b>	To support two related program areas: (1) The Elder Reentry Initiative’s participant screening, intake and assessment, reentry service plans, community case management, and technical assistance; and (2) Osborne’s advocacy and public education on behalf of incarcerated and returning older adults.	\$125,000	\$65,000

<p><b>Health and Wellness – Ending the Epidemic (Ref. 2241903)</b></p>	<p>To support formerly incarcerated people who are living with or at high risk of contracting HIV and come from low-income communities of color, with a focus on LGBTQIA+ people. Osborne will provide sexual health education, prevention/treatment, trauma support, and other supportive services.</p>	<p>\$110,000</p>	<p>\$83,461</p>
<p><b>Safeguarding Children Initiative (Ref: 2239478)</b></p>	<p>To support the implementation of Local Law 1349-A, enacted to reduce trauma to children when NYPD arrests parents/ caregivers. Osborne will provide necessary training and collaborate with NYPD on numerous aspects of implementation, and engage and train a network of CBOs that can provide post-arrest support to children. Expanded funding also allows for work to safeguard and consider children to expand to NYC DOC.</p>	<p>\$500,000</p>	<p>\$265,000</p>
<p><b>Improving Behavioral Health and Wellbeing for Youth (Ref: 2192640)</b></p>	<p>For assessing and addressing mental health and trauma in youth impacted by the criminal legal system through treatment options that alleviate stress, improve functioning, and reduce trauma symptoms. Targets: 70 assessments; 60 referrals.</p>	<p>\$308,000</p>	<p>\$158,000</p>
<p><b>Kinship Reentry Housing Initiative (Ref. 2243156)</b></p>	<p>To sustain and expand the <i>Kinship Reentry Housing Program</i>, which provides financial assistance, case management, and peer support to families housing a loved one returning from incarceration. By addressing economic and logistical barriers to stable reentry housing, the program reduces reliance on the shelter system, strengthens family reunification, and lowers the risk of recidivism.</p>	<p>\$250,000</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p><b>Fulton Community Reentry Center (Ref. 2242869)</b></p>	<p>To support a portion of executive leadership time, to advance the mission of Fulton, a 140-bed transitional housing program, through systems-level and individual advocacy for older adults impacted by long-term incarceration, both those currently incarcerated and those returning to the community.</p>	<p>\$15,000</p>	<p>\$10,000</p>
<p><b>Women with a Plan (Ref. 2243346)</b></p>	<p>To fund Women With a Plan which supports and creates opportunities for women affected by the criminal legal system to find strength in sisterhood and receive support in navigating their role as caregivers with incarcerated loved ones.</p>	<p>\$300,000</p>	<p>N/A</p>



## Testimony Before the Finance Committee Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 11, 2026

**Madison Mounty  
Director, Government Relations and Advocacy**

Good afternoon, Speaker Menin, Finance Committee Chair Lee and members of the Finance Committee. My name is Madison Mounty, and I serve as the Director of Government Relations and Advocacy at the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony on the work we do providing *Combating Hate in Digital Spaces* in-classroom workshops and assemblies for students and educators, as well as share information on a new workshop proposal for Fiscal Year 27.

Simon Wiesenthal Center is a nearly 50-year-old National human rights organization with a strong longstanding footprint and impact in New York. Our education team manages a citywide portfolio of school-based workshops that provide our digital literacy programming to tens of thousands of New York's public-school students every year. Our assemblies also reached over 975 students last year.

Across New York City, Simon Wiesenthal Center operates our *Combating Hate in Digital Spaces* program, a workshop that provides students with reflections on how their digital selves are shaped, as well as the responsibilities and real-world consequences that accompany their online presence. This community-rooted education initiative focuses on emotional responses in online environments while analyzing diverse social media feeds and perspectives. By examining algorithmic tactics and echo chambers used by digital creators to spread mis and disinformation, students will develop critical digital citizenship skills—equipping them with holistic strategies for ethical online engagement situating them as contributors to the reduction of digital harm, online hate speech, bias, bigotry, and bullying.

Funding for FY25 was used to deliver a total of 463 (450 classroom and 13 assembly style) in-person *Combating Hate in Digital Spaces* workshops to over 11,000 public middle and high school students, grades 5 – 12, in 47 schools across the five boroughs. In FY25, educators and facilitators taught more than 357 total student instruction hours over the course of the school year. We have and are continuing to work in partnership with schools across the five boroughs to schedule Combat Hate workshops and assemblies for the current fiscal year.

In FY'27, we are requesting your advocacy and support for a restored allocation of \$750,000 from the Speaker's initiative to address Boroughwide Needs and a \$500,000 request from Citywide Initiatives including: Digital Inclusion and Literacy, Hate Crimes Prevention, AI Community Engagement, and Violence Prevention and Intervention for Youth and Young Adults.

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NORTHEAST REGION 25 Broadway, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10004 tel. 212.697.1180 [www.wiesenthal.com](http://www.wiesenthal.com)

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This critical funding would enable us to sustain and expand crucial anti-hate, -bias, and -bigotry educational workshops for up to 14,000 students, deepen partnerships with NYC public schools and community groups, and respond quickly to emerging community tensions in real-time, such as the incident response and support we've provided to students and staff at JHS 194 William Carr, Hillcrest High School, and PS 261.

At a time when manifestations of hate are increasingly visible across various facets of society, particularly online, it is imperative that students receive direct instruction on investigating the harmful effects of fear-driven hate. Teachers are eager to address online hate, bullying, and bias but often lack the time, resources, and curriculum to navigate these complex topics. Such programming needs to be a high priority in New York City as NYPD hate crime statistics confirm an alarming escalation in hate incidents and hate crimes. During 2025, the NYPD Dashboard confirms 545 bias incidents, leading to 211 arrests, including 310 anti-Semitic (77 arrests), 59 anti-LGBTQIA+ (29 arrests), 43 anti-Black (16 arrests), 22 anti-Asian (14 arrests), 24 anti-Muslim (13 arrests) and 9 anti-Hispanic (7 arrests). In January 2026 alone, antisemitic incidents rose 182% from last year, with 31 hate crimes reported (20 more than in January 2025).

This program fosters a safe, inclusive learning environment, ensuring that difficult conversations are handled with sensitivity, respect for civil liberties, and a focus on youth leadership and allyship. Designed with a whole community approach, the workshop strengthens collaboration between students and the community. It creates a space for critical conversations about online safety and combating hate while also empowering youth to take an active role in creating solutions. As hate speech and bias-related incidents rise, programs like this are essential to fostering understanding and resilience in school communities.

We are also requesting your advocacy for a **new** \$500,000 initiative proposal and support through Citywide Initiatives for *Witness to History: Introduction to Testimony*, a workshop for students in grades 9–12 that uses survivor testimony from the Holocaust and the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda to teach how history is created, remembered, and communicated. *Witness to History* addresses a gap not filled by existing school curricula: the cultivation of empathy grounded in media literacy by witnessing real human voices and a responsibility to respond to injustice in the present.

New York City stands at a pivotal educational moment: rising hate incidents, the fading presence of survivor testimony, and increasing historical misinformation converge to create an urgent need for media literacy. *Witness to History* offers a proven, research-informed response—one that does not merely teach about the past but shapes the citizens of New York's future depends upon. Support at the requested level will ensure that thousands of young New Yorkers encounter history not as distant tragedy, but as living responsibility—carried forward through memory, empathy, and dialogue.

*Witness to History* addresses a gap not filled by existing school curricula: the cultivation of empathy grounded in media literacy by witnessing real human voices and a responsibility to respond to injustices from the Holocaust and Rwandan Genocide in the present. Research in



genocide and human-rights education demonstrates that testimony-based learning—encountering individual stories of survival, loss, and moral courage—is among the most powerful tools for reducing dehumanization and fostering long-term ethical awareness.

In communities that have experienced hate-based incidents or division—including schools navigating identity-based conflict—testimony-centered dialogue has proven to support healing, reflection, and renewed community trust. By moving students from passive observers of history to active moral participants, Witness to History strengthens the social fabric of New York City schools and prepares young people to confront hate, distortion, and indifference in their own generation.

We are grateful for your leadership and respectfully ask for your support of these requests. We look forward to continuing to partner with the City Council to deliver these vital services for New York City’s students and educators.

Thank you.

**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: Jacqueline James

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DOF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Jeffrey Snow

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DOF

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**(PLEASE PRINT)**

Name: Sarah Parter

Address: 110 William St

I represent: NYC 130

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



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**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarita Subramanian

Address: 110 William St

I represent: NYC 130

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Louisa Chigee

Address: 110 William St

I represent: NYC 130

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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