

STATEMENT OF JUANITA N. HOLMES,
COMMISSIONER OF THE NYC DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE
MARCH 7, 2025

Good morning, Chair Nurse and members of the Council. I am Juanita N. Holmes, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Probation (DOP). I am joined here today by the executive cabinet: Deputy Commissioners Tonya Cauley-Scott, Albert Culler, Patricia Williams, General Counsel Bridget Hamblin, Chief Information Officer Razwan Mirza, and Senior Program Director Deldreana Peterkin. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the critical work of the Department of Probation and our Preliminary Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

The New York City Department of Probation serves as New York City's principal resource for community-based rehabilitation and accountability—As one of the nation's largest alternatives to incarceration we play a vital role in public safety, guided by our five pillars—**recidivism, employment, education, housing, and mental health**-----we are committed to breaking cycles of criminal justice involvement by connecting individuals with necessary services tailored to their core needs. These prevention methods begin with personalized intervention.

There is no one size fits all, a true methodology identifies the specific individual needs of each client with a focus on sustainable outcomes, it is DOP's belief that this process will empower those under our supervision to live a productive law-abiding life.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, DOP provided supervision, investigations, and intake for over 32,000 cases, a 7% increase from 30,000 in FY 2023. Specifically, we supervised 15,778 individuals (a 4.5% increase from 15,101 in FY 2023); conducted 8,879 investigations (a 2% decrease from

9,078 in FY 2023); provided 5,469 intake services (a 21% increase from 4,514 in FY 2023); and adjusted 1,859 juvenile cases (a 12% decrease from 2,120 in FY 2023). These numbers are more than just statistics, they represent lives touched, futures reshaped, and a safer NYC.

For FY 2026, the Department of Probation has a Preliminary Budget of \$114.5 million, compared to the FY 2025 Adopted Budget of \$113.9 million. Of this amount:

- \$82.2 million is for Personnel Services;
- \$32.3 million is for Other-Than-Personnel Services;
- \$93.6 million is in City tax-levy funds;
- \$14.6 million is in State funds; and
- \$6.3 million is intra-city funds

The DOP remains committed to using all revenues effectively ensuring that every dollar furthers our mission in transforming lives while promoting public safety. Central to the DOP achievements are our most valuable assets, our employees, uniform and non-uniform, from executives to our maintenance workers, who all play a key role in our clients' success.

Upon my appointment to the NYC Department of Probation, 2 years ago, I was tasked with overseeing the Agency's efforts to ensure efficient and effective management of probationary services as well as to enhance transparency and facilitate data driven decision-making.

This responsibility, compounded with attrition and the absence of meaningful technology, emphasized the need for a comprehensive dashboard that would consolidate key performance metrics and provide real-time data analysis. This dashboard will offer insights into probation trends, resource allocation, recidivism rates, and will assist with informed policy recommendations, by harnessing advanced technology. The agency aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and the overall effectiveness of the probation system.

Increasing the budget for probation services is essential to improving public safety and promoting successful rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals under supervision. With additional funds, we can hire additional staff who will directly address the current overwhelming caseloads, facilitating a more personalized effective supervision, enhanced clients support, reduced recidivism rates, and promoting better outcomes.

Technology will also assist with tailored program allocation, guiding the programs needed, and more importantly identifying the best locations to serve our clients. In addition to the aforementioned, the Department of Probation is also tasked with ensuring that our clients are living a productive life, with the understanding that unemployment plays a significant impact on this particular aspect. The NYC Department of Probation has partnered directly with several vocational training providers, in the areas of Commercial Driver's License, Emergency Medical Technician, Electrical assistance and so forth. This direct collaboration affords the DOP the ability to identify clients fundamental needs to maximize successful outcomes.

Lastly, the Department of Probation has been met with an increased workload such as the Local Conditional Release Commission supervision, a projected electronic monitoring unit, risk assessment unit, and an essential need to provide in-service training. In the face of these challenges the DOP remains committed to supporting public safety.

The Probation Officers in title series carry out the bulk of this life-changing work, however, as a result of attrition, our budgeted headcount currently reflects a deficit of 31% or 189 probation officers. This deficit creates a huge increase in client caseload management, in both adult and juvenile supervision. Nonetheless, the DOP is committed to aggressively recruiting and hiring and doing our best to break the cycles of criminal justice involvement by connecting individuals with necessary services tailored to their core needs while under the supervision of the department.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. My team and I are available for any questions you may have.



UNITED PROBATION OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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Greetings, Chair Nurse and distinguished City Council members,

I am Dalvanie K. Powell, President of the United Probation Officers Association (UPOA), representing nearly 700 Supervising Probation Officers (SPOs), Probation Officers (POs), Probation Officer Trainees (POTs), and Probation Officer Assistants (POAs). Our members are predominantly women and people of color, holding bachelor's and master's degrees.

The New York City Department of Probation (DOP) serves as an alternative to incarceration, providing critical services to the courts, including investigations, reports, and supervision of probationers. Probation Officers are a vital part of the criminal justice system, working to keep communities safe while giving people involved in the criminal justice system a second chance. Yet, despite our extensive responsibilities and educational qualifications, NYC Probation Officers remain the lowest-paid members of law enforcement.

The DOP is severely understaffed and in crisis. As of today, there are only **586 SPOs, POs, POTs, and POAs**, a significant decline over the past decade:

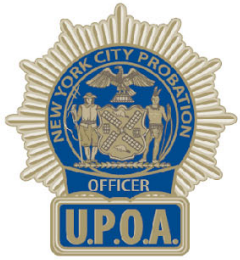
The chart below details the staffing levels at the department over the past 10 years:

| Year | # Probation Officers (PO), Supervising Probation Officers (SPO) |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10/2017 | 727 |
| 10/2018 | 832 |
| 10/2019 | 816 |
| 10/2020 | 796 |
| 10/2021 | 755 |
| 10/2022 | 747 |
| 10/2023 | 689 |
| 10/2024 | 645 |
| 01/2025 | 608 |

According to a recent report from the NYC Comptroller, **DOP has the highest attrition rate in the city at 128.6%**. From March 2023 to December 2024, **369 employees left DOP**, including **103 resignations, 32 retirements, and 23 terminations**. During that same period, only **210 new employees were hired, including just 57 Probation Officers**.

Meanwhile, in 2023, three academy classes were canceled, the POT exam was scrapped, and the PO exam was postponed. Commissioner Holmes is now attempting to lower hiring qualifications by eliminating the two-year internship requirement—a move strongly opposed by both UPOA and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

Additionally, **Family Court services have been cut by more than 40%**, further straining an already overwhelmed system.



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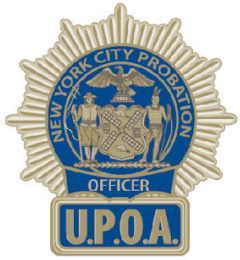
The staffing crisis is negatively impacting both our members and public safety. Instead of prioritizing the hiring of more Probation Officers, this administration has **reversed years of evidence-based policies** that supported lower caseloads and risk-based supervision. Now, all levels of supervision—both family and adult—are being consolidated, leading to **dangerously high caseloads**.

Furthermore, under this administration:

- We are Peace Officers, authorized to carry firearms and make arrests, yet we are **not** Police Officers. However, this administration continues to push us toward a policing model while disregarding our unique role in the criminal justice system.
- Our shields were redesigned to resemble NYPD badges, erasing our distinct identity and creating **serious safety concerns** for UPOA members.
- Unlike NYPD officers, Probation Officers do not receive unlimited sick leave, a 25-year pension, or three-quarters pay in the event of an injury—nor are we compensated at the same level. If the city insists on treating us as police, it must **resolve our EEO case and restructure our salaries accordingly**.
- All officers are now required to **carry firearms**, even those who have not handled a weapon in 20 years or more, without proper retraining.

Additional Concerns

- The **academy training period has been extended to five months (soon to be six months)**, despite the urgent need for new hires.
- UPOA has proposed overlapping academy classes to speed up hiring, but the Commissioner has dismissed this recommendation.
- **A civil service list of 200 qualified candidates exists, yet the administration has failed to utilize it.**
- Officers are required to work **late-night shifts twice a week and weekends**, making it difficult to balance work and family life.
- **Caseloads have been removed from Probation Officer Trainees (POTs)** despite the staffing shortage.
- The Commissioner **disbanded the Court Liaison Officer (CLO) unit in Family Court**, against objections from both UPOA and Family Court judges. This has resulted in delays in processing court orders, hindering case progression and affecting youth moving through the system.
- The Commissioner **plans to replace CLOs with attorneys**, who will be paid more despite the fact that UPOA members have handled this work exclusively for over 50 years.
- **UPOA has warned the administration that it must negotiate before reassigning this work outside our bargaining unit.**
- Probation Officers are now required to appear for court cases normally managed by CLOs, forcing them to spend **valuable time traveling and waiting in court instead of performing essential duties like client visits**.
- Supervising Probation Officers (SPOs) are being pulled away from their leadership roles to assist with **consent-to-search operations**, disrupting their ability to supervise.
- **Probation Officers are being penalized for failing to manage excessive caseloads** caused by the staffing crisis.



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- The administration is **enforcing harsh disciplinary measures instead of following progressive discipline**, further demoralizing staff.
- Despite prior commitments, the Commissioner **refuses to meet with UPOA** to discuss work flexibility.
- Instead of addressing concerns raised by UPOA in labor-management meetings, the Commissioner **bypasses the union and directly pressures individual members, fostering a climate of intimidation.**

The NYC Department of Probation is in worse shape than ever due to **mismanagement and a lack of respect for our profession**. Probation Officers are not just an alternative to incarceration— we play a vital role in **rehabilitation, public safety, and supporting our communities**. Our ability to build trust with probation clients and the courts is being undermined by chronic understaffing and poor decision-making.

The continued failure to address these issues not only harms our members but also jeopardizes **public safety**.

We urge this Council to take immediate action to address the staffing crisis, restore proper funding, and recognize the essential role of Probation Officers in the criminal justice system.

Thank you for your time. I am available for questions.

**Testimony before the
New York City Council
Committee on Criminal Justice
Chair Sandy Nurse**

**By
Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, Commissioner
NYC Department of Correction**

March 7, 2025

Good morning, Chair Nurse and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice. I am Lynelle Maginley-Liddie, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction ("Department" or "DOC"). My colleagues and I are here to discuss the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026. Today, I will provide you with insight on how my team and I are working to address some of our most pressing challenges to ensure our jails remain safe and humane. I will also provide you with an overview of the Department's fiscal year 2026 Preliminary Budget.

State of the Jails

As we move into this next fiscal year, we must confront some hard truths. Despite any hopes to the contrary, the jail population continues to rise. Between January 1, 2022 and today, the Department has experienced a remarkable 32 percent increase in the population. In the last year alone, the population has increased over 10 percent. Today, the census is approximately 6,900, which is the highest it has been since 2019. This number is not in line with what was envisioned for the borough-based jails, nor our current jails on Rikers Island. The physical plant of our jail system as it exists today is not equipped to house an ever-increasing population,

especially given our current staffing levels. The Department has been proactive in monitoring population and staffing levels, as well as facility conditions and capacity demands. It is our goal at all times to uphold safe, secure, and humane conditions for people in custody and our staff. With this in mind, the Department developed and executed a plan to increase bed space in certain housing areas throughout the jails to ensure available beds for those coming into our care. This work remains ongoing as we anticipate further increases to the population in the coming weeks. In tandem with increase capacity, we are exploring every avenue to decrease the population in the short and long term. Recently, the Department revised policies and procedures to tackle a longstanding issue and streamline the process by which attorneys can meet with their clients on Rikers and review electronic discovery documents. This will support speedier case processing and reduce lengths of stay. We also continue to meet with stakeholders throughout the criminal justice system to impress upon them the urgency of the situation and develop collaborative strategies to bring down rates of new admission and safely reduce the population.

As the Council is aware, the Department has been experiencing a continuing staffing crisis. Today, the Department employs approximately 6,000 uniformed members of service. That is a 20 percent decrease from January 2022. Nearly 250 members of service are currently eligible to retire, and 450 more will become eligible to retire by the end of the of the year. By the end of 2026, approximately 750 more will be eligible to retire. Recruitment and retention of law enforcement staff has been a challenge nationally, and the reality is that the Department's recruitment classes are not keeping up with levels of attrition. For us, it is extremely important to focus on building up our uniformed staff, and providing them with opportunities for support, wellness, and growth. In the last year, uniformed and non-uniformed staff participated in

professional growth opportunities to enhance soft skills and leadership development, to ensure we have a deep bench of leaders to sustain the agency well into the future. We have also been focused on bolstering our dedicated Correction Assistance Response for Employees ("CARE") staff, who regularly provide a holistic range of support and resources for all members of service. This calendar year, we are partnering with a vendor to provide training and professional development for our CARE staff on topics such as resiliency, mindfulness strategies, mental health awareness and suicide prevention, and more. But training is just one tool we are wielding in our effort to enhance staff wellness and retention; we are also opening wellness centers and other spaces for staff to relax and practice mindfulness throughout the commands. We opened the first wellness center for staff at the Otis Bantum Correctional Center (OBCC), as well as a staff wellness center in our Brooklyn court facility, and plan to open more centers in the months to come.

Later this month, we will swear in over 100 new correction officers. These recruits have undergone comprehensive training to ensure they are prepared to serve with professionalism and integrity as stewards of public safety. We are excited to welcome the next generation of public servants to the Boldest family, and we are intent on raising them up to be leaders within our jails and our city. The staff in our facilities work long hours in difficult and stressful conditions; our actions as leaders must demonstrate to them our appreciation and genuine care. Providing these resources shows our staff that – for all they do to protect the wellbeing of others – their wellbeing matters to us. When we invest in our staff and give them what they need, they will show up as their best selves, and help nurture a culture of service that creates better jails and better outcomes for those in our care.

2024 Highlights

The challenges ahead of us are not insurmountable, and we have the momentum of many great accomplishments in 2024 to carry us forward. Despite a growing population and decreasing staff, the Department made significant strides in safety, security, and providing vital support to both our staff and those in our care. These holistic efforts have had a measurable impact on our jails in 2024, compared to 2023: slashings and stabbings decreased by 23 percent and assaults on staff fell by 23 percent.

We have been focusing on modernizing services and infrastructure across all areas of operation. Last year, the Department implemented several new technology systems to support increased transparency and accountability, as well as improve our ability to run the jails safely and efficiently. Some of these initiatives include an electronic case management system, to coordinate tracking and reporting of incidents across the jails; the rollout of new body-worn cameras, requiring all uniformed staff, regardless of rank or assignment, to equip a body-worn camera as part of their uniform; Rapiscan drug testing machines designed to significantly improve the detection of drugs via inbound mail; and a new programs tracking system, which tracks the progress of people in custody make as they attend sessions and triggers an automatic reclassification when programmatic milestones are reached. We received several federal grants last year to support many of these efforts, including funding to expand substance misuse services. The Division of Programs and Community Partnerships has also launched several meaningful initiatives, to support people in our care and their loved ones. In 2024, in partnership with the Children's Museum of Manhattan ("CMOM"), we launched CMOM hubs at the Rose M. Singer and George R. Vierno Centers. These interactive play spaces promote bonding between parents

and children during visits, having a positive and lasting impact on their relationships. In addition, we welcome the Council's support in promoting the free visitor shuttle bus we offer to all New Yorkers who wish to visit a loved one in our facilities. We know visits have an immediate impact on people's rehabilitation and behavior while in custody and whatever we can do to maintain that support is beneficial.

We know firsthand that programs are a cornerstone to creating a safer environment for both staff and people in custody and have been working hard to meaningfully expand services, considering the needs that people in custody have expressed through our focus groups. In January, DOC released a multi-million-dollar challenge-based procurement to solicit proposals to provide expanded programmatic services for people in custody. The four challenges focus on finding solutions for supplemental education services, trauma-informed care, substance misuse, and transition planning and transportation. We are excited to welcome a new wave of providers into the jails to provide these critical services.

In addition, last year was a year of growth for the Department's leadership team. Mr. Fritz Fragé, who sits with me here today, has been appointed Senior Deputy Commissioner, overseeing the administration and management of all Departmental facilities, security, and field commands. He brings a wealth of law enforcement and innovation experience, previously serving as the Director of Public Safety for the City of Newark, New Jersey. We have also appointed several Deputy Commissioners, including Nell McCarty, our new Deputy Commissioner of Programs and Community Partnerships, and Kevin Doherty, our new Deputy Commissioner of Facilities and Maintenance and Repair and Fleet Administration, who also join us today. We are excited to

welcome these outstanding leaders to the team and look forward to their contributions in advancing our mission.

The Department's Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget

Now I will briefly turn to the fiscal year 2026 Preliminary Budget. As of the fiscal year 2026 Preliminary Budget, the fiscal year 2026 Department of Correction budget is \$1.2 billion. The vast majority of this – 84 percent – is allocated for Personal Services, and 16 percent for Other than Personal Services. The fiscal year 2026 Preliminary Budget increased by \$55 million compared to FY25 budget of \$1.16 billion. Some of the increases to the Preliminary Budget include funding for:

- Uniforms for persons in custody, with \$1.8 million baselined starting in fiscal 2025. Individuals currently in custody continue to be issued uniforms and undergarments throughout their stay, and some may need replacing due to normal wear and tear. We are also considering the increase in population, as well as the increase in new admissions; and
- Food for persons in custody, with \$4.3 million baselined starting in fiscal 2026. The additional funding supports increasing food needs for the Department resulting from an increase in population, as well an increase in food prices; and
- Cell door replacement, with \$2.4 million baselined starting in fiscal 2025; and
- Recruitment advertising, with \$4.2 million allocated in fiscal year 2025, and \$5 million baselined in fiscal year 2026.

Capital Funding

The FY25 Preliminary Capital Budget and Commitment Plan totals \$14.6 billion, which covers Fiscal Years 2025 through 2035. As of the FY26 Preliminary Budget, the majority of capital funding is tied to the borough-based jails program which totals \$13.9 billion over the ten-year plan and is allocated as follows:

- Brooklyn Facility - \$2.3 billion
- Manhattan Facility - \$4.1 billion
- Bronx Facility - \$3.1 billion
- Queens Facility - \$4 billion

Headcount

We continue to work diligently to attract and retain both civilian and uniformed staff. Total authorized headcount is: 8,806; 7,060 uniformed positions and 1,746 civilian positions. Our actual uniformed staffing levels remain well below our authorized headcount and the Department plans to use the new needs approved for recruitment advertisement in the Preliminary Budget to be aggressive with advertising and marketing strategies to promote recruitment.

Conclusion

As we look to the year ahead, we also reflect on a history of individual and collective achievements, and innovation. This year marks the Department's 130th anniversary. For 130 years, the bold men and women of this agency have served this city with bravery and resilience. They have dedicated their careers to changing lives by caring for the people in our custody and keeping them safe. Their commitment to this city extends beyond the jails; DOC members of service support critical public safety efforts throughout all five boroughs and beyond, and were

among the first responders who supported the rescue and recovery efforts following the 9/11 attacks. DOC members of service were also deployed to support relief in New Orleans after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, and gave back to their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, donating thousands of pounds of food to non-profits serving the most vulnerable New Yorkers. This is not an exhaustive list; members of the Boldest family have given so much to their communities and this city, and they deserve to be celebrated. I have said it before, and I will say it again: heroes work at the New York City Department of Correction. I am grateful for the heroism they display everyday – seen and unseen – whether it be during their tours or when called to support in times of great need, and I celebrate the difficult work they do.

As public servants, my team and I will continue to bring the same unwavering energy and commitment to our work, building on the progress we've made to ensure it's sustainable, and that this agency is safer and fairer for decades to come. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My colleagues and I are available to answer your questions.



**“The Mayor’s Preliminary Budget for
Fiscal Year 2026”**

**COBA PRESIDENT BENNY BOSCIO JR’S TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**Hon. Sandy Nurse
Chairwoman**

March 7, 2025

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Ayala and the members of your committee. My name is Benny Boscio Jr. I am the President of the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association, the second-largest law enforcement Union in the City of New York. Our members, as you know, provide care, custody, and control of approximately 7,000 inmates daily.

Our members are essential first responders who risk their lives every day to keep our city safe. For many New Yorkers, we are out of sight, out of mind and often unfairly scapegoated for all the problems in our jails, the fact remains that New York City Correction Officers protect and save lives every day.

We intercede while violent gang members are assaulting, slashing and stabbing one another to protect the non-violent inmates they are attacking. We recover weapons and drugs in our facilities on a daily basis. We prevent suicide attempts and unfortunately, you never hear about the countless suicides we prevent. We administer Narcan to revive inmates who have overdosed from drugs. We ensure the inmates in our custody receive all the programming they are entitled to, escorting them safely to and from court or medical appointments.

I want to provide a quick example of just one of the violent population my members must deal with daily. Recently, there was a story in the New York Post that reported on the violent rampage committed by one of our most dangerous inmates, who assaulted three officers in the span of one week, including two female officers. Since he entered Rikers in 2022, he has attacked 45 Correction Officers and three civilians. His rap sheet includes 30 arrests including charges for murder, assault, and robbery. Approximately 70% of our inmate population is facing violent felony charges just like this inmate.

This is the climate my members work in every day. In the span of one year, from February 21, 2024 to February 21, 2025, there have been approximately 560 inmate assaults on correction officers. In addition to these attacks, there have been 122 spitting incidents, 225 splashing incidents, approximately 20 sexual assaults, nearly 170 slashings, and over 100 stabbings. During that same period, our officers recovered 600 items related to contraband, meaning weapons or drugs.

Our officers continue to perform essential services and maintain safety and security in our jails, all while dealing with a significant increase in our inmate population that is also increasingly more violent. Our headcount, at approximately 5,000 officers, is the lowest it's been in decades. This is why we continue to have one of the highest vacancy rates out of any city agency.

The City constantly asks us to do more with less. Over time, that takes a toll on even the Boldest of my members. Safe staffing levels matter.

Despite the city's effort to recruit more officers, including the \$3 million included in the mayor's preliminary budget proposal, those efforts are falling far short of their targeted goals. The Department is not even close to keeping with attrition. DOC must simultaneously focus on retaining the Officers it has, which is our best chance to achieve safe staffing levels soonest. To achieve these goals the city must make significant investments to support our officers and improve our working conditions instead of disciplining us for everything we do. Imagine getting punched in the face in an unprovoked attack by a person in custody and you getting suspended for defending yourself. This is what's happening to us.

The specific use of the money allocated to the problem must be scrutinized more closely.

For example, it's outrageous that the city has allocated billions of dollars in the capital budget to fund new borough jails that are nowhere close to being completed, while ignoring our dilapidated current jails and the men and women who work there every day.

Therefore, I am calling for an exception to be created in this budget to allow for capital expenditures to be made on Rikers Island. It is inhumane to leave my members to work below acceptable standards of habitability simply because the City has an unrealistic idea of when Rikers can be closed. One major capital expenditure needs to be replacing countless dilapidated trailers on Rikers Island that so many of my members are forced to work from on a daily basis.

Additionally, new investments must include:

- For Recruitment - Add more financial incentives including signing bonuses to enhance recruitment efforts, target advertising messaging towards military veterans and engage with other untapped groups rather than marketing to the same pool repeatedly.
- For Retention - Enhanced usage of specialty pay, hazard pay, OT bonus incentives, and increasing the value of pension credits after full vesting.
- Immediately updating and replacing all inoperable cell doors to keep officers and inmates safe from violent offenders.
- Allocate significant funding for upgraded, sanitary, and modern showers and locker rooms for our officers, which many are currently inoperable and in deplorable conditions.
- We also need the Council's support when it comes to providing home rule messages that will help pass legislation in Albany to enhance the pensions of our workforce to incentivize retainment and establish a viable career path.

The city's budget is a reflection of the priorities set forth by you and your colleagues on the council. For far too long your priorities have been focused solely on serving the interests of the inmates in our custody, even the most violent ones. If this committee is genuine about enhancing the safety of everyone in our jails, then this committee must prioritize the safety and security of my members too.

With that said, I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



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Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Regarding the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

March 7, 2025

By Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director
New York City Board of Correction

Good afternoon, Chair Nurse and members of the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice. I am Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director of the New York City Board of Correction (the "Board" or "BOC").

I am joined today by BOC's Deputy Executive Director of Administration, Danielle Ortega, our Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel, Melissa Cintrón Hernández, and BOC's Assistant Executive Director of Monitoring, Katrina Blackman. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Background

Since 1957, the Board has exercised independent oversight of New York City's jails, despite operating as a relatively small agency with limited resources. The New York City Charter ("City Charter") mandates the Board to establish local regulations, investigate matters within the jurisdiction of the Department of Correction ("DOC"), and evaluate the performance of DOC and Correctional Health Services ("CHS"). The Board's Minimum Standards set baseline conditions that must be maintained for individuals in custody.

Despite our financial constraints, we have remained steadfast in producing meaningful oversight reports. In the past year alone, we have published reports on the use of chemical agents in city jails, three death reviews, two Borough-Based Jails progress reports, a Monitoring Quarterly report, an evaluation of the sick call process, an assessment of heat mitigation efforts, and a

triennial review of the DOC grievance process. With additional resources, our impact could be significantly greater.

Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary and Executive Budgets

The Board's FY26 budget is \$3.6 million, which is less than the \$3.8 million budget we were allocated in FY25. Ninety-four percent of the Board's FY26 budget supports 30 authorized positions; three fewer positions than the 33 positions supported by our FY25 budget.

The Board currently has 26 active staff and seven vacant positions. By the end of the fiscal year, we anticipate filling six of those vacancies, amounting to 32 active employees.

City Council support has been instrumental in achieving this staffing level. Indeed, the Committee on Criminal Justice's \$400,000 in FY25 allowed us to hire three critical positions: a Special Investigations Coordinator, a Correctional Standards Review Specialist, and a Research and Compliance Associate. We appreciate the Council's recognition of the Board's role in transforming the jail system and the broader criminal justice landscape and we look forward to your continued support.

Sustaining Existing Staffing Levels

To maintain our existing staffing levels, the Board seeks continued funding for the three previously mentioned positions funded in FY25 only. These frontline roles directly support the Board's oversight work. Losing these positions would significantly reduce our capacity to monitor jail conditions, respond to incidents, and conduct critical research, especially as the population continues to grow.

Current Priorities

To effectively fulfill its oversight responsibilities, the Board requires an additional \$2.3 million and 20 positions in FY26, combining Preliminary and Executive funding requests. For the FY26 Executive Budget, the Board has identified \$1.3 million and 11 positions as essential. Additionally, the Board has \$1 million in unmet funding needs from the FY26 Preliminary plan for strategic initiatives and staff development. These resources will enhance the Board's ability to conduct data-driven reporting, meet City Council mandates, increase public engagement, and improve oversight of jail conditions.

New Needs

The Board seeks funding for new needs across the agency.

Monitoring Staff

Monitoring staff are critical to BOC's mission. We have only 12 monitoring staff who conduct oversight in the jails, court pens, and hospital jail wards. With approximately 6,800 people in

custody, our monitoring capacity remains severely inadequate. While we expect to onboard two new monitors this year, further expansion is critical.

Specifically, we seek funding for three new Investigations and Compliance Monitors who will combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies to systematically assess compliance with the Board's Minimum Standards. Additionally, four Correctional Standards Review Specialists are needed to improve the monitoring staff-to-incarcerated person ratio from 1 staff member per 565 individuals in custody to 1 staff member per 375 individuals in custody. Securing this additional funding is essential, as both lives and fundamental fairness are at stake.

Research staff

Additionally, the Board must have sufficient research capacity to analyze the extensive data it receives from DOC and CHS. By the end of FY25, the Board will have a team of four research staff, which will help to strengthen the agency's analytical capabilities. However, we need an additional six research staff members to further enhance our ability to evaluate DOC operations and ensure timely data-reporting. Of the six new positions needed, there is a critical need for three Senior Research & Compliance Associates who will focus on analyzing compliance with specific chapters of the Board's Minimum Standards.

The other three additional requested research staff will ensure dedicated attention to Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) compliance, assessing DOC's adherence to PREA standards, reviewing sexual abuse allegations, and tracking housing decisions for transgender individuals.

Legal staff

The Board also seeks additional legal staff to strengthen its Appeals and Special Investigations units.

Appeals

To support our work on visit restriction appeals—which significantly impact incarcerated individuals and their families—we request funding for an Appeals Coordinator to expand our one-person Appeals Unit. This is a critical need due to the high volume of appeals received and reviewed solely by BOC's Appeals Director. Indeed, between 2021 and 2024, our one-person Appeals unit received and reviewed approximately 350 visit restriction appeals. This year so far, the Appeals unit has handled approximately 42 visit restriction appeals.

Special Investigations

BOC's Special Investigations unit is a three-person unit responsible for investigating various incidents within DOC's facilities. This includes deaths in custody, unresponsive persons in custody, fires, or any other incident that falls under the "unusual incident" category. The Special Investigations unit would benefit greatly from a part-time doctor or nurse practitioner with the expertise to analyze medical records, give independent advice, and help lead the joint reviews with the CHS staff.

Administration support and agency training

Further, our IT team urgently needs a senior certified IT administrator to maintain operational stability of the Board's systems. Without adequate database support, the agency faces significant operational challenges. A new Human Resources Generalist ("HRG") position is also needed to improve staff support.

Moreover, additional funding is needed to establish a training and development program, which is essential for the professional development and growth of all employees.

Rikers Island office support

As our staff located on Rikers Island continues to expand, funding for adequate furniture, seating, and workstations is critical. In 2023, due to construction on Rikers Island, the Department relocated BOC staff to three trailers, only two of which are safely habitable for staffing operations. The move left the furniture allocated to BOC staff in poor condition. Thus, funding for clean and functional workstations, chairs, and conference room furnishings is essential.

Conclusion

The Board's work is essential to ensuring transparency, accountability, and humane conditions in NYC jails. However, our ability to fulfill our mandate is severely constrained by our limited budget. Receiving just .3% of the Department's funding is inadequate given our responsibilities and the growing need for independent oversight. An established funding structure will enable the Board to meet its mandate and effectively monitor conditions of confinement for the thousands of people in the Department's custody.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions.



Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair
Helen Skipper, Vice Chair
Robert L. Cohen, M.D.
Hon. Barry A. Cozier (Ret.)
Felipe Franco
Jacqueline Miriam Pitts
Jude Torchenaud

Jasmine Georges-Yilla
Executive Director

BOARD OF CORRECTION
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Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Regarding the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026

March 7, 2025

By Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director
New York City Board of Correction

Good afternoon, Chair Nurse and members of the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice. I am Jasmine Georges-Yilla, Executive Director of the New York City Board of Correction (the "Board" or "BOC").

I am joined today by BOC's Deputy Executive Director of Administration, Danielle Ortega, our Deputy Executive Director and General Counsel, Melissa Cintrón Hernández, and BOC's Assistant Executive Director of Monitoring, Katrina Blackman. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Background

Since 1957, the Board has exercised independent oversight of New York City's jails, despite operating as a relatively small agency with limited resources. The New York City Charter ("City Charter") mandates the Board to establish local regulations, investigate matters within the jurisdiction of the Department of Correction ("DOC"), and evaluate the performance of DOC and Correctional Health Services ("CHS"). The Board's Minimum Standards set baseline conditions that must be maintained for individuals in custody.

Despite our financial constraints, we have remained steadfast in producing meaningful oversight reports. In the past year alone, we have published reports on the use of chemical agents in city jails, three death reviews, two Borough-Based Jails progress reports, a Monitoring Quarterly report, an evaluation of the sick call process, an assessment of heat mitigation efforts, and a

triennial review of the DOC grievance process. With additional resources, our impact could be significantly greater.

Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary and Executive Budgets

The Board's FY26 budget is \$3.6 million, which is less than the \$3.8 million budget we were allocated in FY25. Ninety-four percent of the Board's FY26 budget supports 30 authorized positions; three fewer positions than the 33 positions supported by our FY25 budget.

The Board currently has 26 active staff and seven vacant positions. By the end of the fiscal year, we anticipate filling six of those vacancies, amounting to 32 active employees.

City Council support has been instrumental in achieving this staffing level. Indeed, the Committee on Criminal Justice's \$400,000 in FY25 allowed us to hire three critical positions: a Special Investigations Coordinator, a Correctional Standards Review Specialist, and a Research and Compliance Associate. We appreciate the Council's recognition of the Board's role in transforming the jail system and the broader criminal justice landscape and we look forward to your continued support.

Sustaining Existing Staffing Levels

To maintain our existing staffing levels, the Board seeks continued funding for the three previously mentioned positions funded in FY25 only. These frontline roles directly support the Board's oversight work. Losing these positions would significantly reduce our capacity to monitor jail conditions, respond to incidents, and conduct critical research, especially as the population continues to grow.

Current Priorities

To effectively fulfill its oversight responsibilities, the Board requires an additional \$2.3 million and 20 positions in FY26, combining Preliminary and Executive funding requests. For the FY26 Executive Budget, the Board has identified \$1.3 million and 11 positions as essential. Additionally, the Board has \$1 million in unmet funding needs from the FY26 Preliminary plan for strategic initiatives and staff development. These resources will enhance the Board's ability to conduct data-driven reporting, meet City Council mandates, increase public engagement, and improve oversight of jail conditions.

New Needs

The Board seeks funding for new needs across the agency.

Monitoring Staff

Monitoring staff are critical to BOC's mission. We have only 12 monitoring staff who conduct oversight in the jails, court pens, and hospital jail wards. With approximately 6,800 people in

custody, our monitoring capacity remains severely inadequate. While we expect to onboard two new monitors this year, further expansion is critical.

Specifically, we seek funding for three new Investigations and Compliance Monitors who will combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies to systematically assess compliance with the Board's Minimum Standards. Additionally, four Correctional Standards Review Specialists are needed to improve the monitoring staff-to-incarcerated person ratio from 1 staff member per 565 individuals in custody to 1 staff member per 375 individuals in custody. Securing this additional funding is essential, as both lives and fundamental fairness are at stake.

Research staff

Additionally, the Board must have sufficient research capacity to analyze the extensive data it receives from DOC and CHS. By the end of FY25, the Board will have a team of four research staff, which will help to strengthen the agency's analytical capabilities. However, we need an additional six research staff members to further enhance our ability to evaluate DOC operations and ensure timely data-reporting. Of the six new positions needed, there is a critical need for three Senior Research & Compliance Associates who will focus on analyzing compliance with specific chapters of the Board's Minimum Standards.

The other three additional requested research staff will ensure dedicated attention to Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) compliance, assessing DOC's adherence to PREA standards, reviewing sexual abuse allegations, and tracking housing decisions for transgender individuals.

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Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I welcome any questions.



OFFICE OF THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

ANTONIO REYNOSO

Brooklyn Borough President

City Council Committee on Criminal Justice Hearing on the Preliminary Budget March 7, 2025

Good afternoon Chair Nurse and members of the Criminal Justice committee, and thank you for holding this hearing today. My name Hannah May-Powers and I am here on behalf of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso to call attention to the ways in which the Mayor's budget fundamentally undermines safety and the mandate to close Rikers Island.

The Department of Correction spends more than \$556,000 per year per person currently detained on Rikers Island.¹ This is almost 350% more than jail systems in Los Angeles and Chicago. Yet Mayor Adams wants to cut funding to programs that keep people out of jail and continues to support ineffective approaches to criminal justice.

The Department of Correction is in desperate need of rightsizing. According to the Vera Institute, the City could save \$149.6 million without one layoff, just by eliminating uniformed vacancies.² Let's be clear – DOC has a management problem, not an issue with understaffing.³ As of February 27, 2025, the ratio of uniformed correctional officers to detained persons on Rikers Island was 0.8 correctional officers to 1 detained person.⁴ Though this ratio represents a decrease from recent years, it is still vastly higher than the national average of one correctional officer per 3.6 incarcerated people.⁵ This is an issue with both culture and practice at the DOC, which continues to ignore abuse of its unlimited sick time system. In FY2025, DOC had a total absence rate of 11.35%. This is higher than other agencies that have unlimited sick time policies such as FDNY (7.85%) and NYPD (4.61%).⁶

Overall, the DOC is set to receive a 9.2% budget increase over last fiscal year. This comes as agencies that seek to address the root causes of incarceration, such as housing instability and homelessness, unaddressed health and mental health concerns, and social isolation, are facing cuts. This includes the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (-3.2%), Housing Preservation

¹ [Vera Institute](#)

² [Vera Institute](#)

³ [Gothamist](#)

⁴ [Corrections1](#)

⁵ [US Department of Justice](#)

⁶ [Mayor's Management Report](#)

and Development (-6.2%), Department of Homeless Services (-8.1%), and the Department of Youth and Community Development (-11.5%).

As of March 2, 2025, there were 6,866 New Yorkers detained on Rikers Island.⁷ Not only is this a 10% increase from last year's jail population, but it is also drastically higher than the 4,160-person population needed to transition the population to borough-based jails when construction is completed.⁸ However, Mayor Adams is again attempting to cut some of the most critical programs for keeping New Yorkers out of jail. Unless the funding is restored, Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programs are slated to lose \$14.487 million. ATI programs are mandated by judges to provide participants with supportive services in their communities instead of a jail or prison sentence.⁹ These programs provide significant supports to participants in the areas of employment, housing, education, health and mental health, and community life adjustment.¹⁰ Not only do ATI programs connect people with services that more appropriately address the root causes of incarceration than detention, but they are also critical for safely lowering the detained population in order for the borough-based jail system to succeed.

According to Correctional Health Services, 25% of women at Rikers reported being homelessness upon intake.¹¹ The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice found that 5.2% of all individuals on Rikers are street homeless.¹² Data on other forms of homelessness and housing insecurity such as doubling-up and transitional housing is unclear; however, we know that homeless and housing-insecure individuals are drastically overrepresented in our carceral system. Stable housing is one of the most impactful ways to address incarceration.¹³ In 2019, the City expanded the Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) program from 120 to 500 units. JISH is the only designated supportive housing program for people exiting Rikers, offering intensive support programs that are critical for people leaving jail. Since its expansion, it has largely remained stagnant due to a lack of provider funding.¹⁴ The FY26 budget must include expanded funding for JISH.

Another agency facing cuts is the Board of Correction, a critical oversight body that helps to keep people detained on Rikers Island safe. The proposed budget would lead to a 5% decrease, or \$210,000, in funds for this body. Already, the number of BOC officials is not proportionate to DOC's headcount. Increasing the BOC's headcount to 1% of the DOC's would bring more eyes to the thousands of complaints filed by incarcerated people that the BOC must review every year.

Thank you again for holding this hearing. The City can and must do better for the thousands of individuals impacted by incarceration. We know that social determinants of health such as safe and dignified housing, stable employment, food security, quality education, and access to quality healthcare are all protective factors against incarceration. As a city, we must invest in resources that get to the root causes of incarceration and inequality.

⁷ [Data Collaborative for Justice](#)

⁸ [Gothamist](#)

⁹ [MOCJ](#)

¹⁰ [NY State Division of Criminal Justice Services](#)

¹¹ [Correctional Health Services](#)

¹² [City Limits](#)

¹³ [The Fortune Society](#)

¹⁴ [CSH](#)



TESTIMONY OF:

Michael Klinger, Jail Services Attorney

BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Preliminary Budget Hearing

March 7, 2025

My name is Michael Klinger. I am a Jail Services Attorney at Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS). We thank Chair Nurse and the Committee on Criminal Justice for the opportunity to testify regarding the city's preliminary criminal justice budget.

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. For nearly 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. Thousands of the people we represent are detained or incarcerated in the New York City jail system each year while fighting their cases in court or serving a sentence of a year or less upon conviction of a misdemeanor. Our staff consists of specialized attorneys, social workers, investigators, paralegals, and administrative staff who are experts in their individual fields.

In addition to zealous legal defense, BDS provides a wide range of services to address the causes and consequences of legal system involvement. We have built a practice around supporting people who are detained pretrial to mitigate the burdens and trauma created by confinement and to protect our clients from collateral consequences. Through our jail-based programming, we advocate for our clients to access services they are entitled to such as medical care and educational access. Additionally, our established presence in New York City jails allows us to monitor and document the conditions New Yorkers encounter when incarcerated and advocate for the basic human rights, health, and safety of our clients and other incarcerated people. Furthermore, many of the people that we serve live in heavily policed and highly surveilled communities.

I. Jails Weaken Communities; Strong Communities are Safe Communities

Meaningful and enduring public safety requires investment in communities – in affordable and supportive housing, drug treatment, and mental health services, among other critical social

services.¹ Instead, certain communities face a dearth of this kind of critical funding, while being exposed to ever-increasing law enforcement presence and surveillance.² By prioritizing punitive responses the city exacerbates many of the public safety problems it seeks to address, including these communities being overrepresented in the jails' population.³ Many of the people we serve may have avoided the court system and incarceration if they had access to support services sooner.

Compounding the harms of overpolicing in certain communities is the reality that the city jails are sites of violence and deprivation. The Department of Correction has repeatedly struggled to adequately manage the jails on Rikers Island, as nearly 10 years of reports by the federal monitor in the *Nunez* class action demonstrate.⁴ The annual budgeting process presents an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past; we are thus disappointed that the Mayor's preliminary budget amounts to a reinvestment in the same failed policies and priorities.

Specifically, the preliminary budget fails to address the fact that despite drastic reductions in the jail population and numbers of uniformed correction officers over the past decade, Department personnel costs remain essentially unchanged.⁵ Worse, the Department maintains more than one

¹ Erica Bryant, *The United States Criminalizes People Who Need Health Care and Housing*. Vera Institute of Justice, Oct. 17, 2023. <https://www.vera.org/news/the-united-states-criminalizes-people-who-need-health-care-and-housing>. ("Gaping holes in the social safety net and health care systems leave many without access to health care and housing in the United States. Yet, too often, people in need of these resources end up in jail and prison instead."); Brian Nam-Sonenstein, *Seeking shelter from mass incarceration: Fighting criminalization with Housing First*. Prison Policy Initiative, Sept. 11, 2023. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2023/09/11/housing-first/>. (Review of more than 50 studies and reports on housing, health, and incarceration that provide evidence that "ending housing insecurity is foundational to reducing jail and prison populations"). *See also*, Thea Sebastian, Hanna Love, Sam Washington, *A New Community Safety Blueprint: How The Federal Government Can Address Violence and Harm Through A Public Health Approach*. Brookings, Sept. 21, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-new-community-safety-blueprint-how-the-federal-government-can-address-violence-and-harm-through-a-public-health-approach/>. (Highlighting five categories of policy recommendations designed to prevent and reduce violence in communities: public health and prevention; economic opportunity and housing security; youth development and education; built environment and community spaces; and institutional transformation).

² Chloe Sarnoff and Megan McDonough, *From Crisis to Opportunity: Reimagining a More Equitable Policing and Public Safety System in New York City*. The Century Foundation, July 22, 2021. <https://tcf.org/content/report/reimagining-equitable-policing-public-safety-system-new-york-city/>. ("In New York City, like so many other cities in the United States, poverty is criminalized, and the communities most impacted by poverty are also the most affected by over-policing."); Harold Stolper, *New Neighbors and the Over-Policing of Communities of Color*. Community Service Society of New York, Jan. 6, 2019. <https://www.cssny.org/news/entry/New-Neighbors>.

³ Sarah Monaghan, Michael Rempel & Tao Lin, 2021. *Racial Disparities in the Use of Jail Across New York City, 2016 - 2021: Summary of Findings*. Data Collaborative for Justice. <https://datacollaborativeforjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/DisparitiesReportSummary-9.pdf>. ("Residents in just 23% of New York City's 178 zip codes accounted for 60% of the City's 2021 jail admissions.").

⁴ *See generally*, *Nunez v. City of New York*, 11 Civ. 5845 (LTS) (S.D.N.Y. 2011) and all related documents; *see also*, "Twelfth Report of the *Nunez* Independent Monitor," filed December 6, 2021 ("The findings in this report bring into sharp focus that despite six years of striving to implement the required practices, the Department's efforts have been unsuccessful in remediating the serious problems that gave rise to the Consent Judgment. Instead, conditions have progressively and substantially worsened.").

⁵ *See* Vera Institute of Justice. *A Look Inside the New York City Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget*. February 2025. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-New-York-City-Fiscal-Year-2026-Preliminary-Budget.pdf>.

thousand uniformed officer vacancies at an estimated cost of \$149.6 million.⁶ In its testimony before the Committee, the Correctional Officers Benevolent Association (COBA) asserted that the ratio of uniformed officers to people incarcerated is insufficient to maintain the safety and security of the jails. This strains credibility. A review of New York City jail trends from 2014-2023 conducted by the New York City Independent Budget Office found that, on average, “the ratio of correction officers to people in custody during the decade reviewed was fewer than one person in custody per correction officer,” and reminded that, “for purposes of comparison, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the average staffing ratio for U.S. jails was four people in custody per one correction officer in 2022.”⁷

Despite its rich staffing ratio, year after year the Department sees overtime spending exceed budgeted levels and – counterintuitively – there does not appear to be a direct correlation between any reductions in uniformed headcount and overtime spending.⁸ For this reason and others, as recently as 2023 the cost per person per year of housing on Rikers was \$507,000.⁹ Tragically underscoring the lack of return on investment, 2023 was an especially dangerous year on Rikers Island, and nine people died while in the Department’s custody.¹⁰

The Council’s engagement during the budget process is one of the most important ways for the people of New York City to seek change on Rikers Island and in the Department of Correction. The experiences of the people we represent demonstrate that the Department and the status quo both benefit from a complete lack of transparency in the administration of the jails. And that lack of transparency extends to the Department’s opaque budgeting. We share the concern articulated by others over the ability of the Department to include only six units of appropriation for personal services (PS) and five for other than personal services (OTPS): far fewer than even the NYPD, which includes 14 units of appropriation for PS and 11 for OTPS. As the Vera Institute explains, “[u]nits of appropriation are important because they give elected officials and members of the public insight into an agency’s spending.”¹¹

⁶ The preliminary budget seeks to fund 7,060 uniformed officers, although fewer than 6,000 are currently employed. The Vera Institute of Justice calculates an associated cost to the vacant positions of nearly \$150 million, based on the Department’s total spending on personal services, fringe benefits, and pension fund contributions. Eliminating the 1,152 vacancies that existed on Jan. 1, 2025, would bring a savings of \$149,641,444. *See id.* at 3.

⁷ Arden Armbruster, *A Shrinking System with Similar Spending: A Decade of Jail Trends (2014-2023)* (New York: Independent Budget Office, 2024), <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/a-shrinking-system-with-similar-spending-a-decade-of-jail-trends-2014-2023-september2024.pdf>.

⁸ *See id.* at 5 (“Conventional wisdom is that headcount and overtime are inversely related, and that adding personnel leads to lower reliance on overtime, and vice versa. [The Independent Budget Office] did not find a clear and consistent relationship between uniformed staffing levels and overtime spending over [the period of 2014-2023]. ... This indicates that staffing levels alone are insufficient to explain overtime spending.”).

⁹ *See* Vera Institute of Justice, *A Look Inside the New York City Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget*, *supra* n. 5 at 2.

¹⁰ *See, e.g.*, Tandy Lau, “Rikers Island 2023 death count doubles to six in deadly July,” *Amsterdam News*, July 27, 2023. <https://amsterdamnews.com/news/2023/07/27/rikers-island-2023-death-count-doubles-to-six-in-deadly-july>.

¹¹ *See* Vera Institute of Justice, *A Look Inside the New York City Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget*, *supra* n. 5 at 3.

This testimony will highlight some of the ways in which the Administration's mismanagement of the Department of Correction leads to an increased risk of violence and harm for the people in its custody, as well as ways in which the Department fails to meet even the most basic of the "Minimum Standards" promulgated by the Board of Correction ("BOC" or "the Board"), and concludes with specific steps that the Council can take in this budget cycle to address the ongoing failures on Rikers Island.

II. Incarceration on Rikers Island is Dangerous and Counterproductive

The violent dysfunction on Rikers Island can be measured in many ways, including the cost of settlement payouts in civil lawsuits alleging a wide range of violations,¹² as well as long-running *Nunez* class action, which has produced 10 years of reports by a federal monitor focused on violence in the jails and now threatens to bring the city jails under federal receivership.¹³

The Council Passed Local Law 42 to Address Some of the Most Egregious Harms Inflicted by the Department of Correction's Practices

In January 2024 the Council resoundingly passed Local Law 42 over a mayoral veto to ban solitary confinement and increase due process for people detained in city jails.¹⁴ The Law requires New York City to end the practice of placing people in solitary confinement for extended periods. It also limits the Department's discretion regarding the types and durations of physical restraints that it uses on people in its custody and provides due process protections for disciplinary sanctions that may lead to restrictive housing placements.¹⁵ As required under the Law, the Board promulgated regulations implementing the new law that clarified key provisions, including rules around providing an opportunity to be represented by counsel in certain disciplinary hearings, the right to present evidence and call witnesses in such hearings, and the right of an accused person in certain disciplinary hearings to review the Department's evidence in advance of any hearing.¹⁶

On July 27, 2024, one day before the new law was to take effect, the Mayor declared a state of emergency in New York City jails and issued an executive order blocking full implementation of

¹² E.g., Reuven Blau, "City to Shell Out \$1.6 Million to Rikers Detainee Abused by Therapist," The City, May 13, 2024. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/05/13/rikers-settlement-therapist-sex-assault/>; Chris Harris, "NYC paying record \$28M settlement to family of Rikers inmate left severely brain damaged after suicide attempt: report," New York Post, Apr. 6, 2024. <https://nypost.com/2024/04/06/us-news/nyc-to-pay-28-million-in-rikers-suicide-attempt-case/>.

¹³ Jacob Kaye, "With receivership looming, what could the future of Rikers look like?" Queens Daily Eagle, Jan. 14, 2025. <https://queenseagle.com/all/2025/1/14/with-receivership-looming-what-could-the-future-of-rikers-look-like>.

¹⁴ Katie Honan and Reuven Blau, "City Council Overrides Mayor Adams' Vetoes of Public Safety Bills," The City, Jan. 30, 2024. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2024/01/30/nyc-council-overrides-vetoes-police-solitary/>.

¹⁵ See generally, Local Law No. 42 of 2024 of City of New York. <https://intro.nyc/local-laws/2024-42>.

¹⁶ See Steven Goulden, New York City Law Department, Division of Legal Counsel to Hon. Dwayne C. Sampson, Chair, New York City Board of Correction, "Re: Amendment of Rules Relating to Restrictive Housing in Correctional Facilities." <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/BOC-Final-Rule-Restrictive-Housing-LL42.pdf>.

Local Law 42.¹⁷ In December, the City Council, joined by the Office of the Public Advocate, filed a lawsuit challenging the Mayor’s legal authority to use emergency executive orders to block the legislation.¹⁸ Brooklyn Defenders joined other public defense organizations in filing an amicus brief in support of the Council’s lawsuit, emphasizing that people in the city’s jails continue to experience trauma caused by the abusive Departmental practices that the Law was meant to eradicate.¹⁹

Meanwhile, amidst the uncertainty engendered by the legal wrangling, the people represented by Brooklyn Defenders continue to be held in conditions that would constitute violations of Local Law 42, if it were implemented as the Council intended.

Whistleblower Report Sheds Light on Routine Deadlocking of People with Serious Mental Illness

The brave whistleblowing report by former Correctional Health Services social worker Justyna Rzewinski in October 2024 exposed the Department’s unofficial practice of locking severely mentally ill people in their cells for weeks or even months in a practice referred to as “deadlocking.”²⁰

Institutional responses have failed to bring an end to deadlocking. Chair Nurse, joined by other Council members, immediately demanded an investigation into the practice, which the Department claimed no knowledge of.²¹ The Department of Correction initially responded by

¹⁷ Chelsia Rose Marcus, “Adams Blocks Law That Bans Solitary Confinement in New York Jails,” The New York Times, July 28, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/28/nyregion/adams-suspends-solitary-confinement-law.html>; see also, e.g., Emergency Executive Order 625, Office of the Mayor of New York. Issued on July 27, 2024. <https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/625-003/emergency-executive-order-625>.

¹⁸ See generally, Council of the City of New York and New York City Public Advocate v. Mayor Eric Adams, Verified Petition, Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of New York. <https://council.nyc.gov/press/wp-content/uploads/sites/56/2024/12/2024-12-09-Petition.pdf?> See also Emma G. Fitzsimmons, “New York City Council Sues Adams for Blocking Solitary Confinement Ban,” The New York Times, Dec. 9, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/12/09/nyregion/solitary-confinement-nyc-adams.html>.

¹⁹ Press Release, Brooklyn Defenders, “New York City Public Defenders File Amicus Brief in Support of the New York City Council and Public Advocate’s Lawsuit to Invalidate Mayor’s Suspension of Ban on Solitary Confinement,” (Dec. 13, 2024), <https://bds.org/latest/new-york-city-public-defenders-file-amicus-brief-in-support-of-the-new-york-city-council-and-public-advocates-lawsuit-to-invalidate-mayors-suspension-of-ban-on-solitary-confinement>. (“[Local Law 42] is needed now more than ever because, as firsthand accounts from *amici*’s clients demonstrate, DOC continues to use the same violent practices that LL42 bans. It is no answer, as the EEOs claim, to say that these practices are necessary to address violence in the city’s jails; the City Council—the arm of our city’s government tasked with making that assessment—expressly concluded otherwise.”).

²⁰ Graham Rayman, *Mentally ill at Rikers often locked in cells for weeks, denied treatment: Exclusive*, Daily News (Oct. 8, 2024), <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/10/08/mentally-ill-at-rikers-often-locked-in-cells-for-weeks-denied-treatment-exclusive/>; Graham Rayman, Josephine Stratman, *Reports of mentally ill being locked in, denied treatment at Rikers sparks investigation*, Daily News (Oct. 8, 2024), <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/10/08/reports-of-mentally-ill-being-locked-in-denied-treatment-at-rikers-sparks-investigation/>; Jacob Kaye, *Former Rikers worker says DOC locks mentally ill detainees inside cells for weeks*, Queens Daily Eagle (Oct. 11, 2024), <https://queenseagle.com/all/2024/10/11/former-rikers-worker-says-doc-locks-mentally-ill-detainees-inside-cells-for-weeks>.

²¹ Graham Rayman, *NYC Council members call for probe of locking seriously mentally ill Rikers detainees in cells for extended periods*, Daily News (Oct. 21, 2024), <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/10/21/nyc-council-members-call-for-probe-of-locking-seriously-mentally-ill-rikers-detainees-in-cells-for-extended-periods/>. See also, Jacob

beginning to track the number of days that people with mental illness are locked in their cells, and also referred the matter to the Department of Investigation.²² Additionally, the Board indicated in its testimony that it is planning to conduct its own investigation into the practice of involuntary lock-ins in Mental Observation (“MO”) units and areas where young adults are held. The experiences shared with us by the people we represent confirm the troubling reality that neither the Board nor the Department of Investigation has addressed: people with serious mental illness continue to be locked in their cells for days and weeks, denied access to medical services, showers, phones, programming, recreation, law library, and visitation.²³ This practice violates not only the provisions of Local Law 42; it violates *existing* Department rules and Board of Correction Minimum Standards, and it is a clear violation of the state law banning solitary confinement generally, particularly with respect to people with diagnosed mental illness.²⁴

In addition to continuing reports from people who have been subjected to this deadlocking practice in MO units at the George R. Verno Center, the people we represent also experience deadlocking in other jails. The Communicable Disease Unit located at West Facility is nominally a place where isolation cells are provided to prevent the spread of disease. People we represent, who do not have diagnoses of communicable diseases, report being placed in these units for days and weeks at a time, where they have no access to outdoor recreation, law library, phones, or – perhaps most confusingly – medical services.

Frequent Tactical Search Operations and Extended Lock-ins Increase Harm in Jails

In December, and continuing through the present, we began hearing with increasing frequency, first from the Otis Bantum Correctional Facility and then from other jails, of weekly Tactical Search Operations (TSOs) followed by extended, multi-day lock-ins. In practice, this meant that entire units are locked in for between three and five days each week. In celled units, the process begins with shutting off telephone access, followed by strip searches of each person in the unit. Each person is then placed in restraints and held outside their cell while officers search the cell, leaving a mess but – in every instance reported to us – turning up no contraband of any kind.

Following the search of the cells, entire units are then locked in for extended periods of anywhere from one to four days. During these extended lock-in periods, the people in the housing unit do not have access to phones either on the wall or on their tablet (if they had a tablet

Kaye, *DOC boss denies knowing about Rikers’ ‘worst-kept secret’*, Queens Daily Eagle (Nov. 13, 2024), <https://queenseagle.com/all/2024/11/13/doc-boss-denies-knowing-about-rikers-worst-kept-secret>.

²² Graham Rayman, *NYC jail officials now tracking how long mentally ill Rikers Island detainees are locked in: sources*, Daily News (Oct. 29, 2024), <https://www.nydailynews.com/2024/10/29/nyc-jail-officials-now-tracking-how-long-mentally-ill-rikers-island-detainees-are-locked-in-sources/>; Courtney Gross, *DOI probes treatment of mentally ill on Rikers Island*, Spectrum News (Nov. 12, 2024), <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2024/11/13/doi-probe-mentally-ill-detainees-rikers->.

²³ One person represented by BDS reported to us that he was recently deadlocked for nearly two weeks, apparently as an informal form of punishment. He was afforded no due process, denied all out-of-cell needs including showers, and was unable to communicate with family or his attorneys until he was eventually released from the unsanctioned deadlocking. Another person represented by BDS, who worked as a suicide prevention aide, recently reported that Department staff sometimes deadlock people on suicide watch.

²⁴ See “Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement” Act (the HALT Solitary Confinement Act). <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2021/S2836>.

at all). All family and counsel visits are cancelled, along with daily recreation, access to law library, all programming, and even showers. Critically, because most people rely on phone access to request medical treatment, these lock-ins limit people's medical access to the provision of daily medications already prescribed, while preventing people from contacting Correctional Health Services for any new or worsening conditions.

Although the Department has discretion to conduct TSOs, it is constrained by its own policies and procedures to the extent that they require that "[e]fforts should be made to minimize disruption of regular facility operations and [to] accomplish the operation in the shortest time possible."²⁵ Based on the experiences of the people we represent, the Department has not been in compliance with its own policies. Local Law 42 would make the extended period of isolation in celled units that typically follows these searches impermissible. In the absence of its full implementation, the people we represent are being harmed.

Lack of Due Process in Disciplinary Hearings Undermines Security in Jails

In addition to its explicit prohibitions on solitary confinement, Local Law 42 provided more robust due process protections for people charged with qualifying infractions and at risk of being moved to restrictive housing.²⁶

It is common for the people we represent to experience a broad array of procedural violations during the disciplinary process used by the Department in determining whether to place someone into restrictive housing. Recently, one person reported arriving for their disciplinary hearing and being told by the hearing officer – before the proceeding began and off the record – that they would be found guilty and that nothing that they said or presented in the hearing would make any difference to that outcome.

Another example is a situation where the person charged with an infraction was never given any notice of the charges prior to the hearing, instead receiving the Notice of Infraction at the same time as the Notice of Determination, after the hearing was concluded.

While many of the Departmental procedural violations that we see on a routine basis already violate the Department's existing directives – including failures to serve a Notice of Infraction, failures to give an individual an opportunity to request witnesses (or to produce them once requested), or failures to timely provide people with notices of determination following a hearing – these all serve to highlight how poorly prepared the Department is to implement the *increased* protections required by Local Law 42.

III. Routine Departmental Mismanagement Means Routine Deprivation

The Tablet Myth: Hard to Get, Difficult to Keep

In its testimony, the Department claimed to provide tablets – through its contract with Securus – to people who have been on Rikers for at least 30 days or have moved out of the intake facility at the Eric M. Taylor Center and into a more stable housing assignment. Department officials

²⁵ See, e.g., New York City Department of Correction Operations Order No 10/07, "Tactical Search Operations." On file with Brooklyn Defender Services.

²⁶ See Goulden, *supra* n. 14 at 5, 10-14, and accompanying text.

claimed that 86% of the population in the jails either currently have access to a tablet or “have had a tablet assigned to them.”

Even the Department seems to acknowledge that many people who are assigned a tablet do not actually have access to them. The tablets’ rechargeable batteries are not meant to be removed, so people must ask the officers in their housing units to take them for the purpose of charging them. Once in the possession of staff, tablets are routinely “lost.” This could mean that they are misplaced, broken, or – in multiple, independently reported situations – given or sold to a different person in custody. Once a tablet is lost, even if due to staff negligence, it is counted against the individual to whom it was assigned, and they may never be issued a replacement. Our experience informs us that a significant percentage of people in custody fall into this category. We frequently contact the Department on behalf of clients whose tablets are broken or never returned to them for months with no response.

Additionally, the Department routinely takes far longer than 30 days to provide people in custody with a tablet. In some cases, the delay is intentional, with the Department apparently believing that the person either already has a tablet, or that the person previously had one and it was damaged so that they may have lost the privilege of having one again, as in the situation described above.

Tablets are critical to people for many reasons, including remaining in contact with loved ones, requesting medical services, alerting the Department to problems in the jails by filing grievances, and maintaining access to counsel in order to participate in their own defense. And the promise of the tablet program has always included the possibility of reducing tensions and violence in the jails by relieving pressure in the contest for access to services like phones or entertainment.

The Department’s testimony smoothly elides the failures of its program: if people do not have regular access to a tablet, then the rate of initially assigned tablets, the information tablets house, and the services accessible via tablets do not matter. We urge the Council to see through the artifice and understand that there are too few accessible tablets in the jails, and the Department has made no clear pronouncement about how to ensure that everyone has regular access to the critical services they provide through the program.²⁷

The Department Consistently Fails to Provide Access to Services

As the routine failure on the part of the Department to provide access to a wide range of mandated services attests, people in its custody are consistently deprived of critical opportunities and subject to inhumane conditions. For example, the people we represent are denied access to fundamental services such as medical care, laundry, daily recreation, law library, and barbershop, each of which is required under the Department’s own Directives, the Board of

²⁷ To the extent the Department claimed, in its testimony today, that people who did not have an assigned tablet could access tablet programming when they have access to Law Library, we note that access to law library is also a problem for the Department. The people we represent routinely note that the Department is generally not providing law library access, despite clear requirements in the Board’s Minimum Standards.

Correction's Minimum Standards, or both.²⁸ The practice at BDS is that when we receive specific reports of these deprivations, we immediately relay them to both the Department's Office of Constituent and Grievance Services and to the Board of Correction. But despite both the Department and the Board being notified promptly in each case, these problems remain a constant feature of daily life for the people we represent.

IV. The Department Continues Contracting with Securus to Surveil New Yorkers Inside and Outside the Jails

The Department testified that it has now issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for services that will include both telephone and tablet programs. The current vendor for both services, Securus Technologies, whose contract expires in December 2025, uses its access to recorded telephone calls to administer "a vast and interconnected mass surveillance system that collects and databases biometric and other personal data not only from those detained in our city jails, but also their families, communities, and advocates."²⁹ As we have previously testified, all the data that DOC and Securus collect from both people in custody and the community members they speak to is uploaded to a database, access to which is sold to by Securus's law enforcement customers nationwide.³⁰ This sensitive data is used to map and track familial, associational, and even political ties in violation of the fundamental constitutional rights of both people in custody and community members, who are subject to this invasive surveillance solely because their loved one cannot afford to pay bail.³¹

The only way to be sure the data will not be misused and the rights of New Yorkers violated is to ensure it is not collected in the first place. It is critical that the Council maintain its vigilant oversight,³² not only because the Department apparently spends an order of magnitude more on phone services than other city agencies,³³ but also because the Department's apparent decision to

²⁸ Board of Correction Minimum Standards, Section 1-03(h) ("Personal Hygiene: Clothing Services"); Section 1-06 ("Recreation"); Section 1-08(f) ("Law libraries"); Directive #4000R-A ("Individual Personal Hygiene") ("[e]ach institution shall provide facilities whereby individuals in custody may have their hair cut or styled as regularly as needed").

²⁹ See Testimony of Alyssa Briody, on behalf of Brooklyn Defender Services, before the New York City Council Committees on Contract and Criminal Justice on "Oversight – Contracted Jail Services." Jan. 28, 2025, <https://bds.org/assets/images/BDS-Contracts-and-Crim-Justice-Hearing-Contracted-Jail-Services-Jan-28-2025.pdf>.

³⁰ *Id.*, citing CISION PR NEWswire, Securus Delivers the Most Advanced "Big Data" Analytical Tool in Corrections (Dec. 21, 2015), <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/securus-delivers-the-most-advanced-big-data-analytical-tool-in-corrections-300195882.html>.

³¹ BDS, together with the Bronx Defenders, New York County Defender Services, and Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP is litigating a class action lawsuit against DOC seeking to end its unlawful mass surveillance system. See Petition, *Reid v. DOC*, Index No. 806245/2024E available at <https://bds.org/assets/files/Verified-PetitionMarcus-Reid-v-Department-of-Correction.pdf>.

³² See Intro 0963-2024 (Brewer) ("Privacy of communications of individuals in the custody of the department of correction."). See also, Press Release: Brooklyn Defenders, "New York City Council Member Gale Brewer issued a press release detailing her sponsorship of the End Correctional Community Surveillance ('ECCoS') Act," (June 20, 2024), <https://bds.org/latest/new-york-city-council-member-gale-brewer-issued-a-press-release-detailing-her-endorsement-of-the-end-correctional-community-surveillance-eccos-act>.

³³ See Testimony of Alyssa Briody, *supra* n. 25 at 5 ("Presently, it appears that the Department pays Securus approximately \$5.4 million per year for phone and surveillance services. By contrast, almost every other city agency appears to pay well less than \$500,000 per year for phone services.").

bundle tablet services with phone services preserves the unwelcome possibility for continued intrusion by a private company in the collection and storage of sensitive information and communications in a space that is presently subject to less regulation than phones.³⁴

V. Conclusion

For all of these reasons, Brooklyn Defenders asks that the Council take all necessary measures to increase safety for all New Yorkers by diverting people from incarceration and requiring the city to take meaningful steps to decrease the population of the jails on Rikers Island.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at mklinger@bds.org.

³⁴ See *id.* at 4. See also Tatiana Walk-Morris, *Prison telecom providers are shifting strategy by exploiting tablet services*, Prism (Dec. 9, 2024), <https://prismreports.org/2024/12/09/prison-telcom-providers-exploit-tablet-services/>.



New York City Council Committees on Finance & Criminal Justice
Preliminary Budget Hearings – Criminal Justice
March 7, 2025

Hello, Chairs Brannan and Salaam and members of the City Council. I'm Nadia Chait, the Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy at CASES. We know that NYC's most deeply rooted problems are solved by supporting, not jailing, people. Our programs do what jails and punitive programming cannot: restore hope by giving people opportunities to heal, grow, and succeed in their communities. Unfortunately, Mayor Adams' proposed budget pushes further investments in failed strategies, rather than supporting a vision of true public safety and justice.

This budget must invest in the services that will close Rikers Island, a jail complex filled by torture, brutality and death. Two people have died in DOC custody in the last month alone. Rather than deepening investments in failed systems, we must invest in the work to actual build community safety and help people reach their potential, not punishment.

The proposed \$3.8 million cut to Alternatives to Incarceration, and the \$8 million cut to Reentry Programs, must be reversed. We operate a range of ATIs, which not only keep people out of incarceration but transform lives so people have the supports they need to avoid future criminal legal system involvement. We receive \$9.5 million annually through MOCJ ATI contracts. Without this funding, we simply would not be able to sustain our ATI programs, which helped **over 1,800 people avoid incarceration** in FY24. Our ATIs include:

- Nathaniel ACT, which serves people with serious mental illness and felony charges, by providing wraparound supports. The team-based approach includes psychiatry, medication, therapy, nursing, substance use care, housing placements, court intake and court coordination, ensuring that the full range of a client's needs are met. Among clients who successfully complete the program, *none are reconvicted of a violent felony, and less than 5% are reconvicted of any felony*. The program decreases homelessness by 70% and cuts psychiatric hospitalizations in half.
- ROAR: Reframing Opportunity, Alternatives & Resilience, which provides young people with mentorship, employment support, connections to education, and direct access to mental health services at CASES. ROAR graduates are able to engage in voluntary services following successful completion of the program to ensure sustained support in the community.
- Nathaniel Community Success, an ATI and ATD for people with mental health needs or co-occurring mental health and substance use needs. Clients receive a specialized clinical assessment to guide their treatment, which can include a variety of evidence-based therapies, including motivational interviewing and DBT. We closely coordinate services with our mental health clinic, to ensure a seamless transition for clients at the end of their mandate. Clients can also be linked to our Health Home Care Coordination program to help tackle complex health needs.
- NewSTART: a rapid intervention for people with a history of low-level convictions, designed to disrupt the cycle of incarceration. Starting at arraignment, newSTART

rapidly engages clients in services and conducts an intensive assessment to identify client needs and connect clients to services including housing, mental health care, and employment support.

We are proud to be members of the ATI/Reentry Coalition, an ecosystem of providers that we work closely with to serve the complex needs of our clients. ATIs and reentry services are a key part of reducing the population on Rikers Island. By investing in and scaling these programs, we can create an approach to public safety that focuses on helping individuals heal and desist from crime, rather than endless, ineffective and inhumane cycles of punishment. The administration and the City Council should invest heavily in ATIs and reentry programming this budget.

The Department of Probation has a critical role to play in ensuring public safety in our city. DOP's role in the family court system provides an opportunity to transform young people's lives at a critical moment. We have worked closely with DOP for decades to provide young people with the community-based services they need not only to avoid placement and detention, but to invest in their future. We have also collaborated with DOP on a range of programs to serve young people voluntarily, who otherwise might end up in family court.

Unfortunately, this partnership has been strained by recent developments at DOP, starting in fall 2023 with the abrupt cancellation of the IMPACT and NextSteps programs, and continuing with reporting changes and lack of transparency currently. These changes threaten the City's ability to appropriately serve young people. In the most recent MMR, DOP reported several concerning metrics regarding young people:

- A 25% increase in intakes for youth 12-17, due to an increase in arrests
- An increase in the rearrest rate among youth 12-17, from 2.7% to 4.1%
- A decrease in the number of young people statutorily eligible for adjustment.

These concerning trends are, in part, a direct result of DOP's cancellation of critical preventive programs, and changes to other existing contracts. When young people do not get the help they need to avoid troubling behavior and exit the criminal legal system, some of them will continue to engage in illegal activity.

Restore Funding to DOP Programs, Including IMPACT and NextSTEPS ***Cancellation of IMPACT Contract - \$3.3 million***

In 2022, CASES was awarded an RFP for the IMPACT program, to provide an alternative to placement (ATP) program for young people in family court and/or Criminal Supreme Court. Unfortunately, this contract was abruptly terminated in fall 2023, before we were able to begin operations. We urge the Council to restore funding for this program, as there is no equivalent program. IMPACT was funded at \$3.3 million annually.

IMPACT would have offered credible messenger mentorship, helped clients reach their educational, employment and pro-social goals and provided home-based family therapy. The contract was intended to start on January 1, 2023. CASES hired staff and conducted outreach to community organizations, public defenders, district attorney's offices and judges to provide information about the program and our intake process. We were prepared to launch this program for several months, however, DOP refused to provide their sign-off to let us start, and ultimately cancelled the contract.

There is no equivalent ATP for our young people – although DOP and ACS both operate other ATPs, these serve young people with different needs than IMPACT. We also operate the Adolescent Portable Therapy program, through a contract with DOP and additional funding from the City Council. While APT provides in-home therapy, it does not provide the significant additional services that IMPACT offers. APT is not an alternative to placement and is also funded for a much smaller caseload (30 young people). IMPACT would have served 175 young people across the city, who are otherwise highly likely to experience juvenile detention. These young people deserve access to the robust supports IMPACT would have provided, instead of being forced out of their community into a less supportive and more expensive setting.

Restore the Next STEPS Program - \$2.5 million

In August of 2023, with less than one week's notice, the Department of Probation abruptly ended the Next STEPS program. This cancellation covered the entire program, which operated at 15 different New York City Housing Authority developments. CASES operated this program at the Tompkins and Bushwick Houses in Brooklyn. Citywide, the program served over 240 young people and employed at least 40 individuals, who lost their jobs with less than one week of notice. We urge the Council to restore the full \$2.5 million in funding for this program.

Next STEPS, an initiative of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, offered one-on-one and group mentoring within a cognitive behavioral therapy-based curriculum designed to help young adults make the attitudinal and behavioral changes necessary to avoid criminal activity and re-engage with education, work and community. The program was started in 2014 and provides services in each borough. Mentorship is a critical support for many of our young people, as noted in [Mayor Adams' Blueprint for Community Safety](#). Mentors helped youth connect to educational and vocational opportunities, provided youth with a trusted adult who can support them in challenging times, and helped guide youth as they navigate decisions and enter adulthood. Next STEPS programs employed community members, providing them with an opportunity to achieve both economic stability and mobility.

Our program participants wrote a letter sharing their frustration at the cancellation of this program, and what the benefits of the program were to them:

“Next STEPS has helped us to find jobs and internships while helping to motivate us on a daily basis. Next STEPS creates a good, safe, positive space for us to express ourselves and be free. With mentors that genuinely care, it gives us extra support from someone that we can go to without the fear of being turned away. This program has encouraged us to always do the right thing and to follow in the right path.

“Through this program we receive help with things like resume writing, filling out job applications and preparing for interviews. Our mentors work with us to better prepare us for these jobs by leading mock interviews, shopping for professional clothing, and whatever can be done to help us develop as professionals...Everyday has become a learning experience for us and through sex education, know your rights, boxing, chat no cap, and juvenile justice awareness to name a few, we have gained new knowledge...

“Whenever we are in need Next STEPS works to help us in ways that we are forever thankful for. We are grateful to have such an amazing program with

loving staff that have assisted us in getting gout of our comfort zones in order to reach new peaks.”

The City should reverse this decision and restore funding for the program immediately. The cost of the entire program is just \$2.5 million, a small cost for the unmeasurable impact of transforming lives and guiding young people to achieve their full potential.

Maintain Funding for Current DOP Contracted Programs

It is also critically important that DOP continue funding existing programs, including PEAK, Adolescent Portable Therapy (APT), and WorksPLUS. Our PEAK and APT contracts ended on 9/30/2024. We have been continuing to provide these programs on assurances from DOP that an extension will be registered, but we are now in our sixth month of providing services without a contract. Our contracts for 2023-2024 for these programs were not registered until December 2024, three months after we had completed the work. It is incredibly challenging for us to provide high-quality programs and maintain a long-term commitment to these services when we do not receive timely payments.

Reduce Funding for DOC

As members of the Campaign to Close Rikers, CASES also urges the City to stop funneling money into a failed system of incarceration that is so unable to maintain basic safety that a federal receivership is pending. To that end, the budget should **eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff**. The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025 they employed 5,908 and 1,152 positions were vacant. DOC has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies, DOC could realize cost savings of \$149.6M annually. Further savings can be achieved by **reducing 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. These savings must be invested in community-based alternatives, including ATI, ATD and reentry programs.

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

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- Summary of FY26 Center for Justice Innovation Proposals

The Center for Justice Innovation is a non-profit organization that seeks to transform the policies and practices of the justice system to make it fair, effective, and humane. The Center operates the following sites throughout New York City.

- Family
- Criminal
- Community Development
- Civil/Housing

Click on the name of any program to learn more.

STATEN ISLAND

- 1. Staten Island Justice Center

MANHATTAN

- 2. Harlem Community Justice Center
- 3. Headquarters
- 4. Manhattan Justice Opportunities
- 5. Midtown Community Court

MULTI-BOROUGH

- 6. Legal Hand (Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens)

BRONX

- 7. Bronx Child Trauma Support
- 8. Bronx Community Justice Center
- 9. Bronx Community Solutions

BROOKLYN

- 10. Brooklyn Justice Initiatives
- 11. Brooklyn Mental Health Court
- 12. Brownsville Community Justice Center
- 13. Neighbors in Action
- 14. Red Hook Community Justice Center
- 15. Supervised Release Program

QUEENS

- 16. Queens Community Justice Center (Jamaica and The Rockaways)

Staten Island

Brooklyn

Queens

Manhattan

Citywide

- Access to Justice
- Alternatives to Incarceration
- Driver Accountability Program
- Gender and Family Justice
- Neighborhood Safety Initiatives
- Parent Support Program
- Project Reset
- Restorative Justice Practices
- RISE Project
- Strong Starts Court Initiative
- Youth Action Institute
- Youth Impact

For More Information
Hailey Nolasco
Senior Director of Government Relations
hnolasco@innovatingjustice.org

Courtney Bryan, Executive Director

Good afternoon, Chair Nurse, and esteemed members of the Criminal Justice Committee. My name is Amanda Berman, and I serve as the Senior Director of Court Reform at the Center for Justice Innovation (the Center). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

The Center for Justice Innovation is a community justice organization that centers safety and racial justice in partnership with communities, courts, and the people most impacted. In order for true safety and justice to flourish, our work has shown that we need economic opportunity for all, stable affordable housing, and safe streets, free of crime and violence. This ethos is evident in our programming. Spanning the entire continuum of the justice system, our programs work to address the root causes of justice system involvement, equipping communities with the tools and resources necessary to thrive.

Our work focuses on community safety, which meets the needs of community members on a grassroots level and within court systems, which works within and in partnership with systems to bring justice and fairness to those in contact with the legal system.

Today, I will be focusing on the Center's array of court reform programming, ranging from pre-arraignment diversion, to alternatives to incarceration and post-conviction sentencing programs. These programs are more important than ever as we work towards the shared goal of shutting down Rikers Island. We appreciate the Council's partnership on this effort.

Alternatives to Incarceration

Each year, thousands of people with substance use disorders, serious mental illness, and other treatable issues cycle through our city's jail system. Often, these individuals are returning to their communities destabilized, leading to more harm and ultimately, re-incarceration. With the goal of breaking that cycle, the Center is seeking funding to continue providing these vital programs.

Alternatives to incarceration, or ATIs, link participants with mental health and substance use treatment, vocational and educational supports, individual and group counseling tailored to participants' needs, as well as supervision and regular reporting to the court. ATI programs therefore reduce the court's reliance on incarceration, lower the jail population, and allow people to remain in their communities while receiving the tools they need to avoid further justice involvement.

ATIs work to set individuals up for success upon completion of programming. Through significant staff training and quality assurance measures, we ensure our programs consistently adhere to evidence-based practices. As a result, our programs are successful in reducing re-offending and re-incarceration. In addition, our programs offer longer term services to participants on a voluntary basis following completion of their court-mandated program.

Utilizing these evidence-based practices results in shrinking some of the well-documented high costs associated with incarceration and detention. Ultimately, we can also reduce the potential harms of confinement, such as losing housing, critical benefits, employment,

and protective factors that can be hard to regain once lost. These programs have the capacity to make real, tangible advances in our efforts to improve public safety, ensure justice and accountability, and strengthen communities in the long run.

Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration

The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) seeks funding to support its Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration (FATI) programs for individuals arrested on violent and non-violent felony charges in Kings County. These FATI programs offer holistic and individualized community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring of participants on felony cases, thereby reducing the use of jail and prison sentences and leading to reduced criminal dispositions. The requested funding would sustain operations, as well as enhance capacity to respond to the significant increase in referrals for all of Felony ATI programming—particularly for Brooklyn Mental Health Court, for which referrals have nearly doubled between 2020 and 2024. In addition, as the number of referrals have increased, so too have the complexity of needs that participants are facing. The enhanced funding would support the hiring of two additional staff members: a Housing Case Manager, and a Peer Mental Health Specialist. These two staff members would significantly enhance the capacity of the Felony ATI Programs to better meet the increasingly complex needs of our growing population; and ultimately, improve outcomes for participants and society.

Brooklyn Mental Health Court

The Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC), based within Brooklyn Supreme Court, was New York City's first mental health court and has been serving as a local and national model for over twenty years. BMHC works to craft effective responses to crime committed by those suffering from severe mental illness, including those facing felony charges. In addressing both program participant treatment needs and community public safety concerns, the court links defendants with serious and persistent mental illness, who would ordinarily be jail- or prison-bound, to long-term community-based treatment as an alternative to incarceration. Cases are referred by judges, defense attorneys, and the Kings County District Attorney's office.

The participants in our mental health courts often face numerous challenges, so being able to administer critical treatment services while preserving stability in participants' community is of vital importance. To date, over 1,300 participants have received treatment, satisfied program requirements, and graduated, all outside of the carceral setting. Active participants boast a 74 percent compliance rate while in Brooklyn Mental Health Court. These participants have a reduced likelihood of a rearrest and a 17 percent reduction in the likelihood of a re-conviction versus a comparison group.¹ This data shows that these programs are not just effective at administering treatment but also at improving public safety, features traditional

¹ Rossman, S.B., J. Buck Willison, K. Mallik Kane, K. Kim, S. Debus-Sherrill & P.M. Downey (2012, July). Criminal Justice Interventions for Offenders with Mental Illness: Evaluation of Mental Health Courts in Bronx and Brooklyn, New York. New York, NY: Urban Institute.
<https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/25576/412603-Criminal-Justice-Interventions-for-Offenders-With-Mental-Illness-Evaluation-of-Mental-Health-Courts-in-Bronx-and-Brooklyn-New-York.PDF>

incarceration often lacks. As evidenced by the reduction in re-arrests and convictions, these programs function in a way that is true to their name, working to solve the problems that result in justice system involvement to benefit individuals and communities for years to come while saving the city from increased incarceration costs.

Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Court

The Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration Program offers community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring to people with criminal charges in Supreme Court who are not otherwise eligible for other specialized treatment courts, such as the Brooklyn Mental Health Court or Brooklyn Treatment Court. The court aims to serve participants with a wide range of felony charges and diverse needs.

The goal of the program is to improve public safety by increasing the use of community-based social services and supervision as a response to felony cases. Participants complete mandated, individualized services that are designed to help them avoid future contact with the justice system, reduce unnecessary incarceration, minimize the collateral consequences of criminal justice involvement, and promote swift case resolutions.

Judges and attorneys are provided with independent assessments and tailored interventions that offer clinically informed, effective, and restorative responses. Social workers assess participants and develop individualized treatment plans. These treatment plans can include individual or group counseling, job training, and substance use or mental health treatment, among other services. The clinical staff has access to a consulting psychiatrist for individuals with significant mental health needs.

Bronx Community Solutions Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) Program

Since 2010, Bronx Community Solutions (BCS) has assisted all individuals ordered by Bronx Criminal Court mandate to complete a screening and assessment on DWI-related charges.. This initiative began at the request of the judiciary, who noted that participants were having difficulty navigating the complicated network of private providers of these statutorily mandated services. While BCS never charges any cost to participants for services, private providers regularly charge in excess of \$300 to \$400 to complete a screening and assessment. BCS has negotiated with several providers who have been willing to accept a reduced fee of \$150 in order to serve the volume of court mandated cases that come from Bronx Criminal Court, but that still remains a significant financial hurdle for participants and a barrier to entering the treatment process as soon as possible, thus making Bronx streets safer. To eliminate this financial burden on participants and also expedite the treatment process, BCS is seeking funding to cover the costs of DWI treatment and assessments for BCS participants, and to fund the staffing of a DWI treatment coordinator so that BCS may continue to be relied on by the courts to do the necessary work of connecting mandated participants to treatment.

This initiative will provide two key benefits to the community. First, by addressing the significant financial barrier to screening and assessment for DWI treatment, BCS will provide equity and fairness to all mandated participants, regardless of their ability to pay. For those

facing the financial burdens of lost income and lost transportation, this will be particularly beneficial. Second, this initiative will be beneficial to the entire Bronx community as every Bronx resident will gain from safer streets. The very nature of DWI charges mean that they may impact any pedestrian, cyclist, driver, property owner, or resident of the Bronx who interacts with the streets of this borough. By eliminating barriers to treatment and getting participants to the help needed to make them a safer driver, this initiative will speed up the timeline to achieving enhanced road safety in the Bronx. In 2024, 288 clients were referred for screening and assessment. Since 2020, among the participants referred and followed by BCS through their treatment process, 84 percent successfully completed treatment.²

Driver Accountability Program

Traffic safety is an issue that directly impacts the majority of New Yorkers, whether they are drivers, pedestrians, or cyclists. According to a recent study by Transportation Alternatives, 70 percent of New York City voters know someone who has been injured or killed in a traffic crash, and 30 percent have been injured in a traffic crash themselves, making this a particularly pertinent issue to be addressed.³

The Center's Driver Accountability Program seeks to reduce dangerous driving behaviors and improve street safety in New York City by utilizing principles of restorative justice to engage drivers in meaningful reflection around their driving behaviors, and encourage self-empowerment to change those behaviors. The program also works to reduce systemic harms that are caused by traditional punitive responses, by offering an alternative to fines, fees, traditional prosecution, or short-term incarceration for vehicular charges. We are seeking funding from City Council to support this vital program.

The program draws upon principles of restorative justice to address the dangerous behaviors that are the primary cause of pedestrian fatalities. It utilizes a group participation model that enables drivers to self-reflect and have honest conversations about their own behaviors, the reasons behind their choices, and an opportunity to learn from one another in a non-judgmental environment. Participants are required to actively engage in a series of exercises and discussions led by trained group facilitators.

After a brief introduction, participants complete a questionnaire that requires them to rate and describe their driving beliefs and behaviors, a practice that initiates meaningful self-reflection. Participants are then asked to share their answers, providing a framework for a discussion about what constitutes dangerous driving and why. Incorporating victims' voices is a critical component of the program. Participants watch the Vision Zero video, "Drive Like Your Family Lives Here," which includes testimonials from people who have lost loved ones due to unsafe driving. Group facilitators then lead a discussion about the video and the importance of thinking broadly about one's place on the road and in the community. Participants also learn about the importance of language and why it is critical to view these tragedies as "crashes," rather than "accidents."

² Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

³ Troutman, M. (2021, January 15). Traffic Violence Touches 70 Percent of NYers, Study Finds. <https://patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/traffic-violence-touches-70-percent-nyers-study-finds>

In the latter part of the session, participants are required to identify two to three driving behaviors that they are committed to changing. The group then develops concrete steps to change each of these behaviors, such as identifying alternative practices and decision-making skills that can be harnessed in those critical moments of judgment. This portion of the group empowers participants to become agents of their own change—an essential element of the Driver Accountability Program’s restorative approach.

Throughout the session, the facilitators introduce important facts and safety tips for the group to consider and discuss, such as the scientific data behind speed limits, the lead causes of fatalities, and the importance of street design and engineering. This allows participants to come away with an understanding of the myriad elements that contribute to street safety, and the role they can play as drivers in that ecosystem.

With the support of the City Council, the Driver Accountability Program currently operates at six sites, in all five boroughs, serving criminal courts in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island. The program is offered in both Spanish and English; individuals who are referred with other language needs are provided with translation services to conduct the program in a one-on-one setting. In 2024, 980 participants completed the program across all five boroughs.⁴

A recent impact evaluation conducted by the Center found a 50 percent reduction in recidivism in Brooklyn, and success at improving street safety in both Brooklyn and Staten Island. Specifically, the evaluation found that DAP participants in both Brooklyn and Staten Island were less likely to recidivate on selected DAP charges within six months than the comparison group. In Brooklyn, the recidivism effect remained significant across all periods analyzed, up to two years post-disposition. Participation in DAP was also associated with different case outcomes: DAP participants in Brooklyn were more likely to have their case dismissed and less likely to receive a fine than individuals not mandated to DAP.⁵ This evaluation built upon an earlier participant-focused evaluation conducted by the Center, which found that the program was successful in engaging drivers in meaningful self-reflection and changing their driving beliefs and behaviors.⁶

Over several years of operating the Driver Accountability Program, facilitators noticed a growing number of participants who were being referred to the Program for charges related to a suspended license, or other invalid documentation (such as registration or insurance). For this participant population, program staff determined that a more tailored intervention was needed that offered more insight into state laws and regulations governing such documentation, as well as what steps they would need to take to be in compliance with these laws. As such, program staff created a new version of DAP that would focus on supporting participants to better understand the requirements associated with having a license, how to check the status of their license, how to clear suspensions with the Department of Motor Vehicles, and other rules of the

⁴ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Salesforce database. [Data file].

⁵ Strong, H., Reynolds, D., & Sharlein, J. (2024, November). Steering Towards Safety: An Impact Evaluation of the Driver Accountability Program.

https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2024/DAP%20eval_11072024.pdf

⁶ Sexton, E., & Jeffrey Sharlein. (2022, February). The Driver Accountability Program: A Participant-Focused Evaluation of a New York City Alternative Sentencing Program.

[https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2022/Driver Accountability Program Report Final Draft.pdf](https://www.innovatingjustice.org/sites/default/files/media/document/2022/Driver%20Accountability%20Program%20Report%20Final%20Draft.pdf)

road related to documentation. This curriculum, currently titled “Driver Accountability Program 2.0/Documentation,” began a pilot phase in April 2024 in Brooklyn and has since expanded to Staten Island. In 2024, 52 participants were served through the Driver Accountability Program 2.0 group.⁷

Circles for Safe Streets

The Center is also requesting continued support for the second tier of the DAP program, called Circles for Safe Streets: Driver Accountability Through Restorative Justice, which responds to vehicular crashes involving serious injury or death. The Center worked with Families for Safe Streets to develop Circles for Safe Streets which offers more intensive intervention that brings together drivers and victims and/or surviving family members of their crashes through restorative circles to work toward healing, accountability, and reparation. During the circle sessions, victims (or family members) have an opportunity to articulate their feelings, the depth of harm they have suffered, and what has been taken from them as a result of the driver’s actions. Significantly, it also provides an opportunity for the driver to be held accountable, acknowledge the harm they have caused, and express remorse or even take steps to repair the harm.

Before bringing the parties together, program staff work separately with the drivers and victims/surviving family members to provide intensive individualized support in the form of case management, support groups, and referrals for long-term counseling to address trauma and mental health care that is often needed in the aftermath of these crashes. Additionally, as part of the preparation process, all drivers who participate in Circles for Safe Streets are required to complete the Driver Accountability Program to begin the process of educating and to introduce drivers to the voices of those who have experienced this kind of harm. In the majority of cases, Circles for Safe Streets serves as an alternative to incarceration. In a limited number of cases, where the case requires some period of incarceration due to aggravating circumstances (such as the involvement of alcohol or excessive rates of speed in the crash), participation in Circles for Safe Streets may serve as mitigation and result in a reduced period of incarceration.

EmpowerHER

At the Center’s Staten Island Justice Center (SIJC) and the Queens Community Justice Center (QCJC), there has been an increase in the number of female participants (including female-identifying participants) referred to Alternative to Incarceration programming, a trend that is reflected nationwide.⁸ The Staten Island Justice Center has been offering ATI programming since 2020. In its first full year of operation, 2021, Staten Island ATI programming served 94 female participants representing about 21 percent of ATI participants. This number has steadily increased each year, and in 2024, 200 women were served through Staten Island’s ATI program, approximately 29 percent of the 678 participants served. The Queens Community Justice Center has also seen a notable increase in the number of female participants referred to its

⁷ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

⁸ Budd, K. M. (2024, July 23). *Incarcerated Women and Girls*. The Sentencing Project.
<https://www.sentencingproject.org/fact-sheet/incarcerated-women-and-girls/>

ATI program: in 2022, Queens ATI programming served 91 female participants; this increased to 325 in 2023 and 334 in 2024.⁹ These upward trends in both Staten Island and Queens underscores the growing demand for resources for women and emphasizes the importance of responsive support for female participants in ATI programs. To meet this rising need, the Staten Island and Queens Justice Centers are requesting funding from City Council to develop specialized ATI programming to meet the unique needs of female-identifying participants.

Research shows that women who come into contact with the justice system often have unique needs and experiences that differ significantly from those of men. Women involved in the justice system are more likely to have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse compared to their male counterparts.¹⁰ In addition, they often report higher rates of mental health issues and substance abuse disorders.¹¹ Women involved in the justice system may face greater challenges securing stable, well-paying jobs upon release, impacting their ability to provide for themselves and their families. Finally, a large portion of women involved in the justice system are mothers and often the primary caretakers for their children.¹²

Internal data collected from female participants at the Staten Island Justice Center and the Queens Community Justice Center support these findings. At the Staten Island Justice Center, 29.5 percent of women served in the ATI program were flagged as having mental health needs and 62 percent flagged for employment needs, which correlated with economic challenges. At the Queens Community Justice Center, education, employment, and housing are consistently identified as the top areas requiring attention for women. In 2023, 18.4 percent of female participants flagged education as a need, 56.4 percent cited employment, and 26.7 percent identified housing. By 2024, these figures increased, with 30.2 percent of females flagging education needs, 61.1 percent indicating employment needs, and 31.9 percent highlighting housing as a priority.¹³ Addressing these unique needs with gender-informed approaches can lead to better outcomes for female ATI participants.

With support from City Council funding, the programs will launch EmpowerHer: Pathways to Justice, which will provide both group and individual programming to address the needs of female participants. Funding will be used to hire a case manager for Staten Island Justice Center and a case manager for Queens Community Justice Center, who will deliver trauma-informed and gender-specific programming that address the intersections of trauma, race, gender, and sexuality for women involved in the justice system. Psychoeducational groups will aim to address the most pressing needs of women in the justice system, in tandem with individual case management services. The program's primary focus will be on addressing economic development, health, mental health, and parental support needs.

⁹ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

¹⁰ *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. (2020, August 13). <https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

¹¹ Council on Criminal Justice. (2024, July). Women's Justice: A Preliminary Assessment of Women in the Criminal Justice System . <https://counciloncj.org/womens-justice-a-preliminary-assessment-of-women-in-the-criminal-justice-system/>

¹² *Women and Girls in the Justice System: Overview*. Office of Justice Programs. (2020, August 13). <https://www.ojp.gov/feature/women-and-girls-justice-system/overview>

¹³ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

Pre-Arrest Diversion

In recent years, a critical and growing part of the Center’s work has been an effort to develop proportionate responses that shrink the footprint of the justice system and minimize its harms. This has led to the launch of several early diversion programs which seek to provide offramps to individuals even further upstream than traditional system responses have allowed for. The Center is seeking funding to support two such early diversion programs.

Bronx HOPE

Bronx Heroin Overdose Prevention and Education (HOPE), an initiative of Bronx Community Solutions, addresses substance use issues with a harm reduction model at the precinct level. By giving clients the option of accessing community services instead of appearing in court, Bronx HOPE gives Bronx residents the opportunity for rehabilitation and connection to community rather than jail or options that don’t address the underlying issues.

The process begins when an individual is issued a Desk Appearance Ticket (“DAT”) from the New York Police Department. The NYPD will forward this DAT to the Bronx District Attorney’s Office, which will review the individual for eligibility. Individuals who receive a DAT for drug possession will have the option to participate in the HOPE program. If an individual is eligible, they will be met at the precinct after their arrest by a peer mentor, who explains the program, provides a Naloxone kit and overdose prevention education; and connects the individual to Bronx HOPE case managers. If an individual chooses to participate, they must meet with a Bronx HOPE case manager within seven days of their arrest. Case managers then conduct an assessment and work with the individual to develop an individualized plan of care; help identify services that address an individual’s needs; and provide support in the completion of services.

Bronx HOPE demonstrates that eligible individuals are more likely to engage in programming with peer presence at the precinct. In 2024, Bronx HOPE had a contact rate of 88 percent for dispatched cases. Of those cases that were dispatched and began services, 70 percent completed their services, thereby preventing the need for those participants to appear in court and face criminal charges.¹⁴

Project Reset

Much like Bronx HOPE, Project Reset offers participants the option to avoid court and a criminal record by completing community-based programming. The Center operates Project Reset for adults ages 18 and older in all five boroughs with support from the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, New York City Council, District Attorneys’ offices, and the New York City Police Department. Police alert individuals who are arrested and receive DATs for low-level offenses that they may be eligible for Project Reset. Prosecutors then review each case. Those

¹⁴ Ibid.

with eligible charges are offered the opportunity to engage in programming rather than going to court. Individuals may consult with a defense attorney at any time.

Participants complete an intake interview with program staff and engage in two-to-four hours of programming. Participants who successfully complete this intervention never set foot in a courtroom and don't get a criminal record. Instead, the local district attorney's office declines to prosecute their case and the arrest record is sealed. Project Reset programming varies by borough and the participant's age. Participants are offered interventions such as group workshops, restorative justice circles, arts programming, or individual counseling sessions. Through these interventions, participants gain a better understanding of the criminal justice system, personal accountability, and knowledge of the resources available to them in the community. All participants are offered voluntary referrals to social services, such as counseling, job training, or substance use treatment.

Since 2015, Project Reset has helped more than 10,000 participants avoid court and the consequences of a criminal record. As of 2024, the program has a 96 percent attendance rate of those scheduled.¹⁵ An evaluation of 16- and 17-year-old Project Reset participants in Manhattan found they were significantly less likely than defendants in a comparison group to be convicted of a new crime within one year. It also documented improved case processing times and case outcomes, as well as positive perceptions of the program. More than 95 percent of participants said they had made the right decision by entering the program and that they would recommend Project Reset to someone in a similar situation.¹⁶

Bronx Same-Day Reset

With ongoing City Council support, Bronx Community Solutions, an initiative of the Center, will continue offering same-day at-arraignment programming that gives eligible individuals the opportunity to participate in programming at their first court appearance and receive an immediate dismissal the same day. This programming, first piloted in 2024 with City Council funding, addresses the large gap in services caused by the inability to contact many Bronx Reset and Bronx HOPE (Bronx Heroin Overdose and Prevention Education) pre-arraignment diversion participants before their initial court date. Ultimately, these expanded diversion services reduce the collateral consequences of justice system involvement while instilling accountability; address underlying reasons for justice system involvement; and alleviate the massive backlog in the court system, an issue that disproportionately impacts the Bronx.

Rapid Reset

While same-day programming in the Bronx is funded through Bronx Project Reset's existing City Council award, in Manhattan, this work is presently unfunded. The Center is seeking funding from City Council to maintain this vital resource in an additional borough.

¹⁵ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

¹⁶ Cadoff, B. & K. Dalve (2019, January). *Project Reset: An Evaluation of a Pre-Arraignment Diversion Program in New York City*. New York, NY: Center for Justice Innovation.
<https://www.innovatingjustice.org/publications/projectreset-evaluation>

In Manhattan, around 70 percent of eligible people miss the chance to take advantage of pre-arraignment diversion due to inaccurate or missing contact information on their arrest paperwork. These participants might have inconsistent access to phones or email, and may have no reliable method of receiving mail, making it difficult or impossible for Reset program staff to reach them and engage them in services. For years, these individuals missed out on the benefits of Project Reset, including the opportunity to participate in a meaningful program session, gain access to voluntary resources, and have their case resolved favorably with a “decline to prosecute”. Perhaps most significantly for many, those individuals had no opportunity to avoid going to court, and along with all of the stressful and harmful consequences that can accompany that.

To remedy this, the Midtown Community Justice Center (MCJC), in partnership with the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office, launched same-day Project Reset programming, or “Rapid Reset,” in Manhattan Criminal Court Arraignment Parts. The goal of this initiative was to serve individuals who would have already been eligible for Project Reset, but for a variety of reasons were not able to be contacted prior to their arraignment date. Upon appearing in court, these individuals would have the opportunity to engage in Project Reset programming that same day. Upon successful completion of the session, participants’ cases are dismissed the same day and they are not required to return to court.

During the first quarter of FY2024, before the inception of Rapid Reset, MCJC provided Project Reset programming to 160 individuals. In the first quarter of FY2025, MCJC served 299 people through traditional Reset and 479 people through Rapid Reset, a near 500 percent increase in program participants overall. From the inception of the program through 2024, 2,030 people have completed Rapid Reset in Manhattan ¹⁷

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Investments by the City Council in crucial programming such as ours is fundamental for the maintenance and growth of these invaluable programs. Now more than ever, the Center is relying on our partners in City Council to support these progressive community safety initiatives.

¹⁷ Center for Justice Innovation. (2025). Justice Center Application and Reset referral database. [Data file].

Courtney Bryan. Executive Director

Center for Justice Innovation
FY26 City Council Proposal Summaries

Cross-Site Proposals

- **#197482 - Center for Justice Innovation General Funds - \$750,000**

Innovative Criminal Justice Programs; Speaker's Initiative (Renewal/Redesign)

Description: This is an application to support the continuation of the Center for Justice Innovation's innovative criminal justice responses, community-based public safety initiatives, and access to justice programs across all five boroughs in New York City. City Council's support allows us to serve tens of thousands of New Yorkers with mental health services, family development, youth empowerment, workforce development, and housing, legal, and employment resource services. Our goal continues to be improving safety, reducing incarceration, expanding access to community resources, and enhancing public trust in government to make New York City stronger, fairer, and safer for all. With expanded funding, the Center will be able to make deeper investments in housing justice: a key priority area that underpins our efforts at large to build community justice.

- **#194898 - Driver Accountability Program - \$885,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation's Driver Accountability Program has been proven to improve street safety by changing driver behavior, while minimizing harms perpetuated by the criminal justice system's historically punitive responses. It does so by offering a proportionate and meaningful alternative to fines, fees, traditional prosecution, or short-term incarceration for vehicular charges; and by utilizing principles of restorative justice to address the dangerous behaviors that are the primary cause of pedestrian fatalities. The program currently operates at seven sites in all five boroughs, with six of those sites receiving support from City Council. This application seeks funding to sustain those operations, as well as the operations of its more intensive version, Circles for Safe Streets, which brings together drivers and their victims for a process of accountability and healing in cases where traffic crashes have caused critical injury or death.

- **193911 - Bronx Project Reset - \$710,000**

Diversion Programs (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation seeks renewal funding to continue expanding diversion services for adults in the Bronx through its Bronx Community Solutions site. These diversion services build on Bronx Community Solutions' success running the City Council-funded Project Reset restorative model for six years, the Center for Justice Innovation's deep experience providing community- and court-based restorative justice programming since 2013, and the robust support and collaboration of Bronx court system stakeholders. With ongoing City Council support, Bronx Community Solutions will continue offering same-day at-arraignment Project Reset programming that gives eligible individuals the opportunity to participate in programming at their first court appearance and receive an immediate dismissal the same day. This programming, first piloted in 2024 with City Council funding, addresses the large gap in services caused by the inability to contact many Bronx Reset and Bronx HOPE (Bronx Heroin Overdose and Prevention Education) pre-arraignment diversion participants before their initial court date. Ultimately, these expanded diversion services reduce the collateral consequences of justice system involvement while instilling accountability; address underlying reasons for justice system involvement; and alleviate the massive backlog in the court system, an issue that disproportionately impacts the Bronx.

- **#194075 - Felony Alternatives to Incarceration - \$1,385,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (Renewal)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) seeks continued and expanded funding to support its Brooklyn Felony Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) programming for individuals arrested on violent and non-violent felony charges in Kings County. This programming offers holistic and individualized community-based interventions and rigorous judicial monitoring of participants on felony cases, thereby reducing the use of jail and prison sentences and leading to reduced criminal dispositions. The enhanced funding would target two areas of particular need: housing support and peer support. Specifically, the additional funds requested would support the hiring of two additional staff members: a Housing Case Manager, and a Peer Mental Health Specialist. These two staff members would significantly enhance the capacity of the Felony ATI Programs to better meet the increasingly complex needs of our growing population; and ultimately, improving outcomes for participants and society.

- **#194130 - EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice, a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants - \$300,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (New)

Description: This is an application to expand the Center for Justice Innovation's Misdemeanor Alternative-to-Incarceration (ATI) programming in Queens and Staten Island across two operating programs: Queens Community Justice Center and Staten Island Justice Center by adding EmpowerHER: Pathways to Justice, a gender-responsive program for female ATI participants. The goal of the ATI programs is to offer a single point of access to a wide array of community-based services as alternative sentencing

options in criminal cases, thereby reducing incarceration and improving public safety by addressing the underlying issues that lead to justice system involvement. Funding will support staffing and program delivery to meet the unique needs of female ATI participants at the Queens Community Justice Center and Staten Island Justice Center.

- **#197405 - Manhattan Rapid Reset - \$280,000**

Diversion Programs; Alternatives to Incarceration (New)

Description: The Center for Justice Innovation (Center) is seeking support for Rapid Reset, an expansion of the Citywide pre-arraignment diversion program, Project Reset, in Manhattan. In partnership with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, the Center's Midtown Community Justice Center (MCJC) launched Rapid Reset in late 2023 to provide an opportunity for pre-arraignment diversion to all eligible individuals who appear for court. Like the decade-old Project Reset, Rapid Reset offers people one session of programming, connections to voluntary services, and a chance to receive a "decline to prosecute" from the District Attorney's Office, in lieu of a court appearance. MCJC offers Rapid Reset at all Desk Appearance Ticket (DAT) arraignment parts at 100 Centre Street and at MCJC.

- **#193978 - Bronx Project Heal - \$52,935**

Support for Victims of Human Trafficking (Renewal)

Description: This application is for Bronx Project HEAL (Helping to Empower through Advocacy and Leadership), an evolution of the Bronx Human Trafficking Intervention Court (HTIC) initiative. Based on the National Project HEAL curriculum, developed by the Center for Justice Innovation, Bronx Project HEAL is a leadership development and peer support initiative for justice-involved gender-based violence and human trafficking survivors that is informed by, co-created with, and often co-led by, survivors themselves. It is a 3- to 4-month voluntary program that aims to enhance the capacity of survivors to become leaders and advocates in the Bronx community by offering community-based professional development experiences, leadership and advocacy opportunities, and mentorship and peer support. Funding will support the implementation of the survivor leader empowerment program aimed at providing professional development services, including leadership and advocacy training, to survivor leaders to enhance their professional skills and encourage their participation in anti-trafficking policy and advocacy efforts.

Bronx Community Justice Center

- **#192488 - Bronx Community Justice Center Insight Initiatives - \$100,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (New)

Description: The Bronx Community Justice Center (Justice Center), an operating project of the Center for Justice Innovation, seeks Court Involved Youth Mental Health Initiative funding to enhance the Insight Initiatives program (Insight). Insight is a diversion and alternative-to-incarceration program for young people ages 14 to 24. Insight is specifically designed to engage youth who have been impacted by violence and/or gang involvement. Insight is a community-based, localized program model that is strongly rooted in the neighborhoods the program serves and where youth live. Insight leverages community engagement as the foundation of its successful approach. Insight uses a transformative, healing-centered model to allow youth to take accountability for their actions, contribute to their communities, and address root causes to prevent future justice involvement. Many of the participants, who are justice-involved youth, have also experienced harm and trauma which oftentimes leads to substance misuse as a coping mechanism. As such, with support from City Council funding, the Justice Center hopes to expand Insight to also provide support for justice system-involved youth struggling with substance misuse.

- **#192552 - Bronx Community Justice Center In-She-Spire - \$100,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development (New)

Description: The Bronx Community Justice Center's Project In-She-Spire works to create a safe, empowering, and nurturing environment designed to address the unique needs of young women, femmes, and gender-expansive individuals between the ages of 14 and 24. In the South Bronx, girls encounter a distinct set of challenges, resulting in fractured community bonds, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, and involvement in gangs. Project In-She-Spire is dedicated to fostering meaningful social connections among these young women and gender-expansive youth, with the aim of fostering positive development, strengthening resilience, and boosting self-esteem. Project In-She-Spire's goal is to provide participants with the vital skills and resources needed to navigate systemic obstacles and overcome adversity, ultimately building a brighter future.

Brooklyn Mental Health Court

- **#192513 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court Court-Involved Youth Mental Health - \$150,000**

Court Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: The Court-Involved Youth Mental Health initiative of Brooklyn Mental Health Court provides specialized support to youth ages 18 to 24, who have unique social and cognitive needs and who represent a growing percentage of the cases we serve. Since 2017, more than 191 youth in this age range have been served by Brooklyn Mental Health Court. Thanks to City Council support, we hired a new dedicated Youth Engagement Social worker who leads youth programming and fosters close relationships

with our participants. Renewed funding will enable us to continue and strengthen our youth-focused programs, provide meaningful activities and healthy meals and snacks to our participants, continue essential training for staff, and maintain our critical Youth Engagement Social Worker.

- **#192478 - Brooklyn Mental Health Court - \$100,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: Launched in 2002 as the first mental health court in New York City, Brooklyn Mental Health Court (BMHC) is a specialized court that seeks to craft meaningful responses to the problems posed by defendants with mental illness in the criminal justice system. Addressing both the treatment needs of defendants with mental illness and the public safety concerns of the community, BMHC links defendants with serious and persistent mental illnesses or neurodevelopmental disorders (such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder), who would ordinarily be jail- or prison-bound, with long-term treatment as an alternative to incarceration. BMHC performs psychosocial assessments and psychiatric evaluations, comes up with treatment plans, monitors clients' adherence to treatment plans, and refers clients to community-based services. For FY26, BMHC is seeking renewal funding to enhance its support of some of the City's most vulnerable residents.

Brownsville Community Justice Center

- **#192523 - Brownsville Community Justice Center Brownsville Girls Collaborative - \$150,000**

Young Women's Leadership Development (Renewal)

Description: The Brownsville Girls Collaborative (BGC), a cornerstone of programming at the Brownsville Community Justice Center, is a leadership development program focused on the holistic empowerment of young women in the community. The program creates a safe space for young women from Brownsville, who are at high risk of violence or justice involvement, to engage with Justice Center staff, facilitators, and one another. Throughout the year, the Justice Center will work with BGC participants to address the root causes of trauma, violence, and risk behaviors to reduce justice system contact and develop participants into positive actors within the Brownsville community.

Queens Community Justice Center

- **#190772 - Queens Community Justice Center UPLIFT - \$100,000**

**Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations;
Court-Involved Youth Mental Health;
Speaker's Initiative;
Community Safety and Victims Services (Renewal)**

Description: To address the high levels of exposure to community violence and trauma among young men of color in Queens, the Queens Community Justice Center piloted UPLIFT in FY22 with City Council support. Through the pilot, staff provided trauma and healing services to justice-involved young men of color, ages 16-25. Given the program's initial success, the Justice Center was able to fully implement and sustain the program, thanks to the ongoing support of City Council. By offering client-driven individual therapeutic sessions and supportive group workshops, case management and victim services assistance, and advocacy and mentoring, UPLIFT participants are supported to recognize, process, and heal their own trauma, resulting in better life outcomes. This year, the Justice Center requests funding to continue UPLIFT's critical work through the following initiatives: Court-Involved Youth Mental Health, Mental Health Services for Vulnerable Populations, Community Safety and Victim Services, and Speaker's Initiative.

The RISE Project

- **#191278 - RISE Project IPV Community Intervention - \$150,000**

Domestic Violence and Empowerment (Renewal/Expansion)

Description: This is an application for continued support of the RISE Project. RISE is a part of New York City's Crisis Management System, working in partnership with Cure Violence sites to provide community-based intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention services to individuals at risk of being impacted by gun violence in communities most impacted. RISE works to reduce IPV by engaging individuals who are causing abuse in voluntary programming to stop violence and change behavior, change community norms to reduce tolerance for IPV, train credible messengers to identify risk factors for IPV, build skills to talk about IPV, and connect community members in need of services to RISE. RISE incorporates components of the Cure Violence and restorative justice models in its work.

Staten Island Community Justice Center

- **#195496 - Staten Island Community Justice Center - \$200,000**

Speaker's Initiative (Renewal)

Description: In response to growing community need, the Staten Island Justice Center has worked in close collaboration with the Richmond County District Attorney's Office to plan and begin operationalizing programming for a Staten Island Community Justice Center. When fully implemented, this Community Justice Center will offer a robust array of programming, including replications of community-based interventions piloted and established at the Center for Justice Innovation's existing Community Justice Centers in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn. In FY23, with City Council support, the Staten Island Justice Center conducted a public safety assessment, which sought to pinpoint community strengths, needs, and gaps in service for Staten Island residents. Continued

City Council support in FY24 and FY25 enabled the Staten Island Justice Center to use the results of the survey to inform the Community Justice Center planning process, as well as develop, pilot, and implement several new initiatives responsive to identified community needs. The Staten Island Justice Center respectfully seeks continued funding for FY26 to support this ongoing work, and, particularly, to sustain full implementation of the piloted initiatives, including youth and placemaking programs.

- **#192670 - Staten Island Community Justice Center Youth Wellness Initiative - \$130,000**

Court-Involved Youth Mental Health (Renewal)

Description: This a renewal proposal for Staten Island Justice Center’s Youth Wellness Initiative (YWI), a program providing wrap-around services to court-involved and justice system-impacted youth in Staten Island, ages 12 to 18, to decrease the likelihood of long-term justice involvement and support those who may have unmet mental health needs. We specifically seek to engage youth who have participated in some form of community harm (such as assault, robbery, or gang violence) or who have experienced community harm such as community violence or violence at home. YWI works to decrease community harm and the likelihood of long-term justice involvement through transformative education, youth-led community engagement, peer support and mentorship, and individual short-term counseling and advocacy. YWI also offers interactive and holistic family resources and support to parents or guardians who may need assistance in caring for their youth while navigating the justice system. Participants will be able to translate their therapeutic encounters into an opportunity to restore themselves back into their communities.



**Kaushal Challa Testimony – Charles B. Wang Community Health Center –
3/7/25 – Criminal Justice**

My name is Kaushal Challa, and I'm the CEO of the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center. We provide medical care to 65,000 New Yorkers every year. Our mission is to care for all, regardless of income, insurance, language barrier, or any other barrier. Most of our patients are low-income, non-English speakers, and many are uninsured.

Our oldest site is at 125 Walker St. which touches the Chinatown jail site. 10,000 patients get their care here every year, particularly pediatrics, dental, eye care, and social work services.

In 2023, building conditions worsened drastically. Leaks and water damage affected many exam rooms and waiting areas, while construction noise and vibrations disrupted care.

We had to make the difficult and drastic step to relocate pediatric services at our own cost, while trying to fix or cover up the damage. But this reduced our capacity to serve patients, with 10,000 fewer visits and a financial loss of over \$2 million.

Despite requesting onsite monitoring for noise, air, and vibrations since 2023, our requests were ignored. With the support of groups like NUBC and Welcome to Chinatown and local officials like State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Assemblymember Grace Lee, and Councilmember Chris Marte, monitoring was eventually installed on the same block, but still to this day not on the floor where we provide care.

We have made cosmetic fixes to the damaged areas, again at our own costs, in order to expedite resuming clinical services. We've been told that our expenses and lost revenue are not eligible for claims or reimbursement, without a clear explanation or suggested alternative channels.

My testimony highlights the negative health impacts this project has already caused and the potential for further damage if services must relocate again. Continued poor execution of this project will hurt our ability to provide quality care in the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing, March 7, 2025**

Chair Nurse and Committee Members:

Since 1995, Children's Rights has been a national advocate for youth in state systems. We are also a member of the New York City Jails Action Coalition. Our experience with adolescents and young adults in foster care and juvenile legal systems often brings us into contact with young adult and youth corrections policy, as our clients are disproportionately represented in young adult and juvenile correction facilities. We advocate on behalf of young adults, 18- to 21-years old, incarcerated on Rikers Island.

We cannot incarcerate our way to public health and safety. We must invest in our communities, not continue to throw money at the humanitarian disaster that is Rikers Island. We urge this Committee and the Council to cut the Department of Correction budget and redistribute funding to programs that actually work to improve public safety. We also urge you to reverse the cuts to the Board of Correction to provide the resources for meaningful oversight of the City's jails.

New York City operates both the most excessively-funded and over-staffed jail system in the country—with the worst results. The City now spends over \$500,000 per incarcerated person per year.¹ It runs the only jail system among the nation's 50 largest cities that has more officers than people in custody.² Despite the enormous sums poured into the City's jails, however, countless reports show that detainees are subjected to some of the most dangerous, degrading, and inhumane conditions in the country. We need look no further than the *Nunez* monitor's regular reports and the February 28, 2024 report filed in *Benjamin v. Molina* detailing vermin infestation and sanitary violations on Rikers.³ Serving time on Rikers can also be a death sentence: since

¹ <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/ensuring-timely-trials/>. The most recent available data show that more than 78% of incarcerated persons on Rikers are there pre-trial, more than half have mental health conditions, and over 84% are people of color. <https://greaterjusticenyc.vera.org/nycjail/> Hundreds of people languish on Rikers every day simply because they are homeless.

<https://nysfocus.com/2022/01/03/he-was-homeless-so-the-judge-kept-him-at-rikers/>.

² DOC Fact Sheet: Staffing and Efforts to Improve Conditions; <https://vera-institute.files.svcdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/a-look-inside-the-new-york-city-correction-budget.pdf>.

³ <https://tillidgroup.com/projects/nunez-monitorship/>; <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-rikers-island-report-reveals-graphic-details-about-unsanitary-conditions-fire-safety-and-ventilation-systems/>; <https://ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2024/01/11/detainees-request-clean-laundry-report-unsanitary-conditions-on-rikers#:~:text=%22They%20don%27t%20have%20soap,%2C%20to%20wash%20their%20clothes.%22;see%20also> <https://centerforjustice.columbia.edu/news/new-report-solitary-many-other-names-report-persistent-and-pervasive-use-solitary-confinement>.

Mayor Adams took office, 35 incarcerated people have lost their lives while in Department custody.⁴

Children's Rights urges you to include in the Council's priorities the following:

- At least an additional \$39.8M to meet housing and mental health needs, and to fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including the following funding for specific programs:
 - \$4.8 million more in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH), and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - \$22 million more to create 15 more Intensive Mobile Treatment teams. The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people.
 - \$7 million more to create more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams and cut the long wait times (average of six to 12 months) to access this service.
 - \$6 million more to open four new crisis respite centers, in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
- Full restoration of cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) (\$3.8 million) and re-entry (\$8 million) programs. The budget should also go further, and increase discretionary funding for ATIs by \$2.4 million to support the scaling of ATIs citywide.
- Full restoration of cuts to the Board of Correction and increase its headcount to at least 1% of the number of people in DOC custody.⁵ The preliminary budget proposes \$210,000 in cuts and five fewer staff positions at BOC, when more oversight, not less, of the jails on Rikers is sorely needed.
 - Establishing a minimum budget linked to the number of people in custody would add 37 BOC staff positions (versus the preliminary budget), but would add only \$4.5M to the overall expense budget.

If the City eliminated the more than 1,100 current vacant positions for uniformed correction officers, New York City could save almost \$150 million next year *alone* to reinvest in the programs and services listed above—programs that create real community safety and well-being.⁶

Finally, the investments we recommend will help the City close Rikers by August 31, 2027 in accordance with the law. We call on the Council to ensure our communities have adequate supportive and affordable housing, mental health care, and other critical services *before* New

⁴ <https://www.vera.org/news/nyc-jail-deaths>; the most recent person to die in DOC custody was Terrence Moore on February 24, 2025.

⁵ The FY2026 projected budget allocates \$3.6 million to BOC, for 30 staff; 67 staff would constitute less than 1% of the current jail population (6,800 people).

⁶ <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/a-look-inside-the-new-york-city-correction-budget.pdf>.

Yorkers interact with the criminal legal system. This is especially critical for our children and youth. Evidence shows that incarceration reduces youth's success in education and employment, and also leads to lasting damage to their health and well-being.⁷ Evidence also shows that alternatives to incarceration lead to better outcomes for youth and adolescents, all while costing far less than incarceration.⁸ Underfunding alternatives to confinement and re-entry services makes no sense morally, ethically, or fiscally.

Negotiating these essential changes to the proposed budget provides an opportunity for the Council to move the City in the right direction, while also rightsizing the expenditure of taxpayer dollars. Instead of allocating \$2.87 billion to the Department of Correction as the Mayor has proposed,⁹ the Council should negotiate a fair, just, and reasonable budget that serves all New Yorkers, including young adults and adults on Rikers, and expedites closure of the Island.

Especially in the face of the federal government's rampage against the most vulnerable among us, we look to the City Council to do right by all New Yorkers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniele Gerard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniele Gerard
Senior Staff Attorney
dgerard@childrensrights.org

⁷ <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/why-youth-incarceration-fails-an-updated-review-of-the-evidence/>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ <https://vera-institute.files.svdcn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-New-York-City-Fiscal-Year-2026-Preliminary-Budget.pdf>.

**Testimony of Caitlyn Passaretti, Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York**

**Submitted to the New York City Council FY'2026 Preliminary Budget Oversight Hearing
Criminal Justice
March 7th, 2025**

Since 1944, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York has served as an independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring every New York child is healthy, housed, educated, and safe. CCC does not accept or receive public resources, provide direct services, or represent a sector or workforce; our priority is improving outcomes for children and families through civic engagement, research, and advocacy. We document the facts, engage, and mobilize New Yorkers, and advocate for solutions to ensure the wellbeing of New York's children, families, and communities.

We would like to thank Chair Nurse and all the members of the City Council Committee on Criminal Justice for providing the opportunity to discuss how to improve the delivery of essential services and programs for NYC youth and young adults in the FY26 Preliminary Budget.

Restore Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Supportive Programming for Youth and Young Adults

Extensive research demonstrates the positive impacts of ATI and reentry programs, including lowering recidivism and crime.¹ Moreover, for every dollar invested in ATI programs, studies estimate between \$3.46-\$5.54 in returns, in addition to reduced costs for the criminal justice system and better community health outcomes.²

Despite the well-established benefits of these programs, since 2023 the City Administration has cut nearly \$6 million from probation programs that have proven to be successful in supporting re-entry and connecting young people to mentorship and services. Failing to provide robust reentry services or supportive probation programs will harm our youth and is counterintuitive to building safe communities.

We therefore recommend the following investments and restorations in the FY26 Budget:

- **Restore and baseline** \$3.3 million to the IMPACT program, an alternative to placement program for young people who would otherwise be sent to Horizons or Crossroads
- **Restore and baseline** \$2.6 million for Next STEPS (cut August 2023), which offered one-on-one and group mentoring within a cognitive behavioral therapy-based curriculum designed to help young adults make the attitudinal and behavioral changes necessary to avoid criminal activity and re-engage with education, work and community

¹ Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. ATI Report. Accessed: <https://criminaljustice.cityofnewyork.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MOCJ-ATI-RNR-Report-2019.pdf>

² New York State Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition (2024). Unlocking Potential: The Role of Community-Based Alternatives in Strengthening Public Safety. Accessed: https://www.lac.org/assets/files/Unlocking-Potential_The-Role-of-Community-Based-Alternatives-in-Strengthening-Public-Safety.pdf

Close Rikers and Invest in Supportive Services

As of July 2022, 22.5% of those in Department of Corrections custody were young adults between the ages of 18-25, roughly 1,300 people.³ Furthermore, 90% of this population was being held pre-trial, and therefore presumed innocent. This age group, 18-25, is referred to as *emerging adults*. Brain science shows that brains are still developing until at least 25 years old, and that these young adults require an array of developmentally appropriate justice system responses. Emerging adults are more vulnerable to the harsh environment on Rikers Island and will be more impacted in their ability to re-enter society based on what they witness or experience while incarcerated.⁴ The harms of incarceration at Rikers are undeniable. Under the Adams Administration, 34 people have died while incarcerated there. Moreover, in the first 6 months of 2021, 18-21 year olds were involved in 22% of the reported uses of force by staff but only made up 8% of those detained at that time.⁵ The dangerous impact of Rikers Island – and the disproportionate harm to young people – cannot be ameliorated by reforms alone.

The budget for Rikers Island should be redistributed and invested into services that support people experiencing incarceration and detention and assist their reentry. **We join the [Campaign to Close Rikers](#) in urging the city to remain on track with the closure of Rikers by 2027 and choose to invest in age-appropriate mental health services, housing, and reentry supports for people leaving custody.**

State Advocacy: Waiver of Hardship for Raise the Age

Last fall marked six years since Raise the Age was first implemented across New York State, ending a shameful chapter in our history of prosecuting 16- and 17-year olds as adults regardless of the offense. Prior to the passage of this legislation, thousands of 16- and 17-year-olds were held in dangerous conditions on Rikers Island and other adult jails across the state. Moreover, these youth were systematically locked out of age-appropriate services in family court programs designed to meet the needs of adolescents and avoid the barriers of an adult criminal record.

Youth crime has consistently decreased since Raise the Age implementation in 2018. In New York City alone, since 2013 there has been a 48% decrease in adolescent arrests for serious offenses.⁶ Evidence from implementation across the State clearly shows how the law has improved community safety and youth well-being.

³ Columbia University Justice Lab. (2022). Emerging Adults Incarcerated at Rikers Island. Accessed: <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Emerging%20Adults%20at%20Rikers%20Overview.pdf>

⁴ Columbia University Justice Lab. (2022). Emerging Adults Incarcerated at Rikers Island. Accessed: <https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Emerging%20Adults%20at%20Rikers%20Overview.pdf>

⁵ The Nunez Monitoring Team. (2021). Twelfth Report of the Nunez Independent Monitor

⁶ In NYC, there was a decline of 77% in total arrests, and a decline of 48% in Index Crimes for youth under the age of 18. Data from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services: Juvenile Arrests (Non-NYC) 2013-2022; Analysis of New York City Police Department data by Citizens Committee for Children of New York for 2013-2022. On file with the author.

Despite making up half of the state's youth justice system population, New York City is currently excluded from accessing the Raise the Age funding because the City exceeds the tax cap prescribed by state law. However, it is possible to access this funding by submitting a waiver of hardship, indicating that our city and our programs need the resources that are available through the Raise the Age law. New York City accounts for half of the state's youth justice system population and should be able to access more funding. However, Mayor Adams has yet to apply for the waiver of hardship, despite the administration's claim that the current fiscal cliff necessitates drastic cuts to many of the supportive services and programs that are vital to New York City's youth and families.

It is critical to invest in programs and organizations that are serving our communities through youth development, violence-prevention services, and other alternatives to incarceration to prevent the necessity of further investment in the carceral system. **We therefore urge the Council to work with the Mayor and the administration to submit a letter with the waiver of hardship to allow NYC to be considered for the funding. The ability to access RTA funding for community investments would be transformative for youth and communities in New York City.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**Dismantling Racism Team
Congregation Beth Elohim**

274 Garfield Place, Brooklyn, New York 11215

cbedismantlingracismteam@cbebk.org

**Testimony of Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team
New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Preliminary Budget Hearing, March 7, 2025**

Congregation Beth Elohim's Dismantling Racism Team engages in advocacy to reform the criminal legal system, in alliance with directly impacted groups. Congregation Beth Elohim, with locations in Park Slope and Prospect Heights, is the largest Reform synagogue in Brooklyn, with over 1,200 households.

In Genesis 1:27, we read that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God. This foundational text guides us, as a Jewish community, to advocate for policies that will protect people who are incarcerated and increase public safety.

Mayor Adams' proposed budget perpetuates the crisis on Rikers Island instead of investing in programs desperately needed to improve public safety and keep people from cycling in and out of Rikers, such as supportive housing, alternatives to incarceration, and re-entry services.

We need a budget that follows through on the legal and moral obligations to close Rikers by 2027. We urge you to do all you can to secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration, including specifically:

- **Restore funds cut from the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) (\$3.8M) and reentry programs (\$8M), and increase ATI funding.** ATIs have an excellent track record of diverting people safely from Rikers and helping them stay out. Not only should the \$3.8M in cuts to ATIs be reversed, but the budget should increase discretionary funding for ATIs by \$2.4 million. This would enhance and support the scaling of ATIs citywide as requested by the ATI/Reentry Coalition. Furthermore, a key commitment in the plan to close Rikers, as outlined in the [2019 Points of Agreement](#), was to "Enhance Reentry and Discharge Planning Services Available to Everyone Leaving City Jails." Almost six years later, that promise is still not met. Now is not the time to cut reentry programs by \$8M.

- **Fully restore cuts to the Board of Correction (BOC) and increase their headcount to at least 1% of the number of people in Department of Corrections (DOC) custody.** The preliminary budget proposes \$210k in cuts and five fewer BOC staff positions. More, not less, oversight of the jails on Rikers is sorely needed. DOC continues to violate minimum standards established by the BOC, including continued use of forms of solitary confinement like [“deadlocking”](#) and reported failures to adequately investigate sexual abuse claims. Strong oversight is essential, but that will only be possible if BOC is fully funded.
- **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff.** The preliminary budget proposes spending over \$420,000 a year to incarcerate just one person on Rikers. There are 5,900 officers on payroll today – already one of the most richly staffed jail systems in the country. But the DOC preliminary budget includes funding for over 7,000 officers. If we just eliminated vacancies for uniformed DOC officers, New York City could save \$149.6M next year to reinvest in programs and services that create real community safety and wellbeing.

Thank you for hearing us.



March 7, 2025

Dear Chair Sandy Nurse and Members of NYC Committee on Criminal Justice:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the NYC budget for 2025.

I am Cassandra Warney from the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), a national nonprofit that works to reduce homelessness by helping communities provide permanently affordable housing and wraparound services. Supportive housing is for people who, without services, would not be able to stay housed.

My testimony today is focused on people in NYC who have significant behavioral health needs and are often cycling between jails, shelters, street homelessness, and emergency rooms. **We are asking the City to invest in our housing providers to help reduce crisis system use and strengthen our communities.**

The solution to our City's housing and mental health crisis is to appropriately fund housing providers, so these organizations have the right workforce, can retain their staff, secure apartments for clients in a competitive market, and be able to expand their programs. **The current funding levels and supportive housing eligibility criteria's are not adequate nor respond to the evolving needs on the ground.**

We respectfully ask that City Council urges Mayor Adams to invest in the housing and services needs of the most at-risk New Yorkers and takes steps forward on the [City's commitment to Close Rikers](#) by:

- 1. Allocating \$4.8 million to ensure the JISH units are fully operational and make JISH funding its own line-item in the DOHMH budget.**

Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must appropriate \$4.8 million more in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.

- 2. Expand access to supportive housing for justice-involved people by passing Intro 1100.**

Background

NYC 15/15, the City's primary supportive housing program, aims to create 15,000 units over 15 years for individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorder. Despite being City-funded, the program follows federal chronic homelessness criteria, requiring 12+ months of homelessness and disqualifying those incarcerated for 90+ days by resetting their homelessness status. These barriers exclude thousands of individuals exiting Rikers and other carceral settings, preventing access to stable housing and undermining the program's



Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Testimony

March 7, 2025

mission. Expanding eligibility is crucial to ensuring NYC 15/15 serves those who need it most. Additionally, the City's only dedicated supportive housing program for justice-involved individuals, Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH), remains underfunded and incomplete. As part of the Rikers closure plan, the City committed to providing 500 JISH units, yet only 120 are in operation due to insufficient funding for supportive services, leaving NYC 15/15 as the only other viable option for supportive housing.

The Problem

Instead of providing housing upon release, NYC 15/15 -- the City's primary supportive housing program -- forces people into shelters to generate time as homeless to meet chronicity criteria, perpetuating the cycle of homelessness.

- The average stay at Rikers for individuals with serious mental illness is **287 days**—long enough to reset their homelessness status, disqualifying them from NYC 15/15 upon release. This average length of stay does not include those with a substance use disorder, undercounting the actual need.
- **41–54%** of people leaving NYS prisons have entered NYC shelters each year since 2015, further burdening the system.
- **33%** of people admitted to NYC jails in 2023 were unhoused prior to incarceration, demonstrating a clear link between homelessness and jail stays.

The Solution

This bill effectively **eliminates the 90-day incarceration reset rule**, allowing those with longer jail and prison stays to qualify. Intro 1100 expands eligibility for city-funded supportive housing to:

- Individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Those justice-involved in the past 12 months.

Why it Matters

- Expands supportive housing access to at least 2,600 individuals detained on Rikers each year, preventing long shelter stays and street homelessness upon release.
- **Saves Money:** Supportive housing for 2,600 people costs ~\$108M/year, vs. \$1.4B for incarceration—a \$1.2B net savings.
- **Immediate Budget Impact:** NYC can save \$150M in FY26 by cutting vacant Dept. of Correction positions and can reinvest a portion of those resources in supportive housing.

NYC's leadership commitment to closing the jails on Rikers island by 2027 takes steadfast and consistent investment in community-based organizations. More than 50% of people currently detained on Rikers island have a mental health diagnosis, and hundreds of people languish on Rikers every day simply because they are homeless. Investments in adequate housing and services allow our City to have proactive resources before people interact with the criminal legal system.

Respectfully,

Cassandra Warney
Senior Program Manager, CSH
Cassandra.warney@csh.org

Send to: testimony@council.nyc.gov

Testimony of Good Shepherd Services
Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice

Submitted by
Roy Waterman, Program Coordinator
Good Shepherd Services

March 7, 2025

Thank you, good afternoon, Deputy Speaker Ayala and the Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice for the opportunity to testify on the Mayor's Preliminary Budget for the Department of Probation (DOP).

My name is Roy Waterman, and I am the Program Coordinator of the Arches Program in the Youth Justice Initiatives Division at Good Shepherd Services.

Guided by our values, Good Shepherd Services (GSS) partners and grows with communities so that all NYC children, youth, and families succeed and thrive. We provide quality, effective services that deepen connections between family members, within schools, and among neighbors. We work closely with community leaders to advocate, both locally and nationally, on behalf of our participants to make New York City a better place to live and work.

Good Shepherd Services is a provider of community-based Youth Justice Programs, a Family Enrichment Center known as the C.R.I.B. and the East New York Community Partnership Program in Brooklyn, Cure Violence in the Bronx as well as Community Centers and afterschool programming throughout the Bronx and Brooklyn.

I would like to thank the Council for your commitment to protect programs funded by DOP that support youth across New York City.

Thank you for advocating for the reinstatement of the Next STEPS program which was abruptly brought to an end by the DOP over a year and a half ago with short notice. Youth need educational and/or vocational opportunities, but they also need positive adult relationships and mentoring that program like Next Steps provided. Many youths will never make it to the educational/vocational opportunity without the assistance of credible messengers. Credible messengers help youth cope with and navigate the daily challenges of their lives and these tools later serve as the foundation for future success. We are truly dedicated to the young people and communities we support, and Next STEPS was a part of those communities. Each and every day, we meet young people where they are, in their communities, and that is why it is so important that we reinvest in these programs.

At a time when young people are in crisis and under attack, we should not be removing services for youth programming. We need the city to invest in young people and the communities that support them.

I want to thank the Department of Probation for reinstating the AIM Lite program now known as the Non ATP (Alternative To Placement) and acknowledging the value of connecting every high risk youth ages 13-18 under probation supervision with mentors to avoid recidivism.

Regarding pending Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the AIM and Works Plus program, while we have heard from DOP that these contracts will be extended for one year and that RFPs will be released next year, providers want to ensure that funding for these RFPs is included in the Fiscal Year 2026 adopted budget and that providers are engaged in the process.

As part of the Youth Justice Coalition, a group of over 20 DOP contract providers, Good Shepherd signed on to a letter that was sent to Commissioner Holmes expressing concern regarding the Department of Probation's request for information and documentation from providers over several weeks. We are committed to providing the Department with information that demonstrates the value and impact of this vital programming in the community. However, reasonable notice, context, and consideration for providers and the nature of our work is required to ensure the provision of accurate and complete data. For example, it is not possible to coordinate five years of data into new report structures in only a few days' time and with no prior notice or consultation, particularly when such a high volume of requests is being issued in the span of a few weeks. We look forward to continue to work with the Council and DOP on their data needs.

In summary, I ask the Council to ensure that Next Steps is reinstated and that there is funding in this budget for the AIM and Works Plus RFP. We also support the asks of the New York Alternative to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

March 7, 2025 - Committee on Criminal Justice Hearing - ISS testimony

IMMIGRANT SOCIAL SERVICES

My name is Judy Lei and I work with Immigrant Social Services as their Community Engagement Manager. We provide after school programs for first and second generation working class, immigrant families in the Lower East Side and Chinatown, and we also host events and programs for seniors living at Chung Pak, who live right next to the Manhattan Detention Center and a few of them are with us today.

I've been working at ISS for almost a year and my first assignment was to translate for the NY Times reporters when the cracked wall incident happened—almost exactly a year ago. When we interviewed the seniors, they shared that they feel overlooked and neglected. They constantly express their fear, anxiety, and concern for their aging health due to the ongoing noise and vibration caused by the demolition work.

They don't deserve a megajail in their backyard. They deserve a safe community where they can live out the rest of their lives. They deserve peace.

We urge the Committee to refocus their efforts, discard the idea of building a megajail, and build housing for those in need instead.



TESTIMONY OF DR. MEGAN FRENCH-MARCELIN, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF NEW YORK STATE POLICY AT LEGAL ACTION CENTER

Committee on Criminal Justice Budget Hearing

March 7, 2025

Thank you to Chairwoman Nurse and the esteemed members of the committee for this opportunity to testify. My name is Megan French-Marcelin, I am the Senior Director of Policy at the Legal Action Center. Today, I am testifying on behalf of the New York City Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Coalition, a network of 12 service organizations with decades of experience in providing holistic, community-based supports to justice-involved New Yorkers. Collectively, our programs serve more than 30,000 New York City residents each year.

This hearing takes place amid deliberations on the future of Rikers Island as a federal monitor continues to report on deteriorating conditions, extensive abuse and neglect, and a pervasive culture of violence. It is essential to note that since the current mayor has taken office, at least 35 people have died on the island. It is not simply a legal responsibility to shutter Rikers, it is a moral imperative to do so as quickly as possible.

In New York City, our dependence on mass incarceration is at once a manifestation and a driver of systemic inequities that have devastated Black, Latine and working class communities in all five boroughs. And yet, this city is fortunate enough to have an ecosystem of service providers who are doing the back-breaking work of resourcing communities most devastated by mass criminalization and its attendant consequences.

This ecosystem of providers, who work in front-end Alternatives to Detention/Incarceration as well as back-end reentry services, has been a model nationwide for how you get to a more equitable, human-centered justice system. We are doing this work with pennies on each dollar that the City allocates to the wildly over-resourced Department of Correction, which a federal judge has called “ineffective” in managing those resources.¹

Decades of research demonstrate that ATI programs are *more* effective than incarceration at improving public safety outcomes,² decreasing the chance of future convictions³, improving

¹“Nunez DKT 803 Contempt Order.” Nunez Contempt Order. Accessed March 5, 2025.
<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25419017-nunez-dkt-803-contempt-order/?q=enormous%2Bresources&mode=document#document/p55>, p56.

²Mendel, R. (2023, June 28). *Effective alternatives to youth incarceration*. The Sentencing Project.

³Baber, L., Wolff, K., Muller, J., Dozier, C. & Cordeiro, R. (2021, December). Expanding the Analysis: Alternatives to Incarceration across 13 Federal Districts. *Federal Probation*, 85(3).

employment rates,⁴ and generating significant savings for taxpayers.⁵ Across New York City, ATI and reentry programs yield reductions in homelessness and psychiatric hospitalizations as well as increases in health-seeking behavior, relational connections, meaningful participation in the economy as well as an overall desistance from crime.⁶

Where even a short stay on Rikers Island can subject someone to trauma and abuse, and can exacerbate or even cause a substance use disorder, ATIs build an individual's capacity to overcome or mitigate problematic drug use, seek treatment for mental health disorders, engage health services prior to crisis utilization, and ultimately thrive in community. It is why our programs do not end our commitment to our participants when their mandate is over. We offer a lifetime of connection to care and supports.

And yet, I sit before you today, representing the aforementioned ecosystem who are now staring down nearly \$12 million in cuts – \$3.8 million and \$8 million for ATI and reentry, respectively.

We know that the expansion of ATIs and reentry services alone will not decarcerate Rikers. However, these programs are some of the most meaningful mechanisms we have available to envision and scale a more comprehensive, human-centered approach to public safety. The current administration as well as the City Council should be leading the charge to invest in them.

Earlier this year, the New York City ATI and Reentry Coalition released a narrative-based report highlighting stories of five New York City residents who were offered diversion from Rikers – and in some cases, were facing a lengthy prison sentence – to community-based ATI programs. The stories featured in this report are just a snapshot of the stories the NYC providers see each and every day. Many of these stories start with trauma – childhood abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence, as well as the trauma of poverty, early interactions with racism and police brutality. All of these stories, however, end with resilient New Yorkers who went through rigorous programming and training and have emerged not only as thriving members of their communities, but as leaders.

While I encourage the members of this committee to read the report in full, I want to name some of the achievements of the programs within our New York City ATI and Reentry Coalition network:

- CASES' Nathaniel ACT team, which works with people with serious mental illness who are facing felony charges, connects clients with a comprehensive mobile treatment team that directly provides psychiatric care and therapy, medication management, nursing, peer support, food, clothing, housing & employment support. These interventions have shown measurable success, with participants experiencing a 70% reduction in homelessness and a 50% reduction in psychiatric hospitalizations. Following clients for two years after their

⁴Johnson, A., Ali-Smith, M., & McCann, S. (2022, April 28). *Diversion programs are a smart, sustainable investment in public...* Vera Institute of Justice.

⁵Cloud, D., & Davis, C. (2013, February). *Treatment alternatives to incarceration for people with ...* Vera Institute of Justice.

⁶New York City ATI/Reentry Coalition. (2023, June 28) *Letter to Mayor Eric Adams*. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. *The Limits of Recidivism: Measuring Success After Prison*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26459>.

completion of court monitoring, 94% had no new felony convictions and 100% had no new violent felony convictions.⁷

- exalt youth, which works with youth between the ages of 15 and 19, provides holistic supports and services to create pathways from the justice system into long term success. Two years post-graduation, 95 percent of exalt's young people have not recidivated while 98 percent are re-engaged with education and scheduled to graduate highschool or with an equivalency by 20-years old.
- The Fortune Society, a comprehensive, wraparound service provider works to ensure that New Yorkers receive holistic programming, including but not limited to housing, education, substance use and mental health treatment as well as supports such as benefits application assistance and family services, boasts an 82 percent completion rate in their ATI programs.
- Osborne Association's Court Mitigation Services reduced incarceration for its participants by more than 940 years, saving \$108 million that would have been spent on incarceration while promoting public safety and addressing individuals' needs

In closing, the NYC ATI and Reentry Coalition requests a restoration of the cuts proposed in the January Executive Budget, and an increase from the City Council of \$2.4 million dollars to continue this critical work.

Thank you.

For further questions, please email Dr. Megan French-Marcelin at mfrenchmarcelin@lac.org or call at [REDACTED].

⁷ CASES Nathaniel Act data, available upon request.

NY ATI REENTRY COALITION

FY26 Request: The Coalition requests \$14.226 million, an increase of \$2.4 million over FY25, or an additional \$200,000 for each coalition member. In FY25, the coalition received 11.82 million.

ABOUT THE COALITION

The New York City Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Reentry Coalition is composed of 12 service provider organizations with decades of experience in a broad range of alternative to detention and incarceration programs as well as reentry services. The Coalition operates as a supportive ecosystem to ensure participants receive robust, individually-tailored services that support treatment, long-term stability, and shore up public safety. Collectively, we serve upwards of 30,000 justice-involved individuals each year.

Decades of research demonstrate that ATIs are more effective than incarceration at improving public safety outcomes, decreasing the chance of future convictions, improving employment rates, and generating significant savings for taxpayers. Across New York City, ATI and reentry programs yield reductions in homelessness and psychiatric hospitalizations as well as increases in health-seeking behavior and relational connections, and overall desistance from crime. With support from the City Council, the Coalition has innovated and grown the portfolio of services available to people involved in the criminal legal system.

PROGRAMS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: Pre-employment job readiness training, paid transitional work, job placement, post-placement support, and industry-specific training.



HOUSING SERVICES: Emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive housing as well as developing relationships with landlords and management companies to identify safe and affordable apartments.



LEGAL SERVICES: Legal advocacy to help individuals overcome barriers by working with the courts, parole, and probation to correct conviction record errors, fight employment discrimination, and offer representation at eviction proceedings.



EDUCATION SERVICES: Literacy classes, high school equivalency prep, tutoring, health and HIV/AIDS prevention education, and college/career planning.



FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES: Case management, family supports/reunification/preservation, visiting and recreational activities for children of incarcerated parents, crisis intervention services, and positive youth development initiatives that are strength-based and promote goals.



MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT SERVICES: Clinical screening, assessment, treatment, and referrals to treatment for mentally ill individuals and clinical screening and assessment, treatment, and referrals to treatment at community-based providers.



WOMEN'S SERVICES: Gender-specific services including jail and prison-based education, pre-release services, family reunification assistance, family support services, reentry case management, and other targeted assistance and supports.

Contact:

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N Y L P I

**JUSTICE THROUGH
COMMUNITY POWER**

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
151 West 30th Street, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10001-4017

Testimony of Damon Gilbert, Equal Justice Works Fellow at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest to the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice on March 7, 2025, regarding the New York City FY26 Budget

My name is Damon Gilbert , and I am an Equal Justice Works Fellow in the Environmental Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI). Thank you, Committee members for the opportunity to testify today.

The Trump administration poses an unprecedented threat to the rule of law and to New Yorkers' freedoms, civil rights, access to public services, and access to a healthy environment. New York City legislators must now leverage the substantial power of local government to uphold and protect our laws and rights, and to make the major investments needed to protect and strengthen infrastructure, public institutions, and the renewable energy economy.

New York City's FY 2026 Budget

The Independent Budget Office and State Comptroller DiNapoli have both found that New York City's economic outlook remains strong and project significant budget surpluses for FY 2025.

In recent years, the City Council has played a critical role in defending vital city services, investments, and infrastructure from budget cuts and flatlining.

At the same time a federal administration hostile to immigrants, LGBTQ New Yorkers, and climate science threatens New York City communities and has already begun to seize funds allocated to our City. It is more critical than ever that the City's budget makes bold investments in public services, legal representation, and the transition to a local renewable energy economy, and it is more critical than ever that our Mayor stand up for New York City's communities and independence.

Immigrant Health Initiative

We ask the Council to continue and enhance support for the Immigrant Health Initiative, which continues to save lives and improve health across our city. This program is funded at \$2.43M in

FY25 and supports more than 20 organizations, including NYLPI programs aimed at improving the health and well-being of New Yorkers and their families through direct legal representation, litigation, community education, strategic partnerships with public hospitals, and non-legal advocacy. Through vigorous client and community advocacy and wraparound services, NYLPI improves health outcomes, increases access to healthcare, and provides critical and timely education for communities, healthcare providers, and legal service advocates.

Such access to essential healthcare often results in cost savings for the City, the State, and our safety net health care system when people are able to resume work and productive lives.

As increasing numbers of New Yorkers are detained in immigration jails, we are one of the few organizations focused on medical advocacy and the acute health hazards of immigration detention. In addition, in the face of continued attacks on the asylum process, we have offered culturally competent legal representation, including to those who identify as transgender, gender-expansive, or live with HIV.

Nonprofit Rapid Response Network

The new federal administration is focusing tremendous power on mass deportations, revocation of racial justice initiatives, claw backs of climate and environmental justice funding, and retribution against those who stand up to it. The human cost to New York's disadvantaged communities will be staggering. Nonprofits and CBOs serving or employing immigrants and other marginalized groups will form a critical shield but are also becoming direct targets of federal agencies attempting to conduct raids, chill advocacy, and cut services to people in need.^[1]

With support from a Speaker's request and Protect NYC Families, the Nonprofit Rapid Response Network will strengthen and protect New York City's nonprofit sector by providing informational resources, relationship-building, practical training, and legal advice and representation to nonprofits and CBOs. It will foster collaboration, build capacity, and distribute essential resources and legal advice to help nonprofits survive attacks by the federal administration.

Rikers Island

Furthermore, today I'd like to talk about Rikers Island, which has been an environmental injustice for as long as it's been in existence. The penal colony nestled in the middle of the East River was literally built upon mounds of trash, as landfill was transported from Manhattan to expand the island and make it suitable for development. It is well documented that this decomposing garbage released high levels of methane gas on the island. Poor air quality on Rikers Island is further exacerbated by the many industrial facilities and polluting sources in the South Bronx and Northern Queens – including multiple Peaker plants, waste transfer stations, and of course, LaGuardia Airport. On top of these dangerous environmental hazards, which

threaten both the islands population and the surrounding Bronx communities, Rikers is perhaps the most notorious jail in the nation due to how dangerous the conditions are inside.

Despite it being required by law to close by 2027, this administration seems unconcerned with taking the necessary actions to enforce the law and shut down Rikers. We see this through the DOC's actions, and in the proposed budget, which continues to prioritize mass incarceration over vital services that protect our communities.

The requested \$2.87 billion for jail operations for the fiscal year 2026 is a continuation of this trend and we urge the City Council to intervene.

Far from actualizing the vision of closing facilities and transitioning to a Renewable Rikers, the DOC seems intent on keeping the jail open and perpetuating the environmental injustices and human rights crisis present there. In the past year alone, New Yorkers Chima Williams, Manuel Luna, Roy Savage, Charizma Jones, Anthony Jordan, and Ramel Powell have all lost their lives to the horrific conditions that this city subjected them to on Rikers Island. Still, while exposing thousands of people to rampant abuse and hazardous conditions, Rikers costs of over half a million dollars per person held there each year, making it the most expensive and least effective tool we have to ensure safety.

New York City runs the most expensively funded and staffed jail system in the country, yet consistently delivers some of the worst results. The Mayor has planned to grow the DOC's budget while cutting funding for alternatives to incarceration and re-entry services, all the while wasting resources that are desperately needed for housing, mental health treatment, education, and other investments critical to the health of our people.

In support of our peers fighting to close Rikers, who have come up with concrete recommendations for how this budget can be reduced while prioritizing justice and safety, we ask that the DOC budget be significantly reduced. Specifically, we ask the City Council to allocate an additional \$39.8 million to meet housing and mental health needs as well as fulfill the commitment to close Rikers Island, which would include an additional \$4.8 million in funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing, an additional \$22 million to create more Intensive Mobile Treatment teams, an additional \$7 million to create more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment, and an additional \$6 million to open four new crisis respite centers in compliance with Local Law 118 of 2023.

In conclusion, the costs to human health and dignity caused by this atrocity have grown far too great. Rikers Island, which has become synonymous with cruelty and injustice must be closed before it harms the population of the island and the surrounding communities any further. We ask that our elected officials stay vigilant while monitoring the DOC's spending and actions, and that they work to utilize this year's budget process to invest in community resources that will protect the health of all New York City residents, reduce incarceration, and get Rikers closed. Thank you.

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For almost 50 years, NYLPI has fought to protect civil rights and achieve lived equality for communities in need. Led by community priorities, we pursue health, immigrant, disability, and environmental justice. NYLPI combines the power of law, organizing, and the private bar to make lasting change where it's needed most.

For more information visit: www.nylpi.org

[u](https://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Guidance-to-Nonprofits-Regarding-Immigration-Enforcement.pdf) NYLPI recently published guidance for nonprofits responding to the threat of immigration enforcement. See: <https://www.nylpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Guidance-to-Nonprofits-Regarding-Immigration-Enforcement.pdf>

**Testimony to New York City Committee on Criminal Justice
Executive Budget FY26**

Public Hearing

March 7, 2025

Christina Graham, MSW, MPH
Senior Mitigation Specialist
Court Advocacy Services
Osborne Association



Thank you, Chair Nurse, and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Christina Graham and I am a Mitigation Specialist with Osborne Association's Court Advocacy Services (CAS), providing defense-based advocacy for indigent clients. Osborne is one of the largest and oldest criminal justice service organizations in the state. We serve participants from arrest to reentry in NYC's five boroughs, with headquarters in the Bronx and a Brooklyn office, as well as offices in Newburgh and Buffalo. We are in the courts, on Rikers, in State prisons, and in communities. Additionally, our Court Advocacy Services staff serve Westchester County through a satellite office in White Plains, as well as Albany, Columbia, Greene, and Rensselaer counties through our Troy office. We have been providing Court Advocacy Services in New York City for 30 years. I want to note that MOCJ was the initial funder of these services and we thank them for their history of innovative and effective funding to advance safety and justice.

In my six years at Osborne, I have been more than an advocate for individuals accused of law-breaking, often for serious offenses. As part of the CAS team, I get to be a part of a small but mighty team of highly educated changemakers that liaise between the Court and the community. At CAS, we provide a safe space that allows us to develop trust and get to know the individuals beyond the charges; we proverbially walk them through the peaks and valleys of their life stories; we talk with their families, friends, and other members of their support system; and we analyze the court case using our legal knowledge, social work principles, and a public health lens to create an individualized plan to address the root causes of their involvement with the criminal legal system. This approach promotes public safety while saving public dollars spent on pre-trial detention and prison sentences. Incarceration and detention do not address the root causes of crime. Corrections systems are not resourced to provide the mental health and treatment services so many New Yorkers need, and they should not be asked to do so when community-based providers are available. Tragically, three CAS clients have died while in pre-trial detention in the past few years: William Johnstone, Erick Tavira, and Isaabdul Karim. Their needs could have been met safely in the community.

As you consider where to invest the Council's resources, please consider the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of our services, and those of ATIs, which the Council Speaker recently described as an important investment for NYC. Our work is effective in saving dollars and lives:

- In Fiscal Year 2024, CAS's programs:
 - **Enrolled 796** people
 - Assisted **98%** of those served with **court-imposed conditions** in meeting all conditions
 - Achieved a **93% successful disposition** rate
 - Prevented **1,411 years of incarceration at a cost savings to the City and State of \$162 million**
- Since regaining funding in July 2023, our **Second Look** program has secured the release of **16** women or transgender people (one-third of the clients enrolled into programming during this same period) who are detained in DOC custody. This is a savings of more than \$8 million.

- Our innovative Kinship Reentry initiative is also a model for alternatives to detention when housing and family support are barriers to pre-trial release. Kinship Reentry provides cash assistance to families who can provide housing for their loved one with the additional financial support. 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: \$50,370 annually.¹ The annual cost of serving a Kinship family is approximately \$12,000, resulting in shelter diversion savings of \$38,370 for every family served, and much less expensive and much healthier than being on Rikers.

We thank the Council for investing in ATDs and ATIs. Osborne has been a proud member of the **NY Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI) and Reentry Coalition** since its inception and we are among the 12 organizations who collectively serve more than 30,000 justice-involved individuals each year. This year's **funding request includes an increase of \$200,000 per organization from current funding levels**. This funding allows our organizations to continue providing services across the full spectrum of the criminal legal system. It simply cannot be overstated how effective and affordable ATI programs are: for the cost of one person being detained on Rikers for one year (around \$507,000) – a year in which they are likely to experience or witness violence, are separated from their family, may lose their job and home, and their health and mental health may worsen – ATIs can serve more than 30 people, and yield positive and life-changing results that make us all safer. As a coalition and an ecosystem of support, we are critical to the closure of Rikers, as documented in the recently published [report](#), *Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC: A Pathway to Safely Closing Rikers Island*.

While NYC faces very challenging times, we urge increased, upstream, cost-effective investment in ATIs, giving budget and population relief to strained City and State corrections systems. Solutions to these complex challenges lie in expanding court advocacy services, community-based alternatives to incarceration, and investing in supportive affordable housing.

Increasing, not reducing, investment in ATDs and ATIs is also an urgent matter of racial justice: 94% of people in NYC jails are Black and brown; close to 90% are being held pre-trial. Their detention has ripple effects, increasing stressors and challenges for thousands of children, families, and communities of color. Additionally, almost 100% of our clients have first been victims of violence and/or endured childhood traumas themselves. This harm was rarely named or treated, and so the saying “hurt people, hurt people” continues to play out. But it doesn't have to. ATIs break this cycle of harm. They promote healing and safety. They demonstrate that the opposite is also true: “Healed people heal people.”

¹ 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>

To underscore the importance and effectiveness of mitigation specialists, and alternatives to detention and incarceration, as well as illustrate the harms caused by pre-trial detention and incarceration on Rikers, I'd like to tell you about one of our many clients, Ms. Miller.

Client Story

Ms. Miller was a case that was referred to us by the defense attorney, who informed us that Ms. Miller had three active cases in three different boroughs all for the same charges: petit and grand larceny. She was facing a potential sentence of 2 years for each case to run consecutively, which would amount to a total of 6 years of incarceration. Ms. Miller was in her late 50s, without stable housing, battling a long-term drug addiction coupled with unresolved trauma, a lack of natural support in the community, and constant involvement in the criminal legal system. By that point in time, she had accrued over 45 arrest cycles for the same charges she presented with. To an outsider, this seemed like an individual with a high recidivism rate with limited options. To a CAS mitigation specialist, we saw hope and an opportunity to meaningfully intervene for a brighter future.

Through an extensive interview process, I was able to learn about the intimate details of Ms. Miller's life. I provided her with understanding, support, and a listening ear as she told me about the extensive trauma she faced starting early on in life: abuse, neglect, molestation, rape, loss of family members, intimate partner violence, lack of community support, constant bouts of homelessness, mental health issues, issues with drug addiction, trauma related to incarceration, and incessant involvement in the criminal legal system. **The interviews with CAS were the first time Ms. Miller had a chance to tell her life story in its entirety.**

After reviewing her story through a public health and social work lens, we came to the conclusion that Ms. Miller's constant arrests were not because she had a disregard for the law, but rather they were a proverbial "cry for help." She wanted to be seen, for her story to be heard, and to know that there are people willing to support her in her quest to improve the quality of her life. She needed people to remind her that she mattered in this world. It was evident that she had complex mental health and drug addiction issues that were triggered by her past trauma. I wrote a comprehensive, in-depth report that was submitted to the Court to support a favorable outcome for Ms. Miller in all three of her cases. After review, the referring defense attorney told me that this was the first time in his decades of practice that a report emotionally moved the Court. As a result, I was able to secure Ms. Miller a 2-year sentence to cover all three cases.

Yet her story does not end here. Ms. Miller was very grateful for CAS assistance in her cases and was able to serve her incarcerative sentence. Last year, she was interviewed by the parole board for early release. Once again, CAS was able to connect with Ms. Miller and advocate for her release once again. She successfully and safely transitioned into the community while maintaining contact with CAS. She expressed her commitment to never getting involved in the criminal legal system again and we were able to connect her to services upon her release.

As of last week, Ms. Miller is doing very well in the community and she called to update CAS on her positive progress. Currently, she is participating in an internship with an LGBTQ+ organization, works in a part-time position, receives weekly addiction and therapy services, and will be moving out of a homeless shelter into a recently secured apartment through NYC Housing Connect in the next 30 days. Yet one of the most important highlights is not only her success in the community but her active pursuit to use her story to inspire the younger generation and deter them from getting involved with the criminal legal system.

This is one of many stories that we have at CAS: stories of resilience, hope, and building better futures. We serve individuals from all walks of life, including those who have a long history of arrests and those who have never had exposure to the system. Daily, CAS staff wake up ready to work and take on every challenge the criminal legal system has to offer. We are more than mitigation; we provide an array of services to our community that addresses every point of the criminal legal process not only through CAS, but in conjunction with other services at Osborne and externally with community-based organizations.

I urge you to understand the depth and importance of our work, fueled by our unwavering commitment to uplifting others, assisting members of our community that we live and work beside, and to fund it so that we can achieve justice one case at a time.

Budget Recommendations

As we approach the two-year mark of the elimination of funding for the five Targeted Approach program providers, Osborne among them, we call for **full restoration of the \$17 million for external program providers on Rikers**. The recent RFP totaling \$14 million is an important investment but does not restore nor fully fund the services that were eliminated. We remain very concerned that the legally required 5 hours per day of programming is not being provided.

We also urge the **continuation of the remaining DOP provider contracts, particularly Works Plus and NeON Works**. Osborne is a contracted provider of both programs, and we would love to see additional funding and resources devoted to young people through these programs. Last year, our Works Plus participants achieved impressive vocational and educational milestones.

Despite achieving positive, life-changing outcomes such as those demonstrated above by Ms. Miller's story and incredible cost savings, the preliminary budget proposes to cut ATI (\$3.8 million) and reentry (\$8 million) funding, while increasing the budgets of NYPD and DOC, which include vacancies, over-spending, runaway overtime, and a lack of accountability.² This flies in the face of the goal of public safety. To add to the argument that more police and correction officers do not make us safer, consider that NYC paid out more than \$205 million last year alone in police and prosecutorial misconduct legal settlements for 953 cases. Since 2018, the City has

2

<https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-New-York-City-Fiscal-Year-2026-Preliminary-Budget.pdf>

paid out over \$750 million in legal settlements related to police misconduct lawsuits.³ This comes out of our tax dollars. The City should be investing in what works and increasing this investment, not continuing this bloated spending and creating greater harm.

As you negotiate this year's budget, we support the recommendations of the Freedom Agenda and urge you to:

- **Allocate at least an additional \$39.8M to meet housing and mental health needs,** and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:
 - Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must appropriate **\$4.8 million more in annual funding for [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#)**, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - **Allocate \$22M more to create 15 more [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) teams.** The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people.
 - **Allocate \$7M more to create more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) teams** and cut the long wait times (average of 6 to 12 months) to access this service.
 - **Allocate \$6M more to open four new crisis respite centers,** in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
- **Fully restore cuts to the Board of Correction and increase their headcount** to at least 1% of the number of people in DOC custody.⁴ The [preliminary budget](#) proposes \$210K in cuts and 5 fewer staff positions at BOC, when more oversight of the jails on Rikers is sorely needed, not less. Establishing a minimum budget linked to the number of people in custody would add 37 BOC staff positions (compared to the preliminary budget), but would add only \$4.5M to the overall expense budget.⁵ Given the annual cost of incarcerating someone on Rikers, releasing just 9 people would cover this needed funding.
- **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff.** The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025, it employed [5,908 and 1,152 positions were vacant](#).⁶ DOC has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies, which have been growing since 2022, DOC could realize cost savings of **\$149.6M annually**.⁷

³More information can be found [HERE](#).

⁴ Other oversight agencies [like the CCRB](#) have minimum budgets linked to the size of the agency they oversee.

⁵ The FY2026 projected budget allocates \$3.6M to BOC, for 30 staff; 67 staff would constitute 1% of the currently jail population (6,7000 people)

⁶ Per Independent Budget Office

⁷ Based on \$129,897 per officer, as [calculated by the Vera Institute](#).

In closing, we urge 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. We also call for reducing the trauma experienced by those who live and work on Rikers by investing in programming and visiting. Maintaining relationships and support systems for those detained benefits everyone on Rikers – including staff – and benefits their children and families.

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

Osborne has submitted 7 requests for discretionary funding from the Council, which are detailed below and attached. Thank you.

The Osborne Association

New York City Council Discretionary Funding Requests FY26

| Program | Description | FY26 Request | FY25 Funding |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alternatives to Incarceration and Reentry Services (Ref. 194457) | Osborne’s portion of the ATI 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. (Application PDF) | \$2,052,074 | \$1,852,074 |
| Bronx Osborne Gun Accountability and Prevention Program - BOGAP (Ref: 193844) | To support BOGAP—an innovative diversion program developed with the Bronx DA—to serve approximately 75 participants annually. 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. (PDF) | \$20,000 | \$20,000 |
| Elder Reentry Initiative Services and Advocacy (Ref: 194063) | 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. (PDF) | \$125,000 | \$90,000 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Health and Wellness – Ending the Epidemic (Ref. 193984) | 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. (PDF) | \$110,000 | \$104,325 |
| Safeguarding Children Initiative (Ref: 193568) | To support the work of Local Law 1349-A, enacted to reduce trauma to children when NYPD arrests the parent of a child. Osborne will provide necessary training and administrative support to the NYPD, and build a network of CBOs that can provide post-arrest support to children. (PDF) | \$300,000 | \$265,000 |
| Improving Behavioral Health and Wellbeing for Youth (Ref: 194209) | 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: 60 assessments; 120 referrals. (PDF) | \$158,000 | \$158,000 |
| Kinship Reentry Housing Initiative (Ref. 194304) | 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. (PDF) | \$250,000 | N/A |

**TESTIMONY OF
THE FORTUNE SOCIETY**

**THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

City Hall,
New York, NY

Friday, March 7, 2025

SUBJECT: Preliminary Budget Hearing – Criminal Justice

PURPOSE: To highlight the need for investment in Alternatives to Incarceration, reentry services, and supportive housing

Presented by

Ronald F. Day
Senior Vice President

The Fortune Society
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Good afternoon, Council Committee Chair Nurse, and Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Ronald F. Day, and I am Senior Vice President of The Fortune Society. I have been with the Fortune Society for over ten years managing various units, including discharge planning, Employment Services, our Center for Research, Inquiry, and Social Justice, and the David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy. I also oversaw Fortune's programming in the city jails that was cancelled in June 2023. My professional experiences, as well as my personal experience serving one year on Rikers Island and 15 years in state prison, inform my understanding of the critical importance of investing in Alternatives to Incarceration (ATIs), reentry services, and supportive housing to reshape lives and contribute to community safety.

The Fortune Society, with its 56-year legacy, is committed to supporting successful reentry from incarceration and providing alternatives to incarceration. Our mission aims to strengthen the fabric of communities by instilling a belief in the power of individuals to change. Through programs shaped by the experiences of our participants, we help rebuild lives. We also seek to change minds through education and advocacy to foster a fair, humane, and rehabilitative justice system. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, we served over 13,000 individuals across diverse programs.

To fulfill the legal mandate to close Rikers by 2027, the City Council must secure a budget that prioritizes community safety and invests in effective ATIs, re-entry services, and supportive housing. First, the Administration has proposed an alarming \$3.8M in cuts to ATI programs and \$8M in cuts to reentry services. ATI and robust re-entry support are key components to effectively breaking the cycle of incarceration and creating true public safety, one person at a time. For those Members who were unable to attend the briefing offered by the ATI/Reentry Coalition last month, I encourage you to read the Coalition's report [*Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC: A Pathway to Safely Closing Rikers Island*](#). I am immensely proud that one of the successful Fortune ATI participants featured in that report is now colleague, Corinthian Black, whose relationship with Fortune started when he was a participant in our ATI gun diversion program. Corinthian regularly carried a firearm because he felt that was the only way to keep himself safe. Once arrested on a gun charge, he faced either a felony conviction, with its lifetime stigma and imprisonment upstate, or mandated participation in our gun diversion program. Reluctant and skeptical at first, Corinthian learned life-saving de-escalation and communication strategies through cognitive behavioral therapy and sessions with

a credible messenger mentor. As he recounts in the report, “That alone has saved me more than once...It made me realize how much my first reaction didn’t have to be my only reaction.” Due to his exemplary participation and hard work, Corinthian earned himself a job as a Community Navigator in our Atlas Hope partnership in the South Bronx. He is only twenty-three years old and has unlimited potential, striving to give back to his community through his own example of transformation. While Corinthian is certainly exceptional, he is not the exception; there are countless more people who participate in ATI programs offered by Fortune and our sister organizations and quite literally turn their lives around, becoming true pillars of our communities. That is how we create public safety. Cutting funds means cutting off resources to future Corinthians; without these programs, young men like him and others will face jail and prison time as well as the lifetime collateral consequences of felony convictions, which can pose barriers to obtaining housing and employment.

The Administration proposes to cut funds for critical ATI and reentry services while simultaneously increasing the Department of Correction's (DOC) already-excessive budget. The current Commissioner of DOC has prioritized attempting to bring providers back into the jails, albeit not with the same level of funding as was abruptly cancelled in FY24. We also appreciate DOC’s increased transparency with the media and cooperation with oversight entities, including the Board of Correction and the federal monitor in the ongoing Nunez monitor. However, any fiscal discussion of DOC must be framed in context of the legal and moral mandate to close the jails on Rikers by August of 2027. This discussion must also be framed in the context of the lengthy federal court proceedings in the *Nunez* matter involving on-the-ground monitoring and public reporting on conditions, inefficient staffing practices and supervisory failures, and lack of accountability for continued and avoidable uses of force.¹ We must also note that very recently two people have died in DOC custody this year, within less than one week of each other: 38-year old Ramel Powell and 55-year old Terrence Moore.²

People in custody on Rikers continue to be at grave risk of physical harm, overdose, and continue to lack consistent access to necessary care. Roughly 25% of people are not produced

¹ Opinion and Order on Motion for Contempt. *Nunez v. New York City Department of Correction*, SDNY, No. 11-CV-5845-LTS, Nov. 26, 2024. Retrieved from <https://ecbawm.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Nunez-Dkt-803-Contempt-Order.pdf>. (“It bears repetition that supervisory and leadership failures have been identified as core problems and areas of noncompliance for, literally, years.”) p. 28 fn26

²Krigestein,B., (2025, Feb. 25), “Second Rikers Detainee Dies in NYC Custody in Less Than a Week, Officials Say.” *Gothamist*. Retrieved from <https://gothamist.com/news/second-rikers-detainee-dies-in-nyc-custody-in-less-than-a-week-officials-say>.

for scheduled medical appointments, which includes mental health care.³ This is not acceptable when we know that 54% of the people on Rikers have a mental health diagnosis, and 21% have a serious mental health diagnosis.⁴ Furthermore, in November, the Board of Correction – in a rare show of unanimity – approved a resolution condemning the “use of frequent, arbitrary, and unreported individualized lock-ins” after conducting investigations and hearing public testimony from a former Rikers Island social worker about such lock-ins of people with mental illness.⁵

Despite the critical oversight role played by BOC, particularly as described above with respect to the most vulnerable people in our jails, the Administration proposes to slash its already inadequate budget and thus its already inadequate staffing.⁶ In contrast, the proposed DOC budget of \$2.87 billion dollars reflects an increase of 9% and includes funding for over 7,000 uniformed officers through FY2029.⁷ No other large jail system in the country has such a high ratio of officers to people in custody,⁸ which is now more than one officer per person in custody. At these continued budgeted staffing numbers, that ratio will be nearly two to one when the borough-based jail plan is finally effectuated, with 4,000 beds. It is critical to note that even the federal judge in *Nunez* found that “enormous resources — that the city devotes to a system that is at the same time overstaffed and underserved — are not being deployed effectively.”⁹ In the face of such ineffective deployment of resources, it calls into question the Administration’s plan to increase funding for DOC while reducing funding for the very programs that we all know can keep more people from landing in or returning to our city jails. The City must redirect resources to reduce our City’s overreliance on incarceration which is both unnecessary and counterproductive. It is unnecessary because we know that alternatives to incarceration work, and counterproductive because we also know that even brief periods of pretrial detention, which

³ Mayor’s Preliminary Fiscal 2025 Management Report. Retrieved from <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/operations/downloads/pdf/pmmr2025/doc.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Resolution of the Board of Correction November 12, 2024 Public Meeting. Retrieved from <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/boc/downloads/pdf/Resolution-on-involuntary-lock-ins.pdf>.

⁶ The City of New York Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2026. Retrieved from <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf>.

⁷ Vera Institute of Justice (2025, Feb.). *A Look Inside the New York City Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget*. Retrieved from <https://vera-institute.files.svdcn.com/production/downloads/publications/A-Look-Inside-the-New-York-City-Fiscal-Year-2026-Preliminary-Budget.pdf>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Opinion and Order on Motion for Contempt. *Nunez v. New York City Department of Correction*, SDNY, No. 11-CV-5845-LTS, Nov. 26, 2024. Retrieved from <https://ecbawm.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Nunez-Dkt-803-Contempt-Order.pdf>.

is what the vast majority of people in Rikers are subjected to, can render someone more likely to have continued contact with the criminal legal system.¹⁰

We can further reduce the numbers of people in our jails if we invest in another proven intervention, supportive housing. There are approximately 2500 people in Rikers who may qualify for supportive housing, but only 120 City-funded units specifically designed for this group. Fortune is grateful to the Council for the award of \$6.4 million in discretionary funding in FY25, to enhance the woefully inadequate service rates in the existing contracts for the Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH) program. Those funds provided only time-limited relief, however, to the three existing JISH providers (CAMBA, Fortune, and Urban Pathways), as we had been relying on other funding to provide the necessary robust services for our JISH residents. To ensure that the City can meet its six-year old unfulfilled commitment to bringing an additional 380 units online, we urge the City to appropriate \$4.8 million in annual funding, as a line-item in the budget of the Department of Health & Mental Health, as such transparency is necessary to track progress on allocation and disbursement.¹¹

We know that supportive housing can break the cycle of jail to the streets and shelters and emergency rooms, from our own experience as a successful housing provider. We also have clear evidence in the robust 10-year follow-up report on the precursor to the JISH program, the supportive housing model called Frequent Users Engagement Program (FUSE). The study showed remarkable outcomes for FUSE participants. They spent less time in jails and in shelters than similarly-situated participants, leading the researchers to state that “(d)espite intense histories of incarceration and shelter use, the most common pattern seen over the 10 years for FUSE participants was **no jail or shelter experience after an early period of shelter stays.**” (emph. in original)¹² The researchers also found that if all of the participants in the FUSE study, including the comparison group, had actually been enrolled in the program, the City would have saved an estimated stunning amount of \$45,000,000.¹³ Again, we are asking for a mere \$4.8 million to create more of precisely the kind of supportive housing that has been proven to keep

¹⁰ See, e.g., Loeffler, C. and D. Nagin (2022, January), “The Impact of Incarceration on Recidivism, *Annual Review of Criminology* 5:133-152. Retrieved from <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-criminol-030920-112506>. (“(t)he findings of studies of pretrial incarceration are consistent – most find a deleterious effect on post release reoffending.”)

¹¹ See Appendix A, Corporation for Supportive Housing, *Expand Justice Involved Supportive Housing*.

¹² Aidala, A., McAllister, W., Yomogida, M., Alatas, H., & Torsiglieri, A. (2023, April). *FUSE 10-Year Follow-Up Report Initial Findings*. Retrieved from <https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/FUSE-10-Year-Report-Initial-Findings.pdf>.

¹³ *Id.*

people out of jail, which is clearly a massive public safety benefit. The City must allocate the additional funds bring the 380 remaining JISH units online, with appropriate service rates, and thus fully implement this crucial aspect of the Close Rikers plan.¹⁴

Moreover, the reason JISH is such a critical resource is that the largest City-funded supportive housing funding stream, NYC 15/15, effectively excludes far too many people on Rikers, as well as those returning to our city from prison. The eligibility criteria for NYC 15/15 needlessly incorporates the federal definition of “chronic homelessness,” which does not count carceral stays of more than 90 days towards required time spent homeless.¹⁵ A report released last year by the NYC Independent Budget Office revealed that average length of stay for people on Rikers increased by 91% between FY14 and FY23, to 105 days.¹⁶ New York state prisons sentences are by definition at least one year.

People identified by DOC as requiring mental health treatment, who are among those who may be eligible for supportive housing, usually remain on Rikers for twice the overall average length of stay.¹⁷ Similarly, the number of people who are classified as “unhoused” at jail admission has also increased to 33%.¹⁸ Furthermore, more than half of the people on Rikers have been diagnosed with a substance use disorder.¹⁹ Of people returning to NYC from our state prisons, as of July 2023, 42% of them were sent directly into our overburdened shelters.²⁰ Yet NYC 15/15-funded housing may be off-limits to all of them.

Fortune is therefore grateful to Council Member Rivera for introducing Intro. 1100-2024, which would expand eligibility for this critical resource. We also thank Chair Nurse and the other members of this Committee who have signed on as co-sponsors of this important bill. The bill would expand eligibility to individuals and heads of household who have had justice system

¹⁴ Beyond Rikers. (2021, September), *Beyond Rikers Commitment Tracker*. Retrieved from <https://rikers.cityofnewyork.us/beyond-rikers/>.

¹⁵ *Definition of Chronic Homelessness*. HUD Exchange. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/coc-esg-virtual-binders/coc-esg-homeless-eligibility/definition-of-chronic-homelessness/>.

¹⁶ NYC Independent Budget Office. (2024, March). *In Custody: Length of Stay & Population Demographics at NYC Jails, 2014-2023*. Retrieved from <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/in-custody-length-of-stay-and-population-demographics-at-nyc-jails-2014-2023-march-2024.html>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Rodriguez, J. and M. French-Marcelin. (2025, Jan.). *Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC: A Pathway to Safely Closing Rikers Island*. Retrieved from [Legal Action Center | Expanding Alternatives to Incarceration in NYC](#) (citations omitted).

²⁰ Coalition for the Homeless. (2024, July). *State of the Homeless 2024: Rights Under Attack, Leadership in Retreat*. Retrieved from <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/state-of-the-homeless-2024/#closing-the-prison-to-shelter-pipeline>.

involvement in the last 12 months, have a serious mental illness or substance use disorder, and are homeless or at risk of being homeless. These criteria would not exclude time spent in jail and prison, unlike the NYC 15/15 eligibility criteria. Fortune is proud to co-lead the advocates who will be championing this bill towards eventual passage.

As always, The Fortune Society stands ready to partner with the city to ensure that the most vulnerable among us have access to the supports and services that help them rebuild their lives, especially during these challenging times. ATI and reentry services and supportive housing enhance our collective safety and well-being, while offering tremendous cost savings. We must not continue to waste resources on the punitive and ineffective strategy of increasing mass incarceration in our own backyard, which continues to cause worsening disproportionate harm to our Black and brown families and communities.²¹ Investing in proven strategies not only aligns with fiscal wisdom but is also a moral necessity that fosters economic justice, advances racial equity, and upholds our collective humanity.

²¹ Blau, R. (2023, March 2). "Racial Gap in City Jails Has Only Gotten Worse, John Jay Study Finds." The City. <https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/03/02/racial-gap-nyc-jails-got-worse/>.

APPENDIX A

Expand Justice Involved Supportive Housing

WHAT IS JUSTICE INVOLVED SUPPORTIVE HOUSING?

Supportive Housing (SH) is a proven solution that combines permanent affordable housing with tailored support services to help individuals with complex health challenges, such as mental health and substance use disorders, and secure and maintain stable housing. It enhances public safety while **reducing** homelessness and over-reliance on costly and less effective emergency services like shelters, emergency rooms and law enforcement that only provide temporary responses.

In New York City, **Justice Involved Supportive Housing (JISH)** specifically supports people leaving Rikers who would otherwise be homeless and need behavioral health support, aiming to keep them housed and reduce their use of jails, shelters, and other emergency services. People are at their most vulnerable upon their release from incarceration and safe and stable housing with wraparound supports are critical.

FY25 Investment Success

The current JISH providers are grateful for the \$6.4M appropriated in FY25 from the City Council discretionary funds. JISH providers will be able to increase the funding rate for the existing 120 JISH units, which is critical to ensure JISH program participants receive robust services and providers are able to pay their staff a living wage.

PROPOSAL

In 2019, the City committed to funding 500 JISH units, but 380 have never been brought online due to insufficient funding for supportive services in the NYC Health Department's (DOHMH) budget. Despite serving clients with highly complex needs, JISH units receive about \$17,000 less per unit compared to similar supportive housing units citywide, like the 15/15 Young Adult Supportive Housing Program. The funds allocated are insufficient for providers to deliver critical services offered by a sufficient number of qualified staff. However, experienced providers have indicated that they would be interested in operating these new 380 units for people transitioning from Rikers back into the community, if funding levels are brought in line with other supportive housing programs for vulnerable populations.

➡ **Appropriate \$4.8 million more in annual funding for JISH and re-issue the RFP for the 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs.** This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand to 500 units.

➡ **Create a JISH line-item in the DOHMH budget** to allow for better tracking moving forward, given the JISH program's importance for public safety.

WHY JISH, WHY NOW?

JISH is currently the only supportive housing program in the City designed specifically to meet the needs of the estimated 2,500 people on Rikers Island who need supportive housing but there are only 120 existing units of JISH housing. To comply with the mandate to close Rikers in August 2027, the City can safely reduce the population in part by bringing 380 additional JISH beds online.

The City needs to properly fund JISH to fulfill the City's commitment of 500 units.

To contact us, please email cassandra.warney@csh.org





March 8, 2025

Jeremy Whiteman
Legislative Council,
New York City Council

**New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice Meeting
March 7, 2025 Budget Hearing - Criminal Justice**

Dear Mr. Whiteman,

We are grateful for this opportunity to provide you with written testimony on behalf of The Interfaith Center of New York, a non-profit organization that, over the course of 27 years, has built a wide religiously-diverse and civically-engaged network of grassroots and immigrant religious leaders across the five boroughs of Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island and the Bronx.

The Mayor's proposed FY2026 budget once again fails to address New York City's legal and moral obligation to close the Rikers Island jail facilities and open borough-based jails by August 31, 2027. Instead of adequately funding alternatives to incarceration programs, supportive housing, and community-based mental health treatment—all key commitments of the Rikers Closing Plan—the Mayor would pour money unnecessarily into the Department of Corrections budget.

Justice Involved Supportive Housing models successfully reduce jail, shelter, and hospital stays, and save the city money. Still, NYC budgets consistently underfund these programs. Operators of the existing 120 supportive housing units struggle to provide quality services because NYC funding rates are drastically lower than those provided to similar supportive housing programs elsewhere. Discouraged by these low rates, qualified providers have not applied to create the additional 380 units the Adams administration promised according to the Points of Agreement on Closing Rikers. **Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must appropriate \$4.8 million more in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs.**

The Rikers Closing Plan insists that New York “Enhance Reentry and Discharge Planning Services Available to Everyone Leaving City Jails.” Yet, the administration proposed to cut \$8M to reentry services. To make matters worse, the proposed budget also cuts \$3.8M from alternative to incarceration programs. Opportunities to divert people from Rikers should be fully utilized, in collaboration with the Jail Population Review Initiative that the Council established last year through Local Law 75-2023.

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Still, the Mayor proposes to spend \$2.87 billion on jail operations in FY2026. 87% of DOC expenses will be staff salaries, overtime and benefits. And though uniform headcount reductions are consistent with and necessary for a lower jail population and closing Rikers, the DOC remains overstaffed. **If New York City simply eliminated the 1,152 vacant positions for uniformed DOC officers, it could save \$149.6M next year to reinvest in programs and services that create real community safety and wellbeing and prevent people from becoming involved with the criminal legal system in the first place.**

Across New York's varied and vibrant faith communities, we find that our religious traditions call us to cherish and nurture every human life. We must take particular care to protect those who are vulnerable and to tend to those who are ill—as so many people detained on Rikers Island are. Conditions there make it nearly impossible to meet either of those calls. The NYC DOC continues to violate minimum standards established by the Board of Correction. The violations include illegal use of solitary confinement; sexual abuse, with claims spanning decades; and DOC officers “deadlocking” people with severe mental health needs.

Strong oversight is crucial. The Board of Corrections needs more staff to fulfill its mandate, but the Mayor proposes reducing their staff from 35 to 30 positions, and cutting BOC's budget by \$210,418 (5%). **Instead, the budget should increase the BOC headcount to at least 1% of the number of people in DOC custody. Establishing a minimum budget linked to the number of people in custody would add 37 BOC staff positions (versus the preliminary budget), but would add only \$4.5M to the overall expense budget.**

The Rikers Island jails must close. That goal cannot be achieved without completing the borough-based jails, and increasing investment in supportive housing, community-based mental health interventions and care, re-entry programs, and alternatives to incarceration. The Mayor and the City Council need to find the moral courage to meet these basic obligations if they want to show all New Yorkers their elected officials truly care about their wellbeing.

We are grateful to the Committee on Criminal Justice for your attention and concern for the well-being, dignity, and humanity of people in New York City's custody.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chloe Breyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chloe" and last name "Breyer" clearly distinguishable.

The Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, Executive Director &
Scott Blumenthal, Program Associate



Mental Health Project

New York City Council
Committee on Criminal Justice

Preliminary Budget Hearing – Criminal Justice

Friday, March 7, 2025
Council Chambers, City Hall, New York, NY

Testimony of
Jennifer J. Parish
Director of Criminal Justice Advocacy
Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project
[REDACTED] • jparish@urbanjustice.org

Good afternoon. My name is Jennifer Parish, and I am the director of criminal justice advocacy at the Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Urban Justice Center Mental Health Project advocates for people with mental health concerns involved in the criminal legal system. We are deeply familiar with the difficulties people with mental health concerns who are involved in the criminal legal system have in accessing essential mental health services. We represent the *Brad H. Class*, all incarcerated individuals who receive mental health treatment while in NYC jails. Currently the *Brad H. Class* comprises more than half of the city jail population.

I am here today to urge the Council to oppose excessive spending on the Department of Correction (DOC). Year after year, the City pours billions of dollars into this agency which cannot fulfill its most fundamental obligation of keeping people in its custody safe and healthy. In fact, its decades-long track record of failing to meet constitutional standards – even with years of outside oversight – has led to the possible appointment of a receiver to take control of the jails.

One recent example of how the Department treats people with mental health challenges demonstrates why this agency's funding should be reduced. Despite the Mayor's repeated claim that solitary confinement does not exist in the city jails, in October 2024 former Correctional Health Services (CHS) social worker Justyna Rzewinski revealed that not only does solitary confinement in the jails exist, but that it is being used in the most egregious way, notably in the

specialized mental health units where people with the most serious mental health treatment needs are housed. She documented, and CHS leadership confirmed, a practice referred to as deadlocking in which correction officers lock people with mental health concerns – people with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and schizoaffective disorder – in their cells 24 hours a day for weeks or even months on end. Correction officers engaged in this practice despite CHS staff advocating for these individuals to be released, despite it resulting in these individuals not receiving medication, and despite them becoming more symptomatic as they mentally decompensated in the torturous environment of solitary confinement.

What Ms. Rzewinski revealed was not *one* egregious incident but a practice that had been going on secretly for years despite regulations against it. (In 2015 the Board of Correction passed regulations banning the placement of people with serious mental illness in solitary confinement.) This practice is what New Yorkers' tax dollars are funding – cruel and inhumane treatment of people with mental health needs. That must end.

We can use funding currently allocated for DOC to fund actual services for people with serious mental health needs in the community – to provide them with housing, mental health treatment, and other supports that promote recovery. Funding community services can prevent incarceration in the first place, divert people from incarceration into treatment alternatives once involved in the criminal legal system, and support people who are detained when they are released from incarceration to the community. That is where money for mental health should be spent – not on DOC staff to inflict the torture of solitary confinement on people with mental health treatment needs.

By reallocating a fraction of the DOC's \$2.87 billion budget, we can easily fund these services. Simply by eliminating the Department's uniformed vacancies, the City would save up to \$149.6 million. With this funding, the City could allocate an additional \$39.8 million for housing and mental health, including appropriating \$4.8 million more in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing, \$22 million more to create 15 additional Intensive Mobile Treatment teams, \$7 million more to add Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams, and \$6 million more for four new crisis respite centers. Reducing the DOC budget would also allow for cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice to be restored, include alternatives to incarceration (\$3.8 million) and reentry (\$8 million) programs. These investments are critical to reduce the jail population and achieve the goals of the plan to close Rikers Island.

Finally, Ms. Rzewinski publicly exposing the practice of deadlocking in the specialized mental health units also illustrates the need to increase the Board of Correction's budget. The Board had not brought to light this pervasive practice despite the presence of the Board's monitoring staff in the jail where it occurred. Moreover, the Board has not yet completed an investigation of the practice notwithstanding the Board's strong commitment to do so. The Board simply does not have the resources needed to provide the comprehensive oversight of the jails

that is required. We urge the Council to demand that the Board's budget be increased so that the agency can fulfill its obligations to New Yorkers.

New York City Council Criminal Justice Committee Budget Hearing

Written Testimony of Alana Sivin
Director, Greater Justice New York
Vera Institute of Justice

March 7, 2025

My name is Alana Sivin, and I am director of the Greater Justice New York initiative at the Vera Institute of Justice, which works to end mass incarceration, protect immigrants' rights, ensure dignity for people behind bars, and build safe, thriving communities. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

This year's preliminary city budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 includes \$2.87 billion for the DOC (a 9 percent increase from last year's adopted budget) and \$12.4 billion for NYPD (a 4 percent increase).¹ In contrast, despite some large proposed investments in safe haven beds and temporary housing, funding is set to decrease for agencies that deliver safety by providing community-based services to New Yorkers, including the Department of Youth and Community Development (11 percent decrease), Department of Homeless Services (8 percent), Department of Housing Preservation and Development (6 percent), and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (3 percent).²

New York City cannot punish its way to safety. Instead, we must increase funding for supportive housing, a community-based continuum of care for New Yorkers experiencing mental illness, alternatives to incarceration, and reentry services. Contact with law enforcement can increase the likelihood of future criminal behavior, and even one day incarcerated can increase the likelihood of rearrest.³ Rather than overfund agencies that trap New Yorkers in an ongoing cycle of instability, arrest, and incarceration, New York's leaders must invest in evidence-backed services that prevent crime, respond to crisis, and stop violence. These investments are also essential to lowering the jail population on Rikers Island so that it can be closed and replaced with the four smaller, modern borough-based jails.

City leaders must hold DOC accountable for its budget, particularly its overtime budget. DOC overspent its overtime budget by \$161 million and \$149 million in the last two fiscal years.⁴ Troublingly, even during periods of rapid hiring, DOC's uniformed overtime spending increased.⁵ Despite spending \$151.2 million on uniformed overtime in just the first six months of FY 2025, DOC has budgeted uniformed overtime for all of next fiscal year at only \$153.8 million.⁶ Without any plan for how to rein in overtime so

significantly, it seems likely that actual agency spending next fiscal year will far exceed budgeted levels. Moving forward, the city must insist on accurate and transparent overtime budgets.

More broadly, DOC's budget lacks granularity. The FY 2026 budget includes only six units of appropriation for personal services (PS) and five for other than personal services (OTPS).⁷ In contrast, NYPD's preliminary budget includes 14 units of appropriation for PS and 11 units of appropriation for OTPS, including two new units this year for the detective bureau and chief of department.⁸ Units of appropriation are the most detailed items included in the annual budget. They are important because they give elected officials and members of the public insight into an agency's spending. In addition, if agencies want to spend five percent more or less than a unit of appropriation allows, they must seek city council approval.⁹ To increase transparency and enable greater oversight of DOC's budget, the city council should pass a budget resolution requiring DOC to introduce new units of appropriation. At a minimum, these units of appropriation should include PS and OTPS related to programming for incarcerated people and executive management.

Beyond budget accountability, city leaders must invest in safety services proven to work. To increase safety via the FY 2026 budget, city leaders should invest \$56.1 million in annual funding as follows:

- **\$4.8 million for Justice-Involved Supportive Housing (JISH).** Also, reissue the request for proposals for new units with higher service funding levels to enable service providers to create and maintain 380 additional JISH units, bringing the total number of units to 500. The city should baseline them in their own unit of appropriation within the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to increase budget accountability.
- **\$22 million for Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams,** a 50 percent increase in IMT funding that will help to clear the waitlist of people seeking vital mental health support.
- **\$7 million for Forensic Assertive Community treatment (FACT) teams by,** a 50 percent increase that will enable more justice-involved New Yorkers with mental health needs to access care.
- **\$8 million to restore slated cuts to reentry services** that help New Yorkers returning from incarceration find stable housing, employment, and mental health and substance use treatment.
- **\$3.8 million to restore slated cuts for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs)** to enhance and support the use of ATIs citywide.

- **\$4.5 million for adequately paid peer specialists** to staff mental health and crisis response teams.
- **\$6 million for four new crisis respite centers**, two of which must be opened by the end of 2025 per legislation passed in 2023.¹⁰ These centers provide up to 28 days of housing and care for people experiencing mental health crises.

Through this \$56.1 million investment, the city can improve safety for less than 40 percent of DOC's uniformed overtime budget for the coming fiscal year.

The city could fund all these services more than twice over by simply eliminating DOC's vacancies. In the last several years, recruitment efforts have failed to keep pace with attrition.¹¹ DOC's preliminary budget includes funding for 7,060 uniformed officers, despite currently employing fewer than 6,000.¹² Eliminating the current 1,152 uniformed vacancies—which would not entail a single layoff—would save \$149.6 million.¹³ Allowing DOC to budget these vacancies every year gives them additional funding not subject to rigorous oversight.

By investing more in comprehensive, community-based safety programs that prevent crime rather than doubling down on punishment after harm occurs, city leaders can improve safety for all New Yorkers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me at asivin@vera.org if the Vera Institute of Justice may provide further support.

¹ All budget numbers in this brief provided by the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO), shared with the authors throughout January and February 2025 and on file with the authors. Vera used data from IBO to have the most up-to-date numbers; for more information, contact Benjamin Heller at bheller@vera.org. Note that all Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 preliminary and FY 2025 adopted departmental budget totals include fringe benefits, pension fund contributions, and debt service. See New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), *The City of New York Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2026: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2025), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/perc1-25.pdf>; and OMB, *The City of New York Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2025: Expense Revenue Contract* (New York: OMB, 2024), <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/adopt24/erc6-24.pdf>.

² Alice Gainer, "New \$650 Million Plan to Address NYC's Mentally Ill Homeless Unveiled by Mayor Eric Adams," CBS News, January 15, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/bridge-to-home-nyc-mentally-ill-homeless-plan>.

³ Juan Del Toro, Tracey Lloyd, Kim S Buchanan, et al., "The Criminogenic and Psychological Effects of Police Stops on Adolescent Black and Latino Boys," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 116, no. 17 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1808976116>; Abigail Novak and Shelby Gilbreath, "Police Stops and Subsequent Delinquency and Arrest: Race and Gender Differences," *Justice Quarterly* 40, no. 7 (2023), 910-949, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2023.2235416>; and Core Correctional Solutions, *The Hidden Costs of Pretrial Detention Revisited* (Houston, TX: Arnold Ventures, 2022), <https://perma.cc/4UQV-4S4Q>.

⁴ IBO budget data, January 2025.

⁵ Arden Armbruster, *A Shrinking System with Similar Spending: A Decade in Jail Trends (2014-2023)* (New York: IBO, 2024), <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/a-shrinking-system-with-similar-spending-a-decade-of-jail-trends-2014-2023-september-2024.pdf>.

⁶ IBO budget data, January 2025.

⁷ OMB, *Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2026*, 2025, 40E-41E.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 29E-31E.

⁹ Logan Clark, *Budget Building Blocks: Units of Appropriation* (New York: IBO, 2023), 2, <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/budget-building-blocks-units-of-appropriation-november-2023.pdf>.

¹⁰ Caroline Lewis, “Deadlines for New Community-Based Mental Health Services Pass the NYC Council,” *Gothamist*, July 14, 2023, <https://gothamist.com/news/deadlines-for-new-community-based-mental-health-services-pass-the-nyc-council>.

¹¹ New York City Comptroller Brad Laner, “Department of Correction (DOC),” dashboard, accessed February 19, 2025, <https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/departments-of-correction-doc/dashboard>.

¹² January 2025 staffing levels (5,908 officers) from IBO. Budgeted headcount from OMB, *Fiscal Years 2025-2029: Full-Time and Full-Time Equivalent Staffing Levels* (New York: OMB, 2025), 35, <https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/jan25/jan25-stafflevels.pdf>.

¹³ OMB, *Preliminary Budget Fiscal Year 2026*, 2025, 40E-41E. To calculate this number, Vera first calculated that for every dollar spent on personal services, DOC spent an extra \$1.46 on fringe benefits and pension fund contributions. Using that figure, Vera then determined that the \$52,804 starting salary for officers as reported on DOC’s website cost the agency an additional \$77,093 in fringe benefits and pension fund contributions. In total, therefore, each new officer costs an average of \$129,897. Multiplying that figure by DOC’s 1,152 uniformed vacancies as of January 1, 2025, leads to a total savings of \$149,641,444.



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**Testimony of Meg Egan, CEO of the Women's Prison Association
Committee on Criminal Justice Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 7, 2025**

Good afternoon, my name is Meg Egan, and it is my great honor and privilege to lead the Women's Prison Association. Chair Nurse and the rest of the members of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Criminal Justice Committee today.

Throughout its 180-year history WPA is a force for change, challenging the systemic inequities that criminalize and marginalize women, particularly Black and brown women, at disproportionate rates. For these women, incarceration is not merely a consequence of a single event but the result of compounding systemic failures: poverty, housing instability, trauma, and lack of opportunity.

The harms and failures of Rikers Island are real. The cost to families, communities, and the city is immeasurable. Mothers are separated from children. Communities lose contributors. The cycle of inequity perpetuates and deepens. But what if there was a different way? A way that prioritized prevention, provided support, and treated justice as an opportunity for restoration rather than punishment? WPA envisions that path forward.

By meeting women where they are, WPA fosters trust, connection, and agency, empowering each individual to reclaim her future. Rooted in New York City, WPA serves as a lifeline for women navigating reentry, working alongside them to dismantle the structural barriers that have kept them in the margins for too long.

There are just over 400 women held on Rikers Island right now. We believe that together with our partners, we can develop the services and support to make the community the public safety-minded default, rather than Rikers Island. To realize that vision, the city must not just restore the funding currently cut; \$3.8m from ATI programs and \$8m from reentry programs but expand these essential and effective programs. Our work will center on the following priorities to develop the infrastructure of services to meaningfully address the compounding system failures that diminish safety.

Alternatives to Detention and Incarceration

WPA is working to expand diversion programs such as supervised release, bail reform, and gender-responsive specialty courts. These interventions target women before incarceration, addressing the systemic factors—poverty, housing instability, and trauma—that disproportionately affect women of color.



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Reentry Ecosystems

For women returning to their communities, WPA offers holistic support: safe housing, clinical care, and employment programs that foster independence and stability. This ecosystem approach reduces recidivism and strengthens communities.

Policy Advocacy for Systemic Reform

Drawing from decades of frontline experience, WPA champions policy changes to reduce the criminalization of poverty and expand access to community-based support. By embedding equity in the justice system, these reforms create scalable, systemic change.

To accomplish these goals, we are seeking funding in the following areas:

1. ATI/Reentry Coalition Funding - \$1,095,200

The Coalition's community-based alternatives to punitive systems lead to lower incarceration rates in New York City and provide individuals and communities that have been disproportionately harmed by mass incarceration in New York with pathways to healing and prosperity. This funding and this work provide WPA with the foundation upon which we can build our holistic approach.

2. Speaker's Initiative Funding - \$200,000

WPA is seeking funding to layout a clear, practical pathway to making incarceration obsolete in New York City. This funding will allow us to strengthen our partnerships while identifying gaps and developing pilot services to address those gaps.

3. Mental Health for Vulnerable Populations Funding - \$200,000

We are seeking funding to provide robust clinical care to our clients. We see clinical, behavioral health care as essential service for our clients regardless of where they are in the criminal legal process. These services will improve outcomes and improve public safety.

4. Discharge Planning Funding - \$1,000,000

With this funding WPA will develop a robust discharge planning infrastructure to ensure that planning begins the moment a person sets foot on Rikers Island. That initial work can support both long-term planning. It can also support, where appropriate, a short-term plan for a motion to reconsider bail and a release into an alternative to detention or incarceration program.

Our vision is to more systematically shift resources from punishment to prevention, addressing the root causes of incarceration. In doing so, WPA will break barriers, shatter systems, and reshape societal norms to significantly reduce the number of women



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incarcerated in New York City. We will also significantly increase the opportunity, financial security, and stability for the women, their families, their communities and our city. At WPA we believe that the women we serve are more than a number and more than their past—they are unique individuals with immense potential to help shape our community for a better tomorrow.

Please contact me by email, megan@wpaonline.org or by phone at 646.292.7710 with any questions.

**New York City Council
Committee on Criminal Justice
Preliminary Budget Hearing – Criminal Justice
Written Testimony of Youth Represent
March 7, 2025**

Youth Represent is dedicated to improving the lives and futures of young people impacted by the Criminal Legal System. When the legal system creates barriers to success for youth, we use the law to help them leave the stigma of a criminal record behind. We provide criminal and civil reentry legal representation to young people aged 16-26, assisting them with everything from rapsheet review to school suspensions to employment discrimination and any other legal needs they identify. We also engage in policy advocacy and youth leadership development through our City Dreamers Advocacy Camp, Youth Committee, and Youth Justice & Opportunities Act (YJ&O) Campaign.

Thank you to Chair Nurse, Committee members, and staff for the opportunity to testify today about the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2026.

We wish to highlight that the appendix to this testimony includes copies of spoken testimonies given on behalf of Youth Represent by Jalyll Wright (Appendix A) and Glen Williams (Appendix B), two young people impacted by the criminal legal system in New York City. Both highlight their personal and traumatic histories interacting with the youth justice system. **They ask that, instead of further investment in jails, prisons, youth detention, and probation in NYC, the Council not only funds programs designed for youth coming out of detention, but also funds programming that fosters and cares for each young person BEFORE arrest, including but not limited to sports programs, art programs, mental health programs, political education, and business programs.**

1. New York City Must Invest in Resources and Opportunities for Young People - Not Criminalization

Across New York City's five boroughs, an estimated 37,000¹ young New Yorkers—primarily Black and Brown young people—are drawn into the justice system through arrests, convictions, and incarceration. This is a cycle that will not stop if the City continues to pour money into criminalizing, surveilling, and incarcerating young people before they've had the chance to thrive. Instead, the City needs to continually invest in community-oriented, youth-specific resources and opportunities to keep New York families safe and healthy.

¹"Workbook: NYS Arrests by County." Division of Criminal Justice Services, n.d.
https://mypublicdashboard.ny.gov/t/OJRP_PUBLIC/views/NYSArrestsbyCounty/HistoricalData?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y.

a. The City Must Address the Crisis in New York City Secure Detention with a Comprehensive Decarceration Plan

At the June 2024 Joint Oversight Hearing of the Committees on Criminal Justice and Children & Youth on Coordinating the Administration's Youth Decarceration Plan, Youth Represent and our partner organizations testified that Secure Detention and Specialized Secure Detention numbers had increased, imploring the City to invest in alternatives now. The City did not take action, so we are here before you, a year later, testifying that the youth detention numbers continue to increase and intensify urgent overcrowding concerns.

In December 2024, there were 273 youth detained in Crossroads and Horizons,² NYC's Secure Detention Centers, despite the maximum bed capacity being 212. For over a year, ACS has been operating under a waiver from the Office of Children and Family Services which allows the agency to circumvent the state law that mandates private bedrooms for youth in secure detention. Under this waiver, young people have been sleeping on cots in hallways and classrooms at Horizon and Crossroads. Temporarily adding beds and continually renewing this waiver is a band-aid that does not adequately or sustainably address overcrowding. The time to consider and act on alternatives is now.

The average monthly population of Secure Detention and Specialized Secure Detention increased by 13% from 2023 to 2024. In 2024 60% of youth in secure detention were Black and 31% were Hispanic, as published by NYC's Administration of Children Services Flash Report for 2024. Black and Brown young people are disproportionately impacted by this overcrowding because they are disproportionately represented in NYC's Secure Detention population.

ACS does not provide adequate data to accurately represent the kinds and severity of charges facing young people held in Secure Detention in NYC. More granular data on arrest charges by borough would better guide allocation of resources to specific programs in the places they are most needed. This lack of data obstructs any effort to understand the problem of overcrowding in these facilities and to develop a comprehensive decarceration plan to identify young people in each borough who could be released with supervision or moved to Alternative to Detention (ATD) / Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) programs while their case is open.

Though ACS has repeatedly stated that 70% of young people in their care are charged with "murder or murder related charges" and that "secure detention no longer holds youth charged with minor charges,"³ the data published by ACS tells a less clear story. For about a third of young people in secure detention in 2024, it is impossible to tell from the data whether they were charged with a misdemeanor or felony; moreover the published data suggests that at least 11 young people held in Secure Detention in 2024 were charged with only a misdemeanor or violation (data pulled from ACS's Detention Demographic Data for FY2024). And for 246 young people (over 32% of the total detained in Crossroads or Horizons in 2024), it is impossible to

² "Flash Report - Monthly Indicators." NYC Administration for Children's Services, January 2025.

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/flashReports/2025/01.pdf>.

³ "TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES." New York City Council, 2024, p. 21.

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/View.ashx?M=F&ID=13181141&GUID=7A055DCF-2604-4026-AD1B-5D1034282D04>.

know whether the top charge was a misdemeanor or felony. We demand adequate and accurate data from ACS to support the effort to depopulate secure detention. To reduce overcrowding and to increase support for these young people, the City urgently needs to create a plan for redirecting eligible young people to non-secure detention and to expand use of supervised or unsupervised release programs.

To address the overcrowding crisis and successfully redirect and depopulate Secure Detention, **the City must expand investments in youth-specific ATDs and ATIs, especially for felony charges.** We know that incarceration has disastrous effects on youth outcomes: residential placements like secure detention centers create obstacles to psychosocial development, making it harder for youth to learn to control impulsive and aggressive behavior, function autonomously, take responsibility for their behavior, and consider other points of view. Research indicates that rather than promote safety, youth detention centers **increase** the probability of recidivism as an adult by between 20-30%. Community-based approaches, by contrast, have been found to lower the recidivism rate by around 5%.

Research from the Sentencing Project lays out a roadmap for effective strategies to reduce youth incarceration and promote public safety and youth development. As we describe below, New York City's excellent youth justice providers already incorporate these strategies into their models, but the City's investment in them is a fraction of what it spends on surveilling, policing, and incarcerating young people.⁴

1. **Credible messenger mentoring programs** hire community residents with a history of involvement in the justice system who provide intensive support to youth and their families, typically as one part of a multi-pronged intervention.

NYC Program Models:

The Crisis Management System - this network deploys teams of credible messengers who mediate conflicts on the street and connect high-risk individuals to services that can reduce the long-term risk of violence in NYC

- i. Shows an average 40% reduction in gun violence across program areas compared to a 31% reduction in comparison areas

Cure Violence - a violence interruption program under the Crisis Management System designed to reduce gun violence, providing street outreach and public awareness. Their work correlates with a reduction in gun violence in historically high-violence neighborhoods (Cure Violence participants include young teenagers)

1. In South Bronx, gun injuries dropped 37%, shooting victimizations dropped 63%
2. In East New York (Brooklyn), gun injuries dropped 50%

⁴ Mendel, Richard. "Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration." The Sentencing Project, June 28, 2023. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/reports/effective-alternatives-to-youth-incarceration/>.

2. **Advocate/Mentor programs, such as Youth Advocate Programs**, assign trained community residents to work intensively with young people and their families, providing support to the families and helping young people avoid delinquency and achieve goals delineated in their individualized case plans.

NYC Program Models:

Arches - a transformative mentoring program for young people on probation aged 16-24 who have been deemed high-risk of continued system involvement, had significantly lower rates of felony reconviction compared to similarly-situated young people on probation who were not in the program. This is a group mentoring program, led by credible messenger mentors in community-based organizations:

- i. 69% lower felony reconviction rate after one year on probation
- ii. 57% lower felony reconviction rate after two years

Advocate Intervene Mentor (AIM) - a one-on-one mentoring program known as an Alternative to Placement for youth in Family Court who would otherwise be ordered to out-of-home placement (meaning they were deemed among the highest-risk and need youth) had the following impact:

- iii. 90.9% avoided another Family Court adjudication within one year of program enrollment
- iv. 98.4% avoided a Youthful Offender adjudication or felony conviction in criminal court within one year of program enrollment
- v. AND within one year of program completion, only 3% had a Youthful Offender adjudication or felony conviction – compared youth released from facilities who are reconvicted within a year of release at a rate of 25%

3. **Family-focused, multidimensional therapy models**, such as Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT) employ specially trained therapists who follow detailed protocols to identify and confront factors that propel a young person toward delinquent conduct, with a heavy focus on working with family members to support youth success.

NYC Program Models:

CASES IMPACT- A model that uses home-based family therapy and wrap-around services and that was successfully used by Esperanza in New York City for a decade to support youth charged with serious offenses in the community, preventing detention and incarceration. The New York City Department of Probation shifted the contract from Esperanza to CASES in 2023 but then cut the funding to CASES before the program was allowed to begin. The City has no plan to replace this critical program.

4. **Cognitive behavioral therapy plus mentors for youth and young adults** at extreme risk, like the programs offered by Roca, Inc., engage youth and young adults living in

violence-torn neighborhoods who are at extreme risk for future incarceration. Roca youth workers provide participants with cognitive behavioral therapy and connect them with education, employment, and other relevant services.

5. **Restorative Justice interventions targeting youth** accused of serious offenses provide an alternative to traditional court. These programs typically involve victims, and they culminate in a conference where victims, accused youth, and caring adults in their lives meet to discuss the harm caused by the offense and craft plans for the youth to “make things right” and to avoid subsequent offending and achieve success.
6. **Wraparound programs assign a care coordinator** to develop individualized plans offering an array of services to assist children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances – sometimes including youth facing serious delinquency charges – who might otherwise be placed into residential facilities.

Many of the pre-existing programming in NYC use a combination of the listed approaches to ATI above. These strategies are already being implemented by CURE violence programs, reentry and legal services providers, and other programs that serve system-involved youth. These programs include: exalt, Drive Change, CASES, We Build the Block, Fortune, Osborne, Youth Justice Network, YouthBuild, Summer Youth Employment Program, among others.

The city must expand investments in this continuum of services for court-involved youth to decrease reliance on secure detention. This includes:

1. **Increased funding for alternative to incarceration, alternative to detention, and supervised release programs available in the youth parts and family court in all five boroughs.** Resources are not just needed to execute programs, but for court liaisons to work with young people, defense attorneys, prosecutors and judges to connect young people to appropriate programs. Resources are needed to increase capacity and the length of programming for young people with more complex needs. And funding streams must be flexible so that young people can access the programs that they need, regardless of what court they are in and the posture of the case.
2. **Prevention should always be the first choice.** Funding streams but be flexible enough to serve youth and connect them to services before arrest, especially mentoring, education, enrichment. The City must coordinate across agencies (DYCD, DOP, ACS, MOCJ, DOE) to ensure robust resources and opportunities for youth. In New York City and nationally, Black students are suspended at 3-4 times the rate of their white peers and are more likely to experience disciplinary responses that involve the criminal justice system.⁵ Specific interventions and resources should be available to any student facing school suspension to ensure they continue their education.

⁵ Lissy, Dr. Rachel. “Intended Consequences and Explicit Bias: The Roots of Racialized Disproportionality in NYC Discipline Policy | NYU Steinhardt.” Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools. <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/intended-consequences-and-explicit-bias-roots-racialized-disproportionality-ny-c>.

The key finding of the Sentencing Project's research is that:

*Expanding the use of these programs is necessary for youth justice systems to reduce overreliance on incarceration. However, to make a meaningful difference, these programs **must be embedded in youth justice systems that strive to steer youth away from more intensive court supervision at every stage of the process** and that explore all available options to keep young people at home and in their communities. Youth justice systems must also make concerted efforts to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in youth confinement.*

In the end, the most essential ingredient for reducing overreliance on youth incarceration will be a determination to seize every opportunity to keep young people living safely at home with their parents and families, in their schools and communities.⁶

Investing in a robust continuum of services must be complemented by extensive reforms to NYC and NYS youth justice systems to reduce the city and state's overreliance on incarceration and detention programs. These reforms include:

- **Passage of #ErasetheDatabase (Int 0798 - Stevens)**
A local law that would abolish the NYPD's criminal group database and prohibit the establishment of a successor database to reduce racial profiling and criminalization of Black and Brown people in NYC's most under-resourced and over-policed neighborhoods.
- **Passage of the Youth Justice & Opportunities Act (A5293 - Walker; S4330 - Myrie)**
State legislation that would expand alternatives to incarceration, diversion, and immediate record sealing for young people who are arrested in New York. It recognizes that emerging adults—young people ages 18 to 25—have unique needs and tremendous potential. Rather than punishing risk-taking and mistakes with harsh sentencing and the barriers that accompany an adult criminal conviction, YJ&O provides for effective, age-appropriate interventions to move young people out of the criminal legal system and into education, stability, and economic opportunity.
- **The passage of #Right2RemainSilent: Children's Early Access to Counsel Legislation (A2620 - Hevesi / S878A - Bailey)**

⁶ Mendel, "Effective Alternatives to Youth Incarceration."

State legislation that would protect children's right to remain silent by creating a non-waivable requirement for consultation with a lawyer for children under 18 before questioning by police.

- **The passage of the Youth Justice Innovation Fund (A767 - Solages / S643 - Cleare)**

The Youth Justice Innovation Fund would direct \$50 million 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 Innovation Fund builds on successful state-wide efforts like Project RISE, which has brought over \$30 million to communities to combat gun violence through public health strategies, including credible messenger and violence interruption programs.

- b. The Administration Has Failed to Take Steps to Access Critical Raise the Age Funds from New York State

Last fall marked five years since Raise the Age was first implemented across New York State, ending a shameful chapter in our history of prosecuting 16-and 17-year olds as adults regardless of the offense. Prior to the passing of this legislation, thousands of 16-and 17-year-olds were held in dangerous conditions on Rikers Island and other adult jails across the state. Moreover, these youth were systematically locked-out of age-appropriate services in family court programs designed to meet the needs of adolescents and avoid the barriers of an adult criminal record.

Youth crime has consistently decreased since Raise the Age implementation in 2018. In New York City alone, since 2013 there has been a 48% decrease in adolescent arrests for serious offenses. Evidence from implementation across the State clearly shows how the law has improved community safety and youth well-being.

Despite making up half of the state's youth justice system population, New York City is currently excluded from accessing the Raise the Age funding because the City exceeds the tax cap prescribed by state law. However, it is possible to access this funding by submitting a waiver of hardship, indicating that our city and our programs need the resources that are available through the Raise the Age law. New York City accounts for half of the state's youth justice system population and should be able to access more funding. However, Mayor Adams has yet to apply for the waiver of hardship, despite the administration's claim that the current fiscal cliff necessitates drastic cuts to many of the supportive services and programs that are vital to New York City's youth and families.

2. #CLOSERIKERS

At a cost of over half a million dollars per person per year, Rikers Island is the most expensive and least effective tool our City has to create safety. In addition to exposing people to rampant abuse and violence, Rikers Island wastes resources that are desperately needed for housing,

treatment, education, and other investments. Mayor Adams' proposed budget continues to misappropriate funds that are needed for real public safety investments by maintaining DOC budget bloat while cutting funds to alternative to incarceration and reentry programs - including those that serve New York's most vulnerable young people - and failing to adequately fund supportive housing and community-based mental health treatment. These resources are essential for New Yorkers of all ages and are especially crucial for young people. As of this week over 1,300 young people aged 18-25 are being held at Rikers.

Preliminary budget analysis:

- **DOCs budget is still bloated**, with the Mayor proposing to spend \$2.87 billion on jail operations alone in FY2026. In addition, the administration is planning either to continue overusing incarceration or to employ almost twice as many correctional officers as people in custody by FY2028. Either option makes no sense, morally or financially.
- **Commitments in the Close Rikers plan are still inadequately funded**: the administration agreed to yet has not followed through on establishing 380 more units of Justice Involved Supportive Housing, a model that has been hugely successful in reducing jail, shelter, and hospital stays, and generating substantial cost savings.
 - The Close Rikers Plan also promised "A new community-based mental health safety net." This administration has clearly fallen short of that goal - the number of people in Rikers diagnosed with a serious mental illness has increased by more than 60% since January 2022 without sufficient investments in community-based interventions and care.
- **Reentry and alternative to incarceration programs face cuts**: The administration is proposing \$8M in cuts to reentry services, while a key commitment in the [plan to Close Rikers](#) was to "Enhance Reentry and Discharge Planning Services Available to Everyone Leaving City Jails," as evidence recommends.⁷
 - The administration is proposing \$3.8 million in cuts to alternative to incarceration programs. Opportunities to divert people from Rikers should be fully utilized, in collaboration with the Jail Population Review Initiative that the Council established last year through Local Law 75-2023. Expanding alternatives to incarceration was also a key commitment in the plan to close Rikers.
- **Jail oversight cuts are proposed**: DOC continues to [violate minimum standards](#) established by the Board of Correction, including [continued illegal use of solitary confinement](#); revelations of [sexual abuse claims on Rikers spanning decades](#); and recent disclosure of [DOC officers "deadlocking" people with severe mental health needs](#). Strong oversight is crucial. BOC needs more staff to fulfill its mandate, but the Mayor proposes [reducing their staff from 35 to 30 positions, and cutting BOC's budget by \\$210,418 \(5%\)](#).

⁷ "Successful Reentry: Exploring Funding Models to Support Rehabilitation, Reduce Recidivism." National Conference of State Legislatures, Updated June 21, 2023.
<https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/the-importance-of-funding-reentry-programs>.

In order to follow through on the legal and moral obligation to Close Rikers, City Council must secure a budget that will improve community safety and reduce our City's overreliance on incarceration. It's time to use our precious resources to fund the things that work.

Priorities for this year's budget to advance the closure of Rikers:

- **Allocate at least an additional \$39.8M to meet housing and mental health needs,** and fulfill commitments in the Close Rikers plan, including:
 - Building on the City Council's investment last year, the administration must appropriate **\$4.8 million more in annual funding for [Justice Involved Supportive Housing](#)**, and reissue the RFP for 380 new units with service funding levels in line with those of similar supportive housing programs. This will enable the City to deliver on the Close Rikers Points of Agreement to expand JISH to 500 units.
 - **Allocate \$22M more to create 15 more [Intensive Mobile Treatment](#) teams.** The waitlist to access this evidence-based program is over 400 people.
 - **Allocate \$7M more to create more [Forensic Assertive Community Treatment](#) teams** and cut the long wait times (average of 6 to 12 months) to access this service.
 - **Allocate \$6M more to open four new crisis respite centers,** in compliance with Local Law 118-2023.
- **Fully restore cuts to the Office of Criminal Justice** for ATI (\$3.8M) and reentry (\$8M) programs. The budget should also go further, and increase discretionary funding for alternatives to incarceration (ATIs) by \$2.4 million to enhance and support the scaling of ATIs citywide as requested by the [ATI/Reentry Coalition](#).
- **Fully restore cuts to the Board of Correction and increase their headcount** to at least 1% of the number of people in DOC custody.⁸ The [preliminary budget](#) proposes \$210k in cuts and 5 fewer staff positions at BOC, when more oversight of the jails on Rikers is sorely needed, not less. Establishing a minimum budget linked to the number of people in custody would add 37 BOC staff positions (versus the preliminary budget), but would add only \$4.5M to the overall expense budget.⁹
- **Eliminate vacancies for DOC uniformed staff.**
 - The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers, but as of January 1, 2025 they employed [5,908 and 1,152 positions were vacant](#).¹⁰ DOC has not made a plan to rightsize this agency in alignment with reducing the number of people in jail and closing Rikers. By eliminating uniformed vacancies, DOC could realize cost **savings of \$149.6M annually**.¹¹

⁸ Other oversight agencies [like the CCRB](#) have minimum budgets linked to the size of the agency they oversee.

⁹ The FY2026 projected budget allocates \$3.6M to BOC, for 30 staff; 67 staff would constitute 1% of the currently jail population (6,7000 people)

¹⁰ Per Independent Budget Office

¹¹ Based on \$129,897 per officer, as [calculated by the Vera Institute](#).

- **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.¹²

3. Youth Represent: Critical Services for Youth

With support from the New York City Council through the Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative and the Discharge Planning Initiative, Youth Represent provides reentry legal services for young people in their own communities. We are deliberate in serving Black, Latiné, Indigenous, and other youth of color who otherwise would not have access to legal services, while still prioritizing those with criminal legal system involvement. We have also expanded our age range from 24 and under to youth 26 and under. This is in response to growing research that shows our brains continue to develop into the mid-twenties, and addresses the very practical reality that our partner organizations often welcome participants over the age of 24.

We focus on young people living within New York City's five boroughs and are committed to providing inclusive and gender-affirming services to all youth. In 2024, 88% of our clients are people of color, including 49% Black, 26% Latinx, 6% multiracial, and 7% Asian. Our clients have an average age of 23, with nearly 20% being non-U.S. citizens and another 20% living in subsidized housing. Alarming, only 10% are employed full-time, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive support. These statistics highlight the significant barriers our youth face in achieving stability and self-sufficiency, emphasizing the critical role Youth Represent plays in empowering marginalized young people to overcome systemic challenges and build brighter futures.

Youth Represent: City Council Criminal Justice Programs Initiative Support

City Council funding, through the **Innovative Criminal Justice Programs Initiative** and the **Discharge Planning Initiative**, has allowed us to provide critical legal services and mental health services for youth. This year we have requested an additional \$50,000—for a total request of \$125,000—which would allow us to increase our support for young people under the funding by 50% and respond to the already overwhelming demand we are seeing for our legal and mental health services in neighborhoods with the highest needs level. We hope that you will renew and expand funding for Youth Represent and that you will do so in the context of a just budget—investing in the full range of services and supports that young people and families rely on.

We thank the Council for considering this testimony and for committing to bettering the futures of young people in New York City.

¹² “Departmental Estimates - Fiscal Year 2026.” Offices of Management and Budget, the City of New York, January 2025. https://a860-gpp.nyc.gov/concern/nyc_government_publications/pz50h083g.

Appendix

A. Spoken Testimony of Jalyll Wright

Wassup ya I'm Jalyll better known as Jah. I am a Youth Mentor & leader from Youth Justice Network and I also just became a Youth Committee member at Youth Represent. Additionally I am a graduate of the Arches program at YJN which I completed after I came home on bail. I've struggled, bled sweat, prayed & cried to get where I'm at today. If it wasn't for the support, love & faith from my people believing in me I wouldn't be where i'm at today, before Arches & Youth Represent I didn't have any opportunities. I didn't know my rights, didn't know my worth or my purpose. The problem is we're poorly educated on life. We are so stuck on survival that we don't know how to live normally. That's how it is for most young men like me but it shouldn't be like that.

\The problems that we're seeing today in my community are lack of education, lack of support, the environment youth come from, poverty, and racial profiling. All these things lead youth to jail. We put too much money into detention centers and jail for youth. We fix this program by investing in the youth's future and listening to what we have to say. The city can do that by passing a budget that funds more programs. Programs that actually work and that young people like myself actually want to see. Programs that we need to invest in that fix the problem are boxing programs, artistic programs, mental health programs, political education and business programs.

Another way to fix the issues we face is investing in more organizations that do know your rights training. This is crucial because when young people know their rights, they can defend themselves in situations where they haven't done anything wrong but are being profiled based on their appearance, skin tone, how they dress, how they walk.

Where I'm from does not define who I am but where I'm from made me who I am today. That's the same for a lot of other young people like me in New York. They are worthy of support just like me, not incarceration. Thank you for listening.

B. Spoken Testimony of Glen Williams

My name is Glen Williams, I am 25 years old. I grew up in the Bronx with a single mother with 8 siblings. Growing up was not easy and while I tried to help take care of my siblings, there were times when I was unable to stay at my house. I had to constantly overcome obstacles to preserve myself for better things. I was always taught to be polite and treat others with dignity. But like many young men in this city, I found myself caught in the system, facing consequences for mistakes I made in my youth.

When I was 20 years old, I was sentenced to three years of probation after serving 45 days for a misdemeanor conviction. The harsh reality of the NYC court system and the probation process easily pushed me further into a life of frustration and failure. It hurt

me mentally, physically, and made me all around discouraged. Between being denied by employers, being homeless, and living in fear of being arrested again, I felt defeated.

The extended probation kept me in a state of constant stress and fear that I could easily be brought back behind bars. I had to manage not falling backwards in society, and I constantly grappled with the difficulty of not being able to get a job because of my record. For three years, I was rejected from every employer I applied to except 2 jobs. The frustration of being denied, over and over again, chipped away at my sense of self-worth, made me feel discouraged, and messed with my character.

Despite successfully completing my sentence, I continued to have encounters with the police, in which they would use excessive force against me. I have both experienced first hand and witnessed how the police are overly aggressive with black men that look like me and how they treat us badly in our own neighborhoods by physically and sexually harassing us and then claiming it is for their job.

What helped me move forward and past involvement with the criminal justice system was my involvement in numerous programs and resources that have changed my perspective. These re-entry programs and resources include programs like Youth Wrap, the Health People, Bronx Connect, Youth Represent, and Drive Change, which were all life changing for me. The programs I named above helped me get different certificates, such as my OSHA license, food handlers license, and connected to therapy, food pantries, and financial support. These programs eased the stress of everyday survival. The programs connected me to stipend programs that paid me and taught me how to properly interview at a job and have job placement services, as well as start having an income.

Therapy helped me overcome the mental health challenges I was dealing with and even ones I did not realize I was dealing with due to my involvement in the criminal justice system and abuse I endured growing up from my family. Health People, Youth Represent, and RiseBoro have provided me with mentorship and social worker support that has helped me learn how to make better choices and conduct myself in certain situations.

In addition to programs needing more funding, there needs to be more resources for supportive housing. More recently, as I was living in the shelter system in NYC, I often had interactions with the police simply because I was residing at a shelter or because I would have to carry my belongings with me at all times. This would result in me getting pulled back into the system and interrupt the progress I was making in building my life.

It's not just about the probation, itself. It was about the way the jail systems and corrections facilities seemed to trap me in a cycle where the consequences felt disproportionate to my actions even after probation. I am living proof that funding programs can help people avoid the system, because once I was connected to

programming I began thriving while continuing to fight the uphill battle I continue to face due to my single conviction from when I was a young adult.

I'm living proof that the focus should be less on harsh sentences and more on rehabilitation and opportunities to reintegrate into society. The idea that increased funding can go towards additional police forces and correctional agencies only perpetrates this endless cycle of punishment. Young people should not have to get arrested and be on probation to get access to the resources and opportunities they need. Investing in people, through the programs that help create real opportunities to turn lives around is crucial and should be the main focus. I think the police, probation, and prison systems are overfunded and that only sustains the problem. Instead money should be redirected to programs that provide real tangible support, guidance, and give me, and others, a chance for a future. Endless punishment for young people needs to end and access to programming is crucial to that.

Thank you.



ALICIA VAICHUNAS FOR CITY COUNCIL • 65-02 HULL AVENUE, MASPETH, NY 11378 • (347) 558-3720 • ALICIAVFORNYC@GMAIL.COM

March 7, 2025

**Testimony of Alicia Vaichunas
Before the New York City Council Committee on Criminal Justice
Hearing on the Preliminary Budget**

Dear Chair Rivera and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on the 2025 Preliminary Budget. As a civic leader and candidate for City Council, I want to express my strong support for the hardworking men and women serving in the Department of Correction (DOC) and the Department of Probation (DOP) — two agencies that are absolutely vital to public safety but are consistently overlooked and underfunded.

This budget must reflect a serious commitment to increased staffing, safer working conditions, pay parity, and common-sense policies that protect both officers and the individuals in their care.

Department of Correction — Staffing, Safety, and Accountability

End Triple Tours — Fully Fund Staffing

Correction officers are regularly forced to work **triple tours**, spending 24 hours or more on duty without rest. This is unacceptable — not only for the officers' health and well-being, but for the overall safety and stability of our jails. The City must fully fund staffing levels to ensure jails are appropriately staffed at all times. Ending forced triple tours is a fundamental matter of safety, fairness, and respect for correction officers.

Separate Gangs — Restore Punitive Segregation

The violence inside city jails is out of control, and much of that stems from housing gang members with non-affiliated inmates and the removal of punitive segregation as a disciplinary tool. There must be a return to segregating gang members to limit the spread of violence, protect both officers and inmates, and maintain order.

Further, punitive segregation must be reinstated for those who assault officers or fellow inmates. There must be meaningful consequences for violent behavior inside our jails. Officers cannot maintain control if they are asked to operate under conditions where violence goes unchecked, and accountability is non-existent.

Rikers Island — Don't Close It, Rebuild It

The plan to close Rikers Island is a costly and misguided mistake. The true cost of closing Rikers and building borough-based jails is now estimated to be billions more than initially projected — and that number will only climb.

Instead of spending astronomical sums on borough jails that no community wants, the City should invest in modernizing and rebuilding Rikers Island itself. Rikers is isolated, secure, and purpose-built for corrections — exactly the type of facility needed to safely house the city's jail population.

Borough jails are a disaster in the making — logistically, operationally, and politically. They force jails into densely populated neighborhoods, over the objections of local residents, and do nothing to address the root causes of violence and dysfunction inside the system.

Unions Representing Correction Staff

The voices of those who work on the front lines must be heard in this process — including the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association (COBA), the Correction Captains' Association (CCA), and the Assistant Deputy Wardens and Deputy Wardens Association (ADWA).

These unions have repeatedly warned about unsafe staffing levels, dangerous policies, and the consequences of ignoring their concerns.

They have been proven right — and this budget must finally reflect the respect and resources their members deserve.

Department of Probation — Pay Parity, Safety, and Fairness

While correction officers work inside the jails, probation officers work out in the community, often supervising the very same individuals after they are released. These officers are critical to public safety, yet they are underpaid, undervalued, and exposed to serious danger in the field.

Despite working with violent offenders and gang members — often in high-crime neighborhoods and unpredictable situations — probation officers earn significantly less than their counterparts in other law enforcement agencies. This is unacceptable. Pay parity must be a priority in this budget.

Enhance Safety Protections for Probation Officers

Probation officers deserve better safety tools, training, and equipment to protect themselves when conducting home visits and fieldwork. They should have access to self-defense training, safer staffing ratios in the field, and clear protocols for escalating dangerous situations.

Support the United Probation Officers Association (UPOA)

The United Probation Officers Association (UPOA) has tirelessly advocated for its members, pushing for pay parity, better safety protections, and fair treatment. Like the corrections unions, their voices must be central to this budget process. Public safety starts with supporting the public servants who make it possible.

The Real Public Safety Agenda

Public safety is more than a slogan — it starts by standing with the men and women who work in our jails and in our communities every single day.

That means:

- Ending triple tours and fully staffing DOC.
- Restoring punitive segregation and separating gangs.
- Rebuilding Rikers, not closing it.
- Pay parity and safety for probation officers.
- Listening to COBA, CCA, ADWA, and UPOA — the experts who do the work.

This is the real public safety agenda, and it's time for the City Council to make it a reality in the 2025 budget.

Conclusion

As a civic leader and candidate for City Council, I urge this committee to prioritize public safety professionals in this budget. Respect means fair pay, safe working conditions, and policies that actually work—not political experiments that make everyone less safe.

Thank you for your attention and your commitment to these critical public servants.

Sincerely,



Alicia Vaichunas
Civic Leader and Candidate for Council District 30

Cc: Benny Boscio, Jr., President, Correction Officers Benevolent Association (COBA)
Paul J. Idlett, President, Correction Captains' Association (CCA)
Joseph Russo, President, Assistant Deputy Wardens, Deputy Wardens Association (ADWA)
Dalvanie K. Powell, President, United Probation Officers Association (UPOA)

From: [Aarushi Agni](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 12:14:17 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Aarushi Agni, and I am a writer, actor and teacher in the Lower East Side and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution, discomfort and irritation.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of

taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Aarushi Agni

Writer, Singer, Comic, Actor, Educator, *she/they*
aarushiagni.com

My solo show is in the New York City Fringe Festival!

[Come see or stream](#) *EMOJI: The Hieroglyphs of Our Time, or how I learned to stop worrying and send the risky text* ☐ on April 5th, 10th, 18th, 19th.

Watch a [video](#) about the show here.

Find out more ways to support the show [here](#).

From: [Adam O](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Opposition the Downtown Jail
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 8:00:47 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Adam Oestreich, I am a 52 year old lifelong New Yorker and current resident of Tribeca, right on the border of Chinatown, for the past 13 years. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am beyond deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the entire Riker's Island fiasco and more specifically, the monstrously disproportionate Manhattan borough-based jail project in our neighborhood. In addition, this boondoggle of a project is already more than 50% over budget with a current trajectory of costing at least three times the original estimate. New York City cannot afford this budget black hole project that will drain our City's resources for the decades to come; as we have already been cutting public library hours to help offset our current budget woes.

Chinatown is one of New York City's most vulnerable communities, as nearly one-third of the residents live in poverty, has one of the largest elderly populations, and 94% of the businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome. In addition, the current plan will create a disproportionate behemoth that will wreck the skylines of Chinatown and Tribeca.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced the noise and air pollution from this construction and am concerned about the impact of the construction on local mom and pop businesses that I frequent in Chinatown.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-

imposed infrastructure projects that have disproportionately prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, fracture and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged nor addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown and surrounding communities, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, food and small business entrepreneurship, which three generations of my Family have happily supported. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival.

I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Adam Oestreich

From: [Adriana](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:41:53 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Adriana Kartanadi, and I am a community advocate in Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Adriana Kartanadi

Community Advocate



From: [Adrienne Chen](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:50:13 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Adrienne Chen and I am a resident on the Upper East Side and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. As a regular patron and visitor, I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic in the area and discussed business owners' concern over loss of income as a result.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- **Halt further construction** of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess

the current plan, budget, and timeline.

- **Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable** for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- Demand a **genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community**, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Adrienne

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ADRIENNE CHEN

From: [Alice Yang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:45:10 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Alice Yang, and I am a resident in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced the closing of many small businesses I grew up loving due to this.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1.

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

2.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Alice Yang

Welcome to Chinatown



From: [Amy Holz](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:50:11 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Amy Holz, and I am a community member in Manhattan and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. The ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project is detrimental to our neighborhood and communities.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. With one of the largest elderly populations in the city, nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, and 94% of businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain the local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have experienced poor communications from city agencies, noise and air pollution, and noticed decreased quality of life for the immediate residents and business owners.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for the indefinite future.

Sincerely,
Amy Holz

From: [Amy Li](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:57:25 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Amy Li, and I am a resident in Ridgewood, Queens, NY and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. I should know—I was born in the Lower East Side in the late 80s back when NYC (especially the LES) was ridden with crime and poverty. When my father came to NYC in the early 1980s, one of the first neighborhoods he lived in was Manhattan’s Chinatown, right on Mott Street. Chinatown is home to me.

Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced how much Chinatown has changed over the years, especially due to Covid. Small businesses are the lifeblood of Chinatown and due to Covid, a lot of them are gone now. Gentrification of the neighborhood has shifted its demographics. What used to be an ethnic enclave—a safe space for newcomers, is now a hotbed of empty “art galleries”, generic coffee shops, and rising rents from luxury lofts sprouting everywhere. This is pushing out long time residents.

Historically, Chinatowns from across the country have endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects (like casinos and sports arenas) that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—**threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city.** The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been

meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Amy Li
Artist/Photographer

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 8:42:48 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Andrea Lu, a community advocate, and I am submitting written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project in our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I see a loss of foot traffic with more noise and air pollution, and a lack of communication from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Andrea Lu



From: [Lita Gene](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 1:54:38 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Angelita Reyes, and I am a resident in Midwood and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced a drastic increase in noise pollution while trying to enjoy the local shops in Chinatown.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing

local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Angelita Reyes

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Brooklyn, NY 11230

From: [anna tang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 11:40:34 PM

[REDACTED]

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Anna Tang, and I am a community advocate for Chinatown. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City—nearly 1/3 of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments. The proposed jail will only add to the economic, social, and environmental struggles we already face.

The ongoing demolition has already devastated businesses and residents. The air is filled with dust and noise, small businesses are disappearing, and many non-English-speaking residents receive little communication from the City. As someone who moved to New York from DC nearly 14 years ago, Chinatown has always been my refuge—a place to find familiarity, culture, and community. I've supported organizations like Welcome to Chinatown and Heart of Dinner because our elders deserve care and respect. To build a massive jail in a neighborhood already fighting for survival is not just unfair—it's heartbreaking.

For generations, Chinatown has been burdened with jails and city-imposed infrastructure that prioritize institutional interests over community well-being. This project threatens to push out businesses, drive down property values, and further isolate Chinatown. Our community has repeatedly voiced opposition, yet we continue to be ignored.

If the City is truly committed to justice, it must invest in what actually builds public safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic support. Chinatown deserves better. Our elders, families, and small businesses deserve better. It's time for the City to


listen and take meaningful action to protect, not destroy, one of New York's most historic and culturally rich neighborhoods.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Anna Tang
Founder, [Cố + Lên](#)



From: [Anthony N Don](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:53:33 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Anthony Don, and I am a Chinese American with family in Manhattan's Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, with one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of small family-owned businesses that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced air pollution and lack of accountability from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and

require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Thanks,
Anthony N Don

From: [Audrey Laude](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project ;
Hearing Date: March 7, 2025; Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget; Hearing Committee: Criminal Justice
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:49:50 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Audrey Laude, and I'm a resident of Lower Manhattan and a volunteer with Welcome to Chinatown. I'm writing to you today to share my concerns about the Manhattan borough-based jail project and its ongoing impact on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is a community that holds so much history, resilience, and culture. Nearly one-third of our residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned shops that are the heart and soul of our local economy. The proposed jail, especially given its enormous scale, is not just another city project—it's something that will change the fabric of our neighborhood in ways that we cannot afford.

Chinatown has always been an important part of my family's life. When my grandparents moved to NYC to help raise me, they were isolated in a new country, not knowing the language and without any friends. Their one bright spot was their weekly trips to Chinatown, where they could buy vegetables, eat meals, and feel understood.

It struck me how Chinatown has played a similar role for me, two generations later, though for different reasons. Despite growing up in the US, being surrounded by the smells, sounds, and language of Chinatown has helped me feel connected to my heritage and allowed me to reclaim a part of me that felt I had to hide while growing up in a predominantly white school system. It's comforting to walk into grocery stores and order foods I ate growing up, foods whose names I only know in Chinese. I'm sure many New Yorkers can relate. I think this cultural richness is part of what makes New York City one of the greatest cities in the world, and is worth fighting for. Chinatown has been a grounding anchor for my grandparents and me at different points in our lives, and I want to help care for its magic, preserve the history of the people who came before us, and share it with the generations to come. To do so, it is critical that we listen to community members, leaders, and businesses when making decisions that will have a massive and irreparable impact on the community for decades.

The ongoing construction of the jail has already caused real, visible damage to our community. I've seen it firsthand—the loss of foot traffic, the noise, the pollution, and the toll it's taken on our small businesses and elderly residents. For so many, it's a daily struggle, and it feels like the City is not listening to the needs and requests of its residents. This isn't just an inconvenience; it's a direct threat to the survival of Chinatown as we know it. It's a threat to the generations of people who have invested their lives into building this community and to the families that still depend on the small businesses that are being pushed to the brink.

Chinatown has already dealt with enough jails and city-imposed infrastructure that have prioritized institutional interests over the well-being of the people who actually live here. But the size and scale of this project make it far more disruptive and dangerous. It will displace businesses, drive down property values, and isolate our neighborhood even further from the rest of the city. Community leaders have consistently raised their concerns, but we feel that our voices have not been heard, and our concerns have been brushed aside.

If the City is truly committed to justice, it must recognize that policies that disproportionately harm immigrant communities like Chinatown are unjust. Instead of pouring billions of taxpayer dollars into expanding the carceral system, we need to invest in services that actually promote safety and well-being—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic opportunities that help our community thrive.

This project is too big and too impactful to be decided without real collaboration with the people who will be most affected by it. Chinatown needs to be part of this conversation in a meaningful way—not just as a bystander but as a partner in shaping what happens next.

That's why I'm asking the Committee to take these actions:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and entrepreneurial spirit. Instead of pushing us out, we should be investing in the future of the neighborhood, supporting the businesses, families, and individuals who have made it what it is. I truly appreciate your time and consideration, and I hope you will take a step back and reconsider the City's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a vibrant and thriving community for years to come.

Sincerely,
Audrey Laude

From: [Austin Yoder](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:51:33 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025

Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Austin Yoder, and I am a resident, musician, and community member in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. As someone who lives in close proximity to Sunset Park, I have met and interacted with many former Chinatown residents who have been priced out and/or forced to leave due to the hostile and chaotic environment this construction and demolition has done to the neighborhood they once loved.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of

taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Austin Yoder

NYC Resident (zip code 11209)

[REDACTED]

From: [BARRY W LEE](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concern for Future of NYC Chinatown
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 7:27:40 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Barry Lee and my family are residents and family members from the Hok Shan region of Canton are members of our community based association in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. My mother is 93 years old and parts of the neighborhood has suffered due to the construction. Family members travel from parts of NYC to come to the association. We have personally experienced noise and air pollution, traffic and ability to freely walk without barricades and detours Members are elderly and travel to/from subway stations to Mott street is difficult

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health

services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Barry Lee
Hok San Association

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Belinda Chan](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:36:02 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Belinda Chan, and I am a community advocate in Midtown East. I am submitting this written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate the economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents, including myself. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution, public health concerns, and witnessed loss or closing of business.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- * Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- * Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- * Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local

voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Belinda Chan

--

Belinda Chan

fivevdesign.com



belinda@fivevdesign.com

From: [Bernice Pfluger](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:38:09 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Bernice Pfluger, and I am a business owner in Manhattan Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, less tourists visiting, noise, and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Bernice Pfluger

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Scope & Size of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail/Prison Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 9:02:48 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Brynn, a long-time resident of NYC, and I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am extremely concerned about the ongoing & future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project that will hurt hundreds of Asian American residents in Chinatown.

Chinatown is one of the top most vulnerable communities in New York City with nearly one-third of residents living in poverty. We have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that the community is already struggling to overcome. It also is very irrational and plain bizarre to place a jail in such a high-traffic and historical area, a place where many locals young and old thrive in and support NYC economically. Why would you take that away? Is the profit from the prison really going to help you or your soul as you represent the people who voted you in?

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced extreme foot traffic and danger from overcrowding, as well as large debris during high winds affecting storefronts and increasing physical illness.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails, prisons and other unfair city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process. Out of all the places in Manhattan or NYC in general, it is a shocking decision to even put a dreadful project in the heart of Lower Manhattan out of all the areas in upstate NY or other states that have greater real estate to consider if this jail is actually needed.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions

of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be sincerely investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival and endangers New Yorkers around the area. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Brynn Sy

From: [Cadence Tan](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 3:22:12 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Cadence, and I am a resident and worker in Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced a growing fear of declining foot traffic, as fewer visitors are coming to the area, making it harder for businesses to survive. With legacy businesses already struggling due to a lack of tourism, the added disruption from construction only accelerates their closures. Seeing these longtime establishments shut down is deeply concerning, as they are integral to Chinatown's cultural and economic fabric.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Cadence Tan (she/her/hers)

Spring 2025 Intern

Welcome to Chinatown Inc.

The Hub | 115 Bowery New York NY 10002

Website | www.welcometochinatown.com

Store | [Made in Chinatown](http://MadeinChinatown.com)

Explore | MEETCHINATOWN.com

From: [catherine sansarricq](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:19:21 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Catherine Sansarricq, and I am a resident in Flushing Queens who frequents Chinatown in NYC, and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, noise pollution, lowered air quality affecting my respiratory health.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Catherine Sansaricq

Constituent

From: [Charis Li](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 1:26:20 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025

Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing

Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Charis Li, and I am a parent of a student at P.S. 130M. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. My son has personally experienced noise and air pollution when he was in Chung Park Daycare last year.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Charis Li

From: [Christian Schwartz](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Cc: [District1](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:16:53 AM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Christian Schwartz, and I am a resident, public school parent, and small business owner in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. Many of these businesses are still working to overcome the economic blow of the Covid pandemic. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community has been struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. My family has been affected by construction noise and dust, and I have stopped frequenting businesses on Baxter St below Canal because of the mess on that block. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process. Mayor Adams paid lip service to cancelling this project during his campaign, before claiming he never said anything of the sort.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures, particularly with the businesses on Baxter Street and the Chung Pak senior housing.
- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Sincerely,
Christian Schwartz
cs@christianschwartz.com

Christian Schwartz
Schwartzco Inc.
[REDACTED]
New York, New York 10002

[REDACTED]

cs@christianschwartz.com

[https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://www.commercialtype.com_!!Pe07IN5AjA!Ue4DzgvMY_Dh-W9A66mDYXsxT_YYceiI5sXluWpiilmMoqP8QHH_FnQku4-RGOmBMqM0cSMYchH8whKz2VHmiQpOOQ\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://www.commercialtype.com_!!Pe07IN5AjA!Ue4DzgvMY_Dh-W9A66mDYXsxT_YYceiI5sXluWpiilmMoqP8QHH_FnQku4-RGOmBMqM0cSMYchH8whKz2VHmiQpOOQ$)

From: [Christina Chan](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:56:25 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Christina Chan, and I am a born-and-raised New Yorker and a resident of Manhattan's Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most culturally vibrant and vulnerable communities in New York City. Close to one-third of residents live in poverty, with one of the largest elderly populations in the city, while 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction has already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced extreme noise and air pollution, a decrease in pedestrian traffic and loss of small businesses that not only serve as a space for commerce, but act as hubs of community exchange and connection.

Chinatown has experienced city-imposed infrastructure projects again and again. This borough-based jail is yet another project that **does not** prioritize the interests and needs of this community. It threatens not only the livelihood, but the soul of this neighborhood. It has and will continue to displace small businesses, decrease property values and further isolate our neighborhood and its residents from the rest of the city. The community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

The lack of transparency, communications and accountability from city agencies is disingenuous as it continues to pursue a jail project that has a scope of \$16 billion. This is

equivalent to the City's annual spending on 75,000 public school teachers— costs that could be invested in supportive and reparative community-based solutions over ones that intend to perpetuate punitive and carceral structures. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- **Immediately halt further construction** of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for **ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.**
- Demand a **genuine engagement** process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. Over the past two and a half decades, it has endured countless threats that chip away at its soul and vibrancy. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. Policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours come at a cost to our future generations. Our families, neighbors and elders alike, cannot afford to lose a community that has been integral to not only New York City but myself and countless others who live, grow up and remain connected to Chinatown today.

I strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Christina Chan

From: [Christine Liang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 3:27:13 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Christine Liang, and I am a community advocate in Crown Heights and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution when walking on Bayard St.—the street where the proposed jail is going up.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Christine Liang

From: [Cindy Hwang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in opposition to the Manhattan borough-based jail facility
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:11:48 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Cindy Hwang — as a Housing Organizer for Cooper Square Committee and a member of Art Against Displacement, I spend a lot of time engaging community members in Chinatown and the Lower East Side. I'm submitting a written testimony for the Committee's FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing that took place on March 7, 2025. I'm deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail facility on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of our residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally witnessed the closure of neighboring businesses, as well as noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project — at its unprecedented scale — threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. **Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety:** affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and

require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future, not imposing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Cindy Hwang
Housing Organizer, Cooper Square Committee
Member, Art Against Displacement

--

Cindy Hwang / 黄欣蒂
Housing Organizer / 住房組織者
Cooper Square Committee
61 East 4th Street
New York, NY 10003
tel: 212-228-8210
coopersquare.org

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From: [Colette](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:42:01 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Colette, and I am a resident in Brooklyn and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced [describe specific harm: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, etc.].

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Colette

From: [Colleen Dalusong](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:44:26 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I am a student who has been living in Chinatown for the past 4 years and I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

I find it absurd that you are building this jail in such a family-oriented neighborhood, of all places. Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents, such as the noise and air pollution clouding the neighborhood, and the reduced foot traffic for businesses on Baxter Street.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours.

Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

From: [Connie](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:31:46 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Connie Lai, and I am a business owner, resident, and community advocate in Chinatown. I am submitting this testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice, which took place on March 7, 2025, to express my outrage at the ongoing and future devastation the Manhattan borough-based jail project is inflicting on our community.

The decision to force yet another jail into Chinatown—one of New York City’s most vulnerable neighborhoods—is not just reckless, it is a direct attack on a working-class immigrant community that has already borne more than its fair share of harmful city-imposed infrastructure projects. This project is nothing short of a betrayal, prioritizing bureaucracy over people’s livelihoods.

Chinatown is home to a population that struggles daily against systemic neglect. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the highest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. Yet, rather than investing in economic revitalization and social services, the city is choosing to further suffocate this neighborhood with a massive carceral expansion that will only deepen our struggles.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already wreaked havoc on businesses and residents, creating intolerable noise, pollution, and economic losses. I have personally experienced [describe specific harm: loss of foot traffic, property damage, unbearable air quality, lack of transparency from city agencies, etc.]. The city has offered little to no meaningful support or accountability for these damages, proving once again that our voices are being ignored.

Chinatown has endured decades of city neglect, displacement, and exploitation. This jail project is the latest and most egregious example of a government that refuses to listen to the very people it claims to serve. The community has loudly and repeatedly rejected this plan, yet city officials continue to bulldoze ahead—literally and figuratively—without regard for the irreversible harm they are causing.

This is not "justice." It is systemic violence against a historically marginalized community. If

the city truly believes in justice, it would invest in affordable housing, mental health resources, youth programs, and economic opportunities—not a prison that will further destabilize an already struggling neighborhood.

I demand that the Committee take immediate action to:

1. **Halt all further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail.** This project is an environmental, economic, and social disaster that must be stopped before it does irreversible damage.
2. **Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) fully accountable** for the harm they have already caused, and force them to implement real mitigation measures—not empty promises.
3. **Establish a real community engagement process** that centers the voices of Chinatown residents and business owners, rather than making decisions behind closed doors. The people who live and work here should not have to beg to be heard.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and entrepreneurship. But resilience does not mean we will tolerate being trampled on. It is unacceptable that the city is choosing to funnel billions into a project that will destroy livelihoods rather than investing in the well-being of its residents. I urge you to reverse course before it is too late.

This jail must not be built. Stop prioritizing prisons over people!

Connie Lai

C:

E:

**Testimony to the City Council Committees on Criminal Justice budget hearing
March 7, 2025
Delivered by Corinne Santiago-Conrad, Freedom Agenda**

Good afternoon, Chair Nurse and committee members, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Corinne Santiago-Conrad and I'm a member of Freedom Agenda and the Campaign to Close Rikers.

I've seen the mayor's budget proposal to spend \$2.87 billion on jail operations in FY2026 and as a New Yorker I'm not only surprised but disappointed, especially when we already the city who spends over \$500K to incarcerate one person on Rikers Island for a year. That's money that can be better used to invest in community resources like mental health, affordable housing, education etc. How are we planning to use this much money on Rikers when the city should be prioritizing decarceration so that Rikers Island can close by 2027, which is the law?

As a lifelong New Yorker, I have watched not only my own, but many communities offer nothing to their residents, especially to our youth, like community recreational centers, programs like P.A.L - even more so in communities where children are being raised by single working moms.

Unfortunately, my grandson who is on the spectrum and has disruptive mood dysregulation disorder was failed by this city repeatedly, starting from our school system and not getting the necessary resources that should come along with having an IEP. Our surrounding community also lacked many resources, particularly, mental health, which resulted in my grandson experiencing psychiatrist hospitalizations, arrests, and run ins with NYPD leading him to Rikers Island. New York City's largest DeFacto mental health institution for communities of people that look like me. Let me break down what "rehabilitation" looked like there - my grandson was beaten and abused by jail guards because of the state of his mental health, thus being constantly punished. Jail guards who have no schooling nor training to deal with people in our communities who may be experiencing mental health concerns. Right now more than half of the people sitting on Rikers have some sort of mental health diagnosis, this is also a number we watched grow under the Adams Administration.

Specifically, I would like to see an additional \$39.8 million to address housing and mental health needs. This includes: \$4.8 million more in annual funding for Justice Involved Supportive Housing; \$22 million to create 15 more Intensive Mobile Treatment teams; \$7 million to create more Forensic Assertive Community Treatment teams; and \$6 million to open four new crisis respite centers. We know that implementing the Close Rikers plan will require serious investments in mental health and in the communities that have been neglected. Let's start now.

I am truly rooting for City to do the right thing and pass a budget that provides care, not more criminalization

From: [Dante Comet](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony to OPPOSE the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:46:58 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Dante Comet, and I am a Co-Director for a volunteer-run organization fighting for racial and social justice. I am also a longtime worker based in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood and condemn the construction of it.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will **exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome**. We have been combatting encroaching construction and gentrification of the neighborhood for decades. **This is a community that I have grown up in and am committed to preserving and nurturing and I know I am not alone in this movement.**

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, and critique of the changing neighborhood at the local business I work out. **The common public, the people who fuel our economy, are clearly against the construction of the Mega Jail.**

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has **continuously voiced opposition to this jail**, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process. This is despite Chinatown being an integral part of New York City's economy and tourist industry.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected

toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Dante C (Co-Director)

--



AAJIL [Asian American Justice + Innovation Lab]

Website: <http://aajil.org>

Instagram: [@aajil_org](https://www.instagram.com/aajil_org)

Eventbrite: <https://tiny.cc/aajilevents>

Bookshop: <https://bookshop.org/shop/AAJILorg>

From: [David L](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan jail project- Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:21:26 AM

[REDACTED]

My name is David Leung and I own two restaurants in Chinatown. I was also born and raised in NYC, and lived in Chinatown when I was young.

This enormous jail is incredibly expensive, and contributes nothing to the Chinatown community. Not only that, but this jail does not belong in this location. It should be located on the fringes of a community, not in the middle of one.

The amount of money being spent on this overpriced and controversial project would be better spent on improving the infrastructure of the community!

Thank you for hearing my testimony!

David Leung

From: [Diana Shum](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:38:39 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Diana Shum, and I am a community member in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on my neighborhood.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Diana Shum



From: [Dong-Ping Wong](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:21:19 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Dong-Ping Wong and I am a business owner in Chinatown, Manhattan. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025.

I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

Beyond that the neighborhood is one of the last remaining ethnic enclaves in Manhattan. It is a truly special place, and not a dumping grounds for problems that the city does not know how to solve. The jail will exacerbate the destruction of a community generations in the making and foundational to New York City. No amount of trade-off financial contributions to institutions like MOCA or + POOL will change that.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Dong-Ping Wong
Founding Director

Food Architects
2 East Broadway #901
New York, NY 10038
O [646 783 0744](tel:6467830744)



food-arch.com
[@foodnewyork](https://www.instagram.com/foodnewyork)

From: [edward.cuccia](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:11:01 PM

Re: Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Edward J. Cuccia, and I am an attorney and a commercial tenant in the Chung Pak complex at 121 Walker Street. I am further a resident in the Little Italy/Chinatown neighborhood with a residence at 105 Mulberry Street. I am further a community activist as I am a member of the Chinatown Business Improvement District. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned and troubled about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on the neighborhoods of Little Italy/Chinatown.

It is without question that the ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on MY business as I am a commercial tenant in Chung Pak and on Me as a nearby resident of Little Italy/Chinatown. I have personally experienced significant harm. As a commercial tenant in the Chung Pak complex I have been severely affected by the terrible demolition noise, vibration and shaking. I have made many 311 complaints. The disruption has been so bad that I have had to move a significant proportion of my business out of Chung Pak and in fact I am being FORCED to fully move my office out of Chung Pak in the next month. I note again that I am being forced to move. I am only moving a few blocks and I will stay in the neighborhood. This is a very significant financial hardship to my business.

As both a business operator and a resident I have further been further harmed by the dust and pollution. I am concerned for my health and the health of my family.

I believe that Little Italy/Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. I fully agree that the proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

I further agree that our neighborhood has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace other businesses beside my own, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The community has continuously voiced opposition

to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

I further note that the prior city councilperson promised the tenants of Chung Pak 3 million dollars in funds to offset this clear and foreseeable harm. None of those monies have been distributed.

I urge the Committee to:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->1. <!--[endif]-->**Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.**

<!--[if !supportLists]-->2. <!--[endif]-->**Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.**

<!--[if !supportLists]-->3. <!--[endif]-->**Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.**

<!--[if !supportLists]-->4. <!--[endif]-->**Look into compensation for the Chung Pak tenants.**

Sincerely,
Edward J. Cuccia

121 Walker Street, NYC

212 966-7775/646 248-4290/edwardjucuccia@yahoo.com

Edward J. Cuccia, Esq.

[REDACTED]
New York, NY 10013

[REDACTED]

From: [Edwin Ma](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 10:26:18 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Edwin Ma, and I am a resident in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. Though I may not currently reside in Chinatown, I am a frequent visitor and have deep concerns about about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally seen the loss of foot traffic and business, noise and air pollution, and lack of communication from city agencies about what's going on.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process. We have already seen the potential harm the jail has already been causing to the once vibrant Chinatown community.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Edwin Ma

A person that cares

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Edwin Ma.

From: [Eleanor Wong](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 11:59:48 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Eleanor Wong, and I am a resident of Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Eleanor Wong

From: [Karl, Ellery](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Borough based prison project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:03:49 PM

[REDACTED]

Hello, please accept, acknowledge and hopefully act on my recommendation to further, thoroughly re examine this project! To me it is both undesirable financially and on its effects on a struggling neighborhood that has more important needs.

Reopen, re evaluate, assess and only then move forward, if appropriate, which I am not sure it is!

Thanks, Dr. Karl, [REDACTED], nyc resident.

From: [Emily Chao](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 6:38:56 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Emily Chao, and I am a recently graduated university student with deep ties to the Chinatown neighborhood and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

For my Mass Communication senior thesis project, I chose to focus on Chinatown--specifically looking for ways in which social media could be used most effectively to help small businesses in the neighborhood faced with challenge after challenge from the rise of anti-Asian hate crime post COVID-19 to the building of the mega jail. If you have the time, please take a look at even just the [conclusions](#) page of my project, in which many of the small business owners of Chinatown cited the mega jail as a major and imminent threat to (if not already affected) the survival of businesses that make up Chinatown, 94% of which are small businesses--something that represents the vigor and hopes of the American dream that has fueled the growth of the country and especially NYC.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally witnessed the demolition's noise and air pollution every time I visit my grandparents in the senior citizen building right next door. It was appalling when I heard about the cracking in the senior citizen building that occurred during the Tombs' demolition and furious that city agencies turn a blind eye to the harms of immigrant, ethnic communities and and nonetheless, elders.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. This doesn't only occur in Manhattan's Chinatown, but in nearly every Chinatown in North America, in which governments and real estate prioritize anything over these often low-income, immigrant, ethnic communities, doing everything they can to push those people out. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that

actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Emily Chao
Lifelong New Yorker



From: [Emily Cheng](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 12:23:48 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Emily Cheng, and I am a resident in Chinatown, NY and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced [describe specific harm: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, etc.].

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Emily Cheng

Best Regards, Emily Cheng Sent from my iPhone. Please excuse typos and brevity.

From: [Emily Tang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 7:16:40 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Emily Tang, and I am a resident in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

I am reaching out to speak up on behalf of the thousands of members of the Chinatown community that feel too powerless to make a difference.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I live on Hester St in Chinatown just minutes away from the jail site. I have personally witnessed the harm done to businesses on Baxter St—they have lost customers from reduced foot traffic and are struggling to stay afloat. Due to language and cultural barriers their voices are not being heard, but their suffering is visible.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Emily Tang

From: [Emma Arabia](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:35:43 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Emma, and I am a resident and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, etc

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

EMMA ARABIA

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:53:54 AM

[REDACTED]

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025

Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing

Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Emma, and I am a resident in Flushing and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am very concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will worsen economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced worsening air pollution and construction noise from the construction of this jail. Not to mention the detrimental effect it will have on the visitors who frequent Chinatown.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The

Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Emma, a concerned NY resident

From: [Eric Yu](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 8:53:50 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Eric Yu. I am a resident in FIDI, a candidate for City Council District #1, and a member of Community Board 1. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on Chinatown, and Lower Manhattan as a whole.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, with one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of the businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced excessive silica and other dust at this location.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it. *Rikers Island needs to remain open to meet NYC's unpredictable crime rates. The problems are the delays of the court system, and the management at the Dept of Corrections - not Rikers Island.*

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Cancel the Borough-Based Jail Plan

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Eric Yu



NY, NY 10038

From: [Erika Scelfo](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 3:18:10 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Erika, and I am a professional working in Chinatown. I am submitting this written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I write today to express deep concern about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on Chinatown.

Chinatown is one of New York City's most vulnerable communities. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, the neighborhood has one of the city's largest elderly populations, and 94% of businesses are small, family-owned establishments that are the backbone of the local economy. The proposed jail will only exacerbate the economic, social, and environmental burdens our community already struggles to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. Many businesses have seen a drastic decline in foot traffic, while residents—including seniors—are forced to endure relentless noise, dust, and disruptions with little to no communication from city agencies. These are not hypothetical concerns; they are the lived realities of a community that has long been marginalized in city planning decisions.

For decades, Chinatown has been treated as a site for city-imposed infrastructure projects that prioritize institutional interests over community well-being. This jail—unprecedented in scale—threatens to displace businesses, depress property values, and further isolate Chinatown from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has repeatedly voiced opposition, yet meaningful engagement has been absent from this process.

If the City is truly committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of spending billions of taxpayer dollars on carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected to investments that create real community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic initiatives that strengthen rather than displace neighborhoods.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for the environmental and economic harm already inflicted and require meaningful mitigation measures.
- Establish a genuine engagement process that prioritizes Chinatown's residents and small

businesses in decision-making, rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown DESERVES respect. The damage to local businesses and residents is undeniable. I ask you to stand with our community and take meaningful action now, before irreversible harm is done to one of New York's most vital cultural and economic districts. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Erika

From: [Gabriel Kolodny](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 5:40:37 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Gabriel Kolodny, and I am a resident of Chinatown, and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced air pollution, noise, and restriction in how can get to businesses in the area.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Kolodny



Sent from my iPhone

From: [Gene](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Chinatown Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 11:00:04 AM

Hi council members,

Instead of a long-winded copy-and-paste email that nobody reads, I am going to get straight to the point.

I am Gene Lui, a current resident of Chinatown.

We all know the harms that this Chinatown jail will inflict upon the community.

Can we just for once try to take something like this into consideration?

Can we, the residents, at least have some meaningful input into the matter?

Oh, and if the jail is such a boon to the neighborhood, then would you consider putting it in your neighborhood?

Thanks.

GL

From: [gerald lam](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Manhattan Jail
Date: Friday, March 7, 2025 4:18:50 PM

[REDACTED]

In reference to the "Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Hearing" (March 7, 2025), chaired by the Criminal Justice Committee:

I am writing to strongly support locating the proposed Borough-Based Jail (BBJ) for Manhattan at the existing Manhattan Detention Center on Park Row, instead of the original location of 124-125 White Street.

I am also highly supportive of repurposing the White Street lot to instead provide local Chinatown community members -- including its sizable, growing senior citizen population -- with affordable housing.

This pivot will save money and time, and will unlock much needed affordable housing for a vulnerable population.

Thank you!
gerald lam
[REDACTED]

From: [Grace Cheng](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 1:48:52 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

I have been going to Chinatown my entire life. In those 46 years I can see firsthand the differences in business activities from then until present day. Chinatown has been suffering economically since 9/11 and most recently the pandemic. Building this jail will just further exacerbate the issues. Please reconsider building this jail and listen to Chinatown residents and business owners.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Grace Cheng

[REDACTED]
New York, NY 10022

From: [Grace Gallagher](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 7:00:35 AM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Grace, and I am a resident in Sunnyside, NY and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, and lack of communication from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Grace Gallagher

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Grace Gallagher
Stevens Institute of Technology 2016, B.E. Mechanical Engineering

From: [Griffin Ong](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 8:00:27 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Griffin Ong and I am a community advocate Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Griffin Ong

Griffin Ong

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Griffin Ong.

From: [Michael S](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 4:53:10 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Guan South, and I am a resident of Brooklyn and frequent visitor to Chinatown.

I am concerned about the impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on a neighborhood that has deep importance to me and others in my life and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025.

The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that this underserved, lower income community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have brought harm on residents and businesses. I know residents of the area who have had to deal with issues from the construction. Dust and debris are getting into people's homes, nearby buildings are being damaged, and people living in the senior center next door are already more vulnerable than others to these impacts. Businesses are already experiencing the impact of less foot traffic and many similar businesses won't survive this harmful construction project.

This is another instance of city-imposed infrastructure projects that prioritize institutional interests and mass incarceration over the real needs of the community. However, the scale of this project in particular threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate this neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet their concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed.

If the City is committed to justice, it cannot also pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like Chinatown. As a child of a Chinese immigrant, I understand the impact these kinds of policies have. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to another jail, that money should be spent on services that are actually desperately needed by the community like affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift the neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and

require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

I appreciate your time and consideration of my concerns. This community has already had to deal with so much since COVID, from the loss of loved ones exacerbated by an ill prepared government to rampant hate crimes that persist to this day. Please do not add this harmful project to this city's legacy of treatment of its Chinese, immigrant, and low income population.

Sincerely,

Guan South

From: [Harry Trinh](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 9:36:59 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Harry Trinh, and I am a community member and nonprofit employee in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. **Through my work at the nonprofit org, I have personally seen the effects of the construction with senior residents at Chung Pak Center (physical concerns with the building, quality of life concerns with residents, Charles B Wang Medical practice had to stop operations in this building due to compromised working conditions due to the construction.) In addition, I have seen first hand the negative effects the construction has had on neighboring businesses on Baxter Street including one of Manhattan's oldest Vietnamese restaurants Pasteur Noodle and Grill. Foot traffic is way down + the street is less accessible both on foot and vehicle traffic.**

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies. I have personally witnessed at "Jail Design Forums" hosted by the City that the community's concerns were not listened to at all.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Harry Trinh
Head of Creative
Welcome to Chinatown



Harry Trinh || 鄭偉其
Experiential Graphic Designer
experienceharry.com

Re: Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Henry Ng, and I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I own and operate an architecture studio in Chinatown, and I have had a chance to review the contract during the window for public viewings. As an urbanist, resident and community advocate, I have deep concerns about the proposed design and how it will negatively impact the neighborhood I love.

Members of the committee will have heard of the staggering challenges already experienced by local residents and business owners from the ongoing demolition process. I offer testimony as a professional deeply committed to the urban vitality of the surrounding neighborhoods, particularly Chinatown. In my view, the proposed design is an urbanistic nightmare for the densely layered and historic fabric of Chinatown, SoHo and Tribeca, especially due to its overall bulk and height. The proposed base height is about 100-feet higher than the adjacent NY Criminal Court Building's base, completely dwarfing it. The proposed building covers 100% of the lot at 124-125 White Street, at about 72,000-sqf, which I believe may make it the single largest footprint of any building south of Canal Street. The replacement of White Street Plaza with an inhospitable covered arcade seriously degrades an important connection between Chinatown and neighborhoods to the west. Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable and beloved areas in all of Manhattan and is still recovering from multiple crises that threaten its very existence. Chinatowns all over North America, from Seattle to Washington DC, have succumbed to the negative impacts from ill-conceived mega scale urban projects. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has highlighted the urgent need to care for these fragile communities. Manhattan's Chinatown is one of the most historic and urgently need in public projects that promote growth and support the vulnerable population.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours.

Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. **Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.**
2. **Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.**
3. **Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.**

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Henry Ng, AIA

Principal, Ideas of Order Architecture

49 Elizabeth Street, 5th Floor

New York, NY 10013

From: [Huayu Ouyang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 7:35:21 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Huayu Ouyang, and I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced a lot of noise and air pollution around the construction site.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Huayu Ouyang

From: [Isabel Li](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:37:20 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Isabel Li and I am a community advocate in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Isabel Li

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Isabel Li



From: [J. Tang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 3:02:33 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is James Tang and I am a resident in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced disruption, restlessness, and fear from residents that live closer towards the area on possible dangers from the jail.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward

services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
James Tang

From: [Jamie Cheung](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerns about the Manhattan borough-based jail project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 4:59:08 PM
Attachments: [RSImage-818101.png](#)

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Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jamie Cheung, and I am an architectural designer from ARQUITECTONICA based in New York, as well as a community organizer. I am submitting a written testimony for **the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025.** I am extremely concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. **I have personally experienced my close friends and family's businesses being impacted from the terrible demolitions that caused structural damage to neighboring buildings. The people you are affecting are a majority of seniors and residents that have been living there for many years, and ones who may have barriers to speak out against this displacement.**

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan,

budget, and timeline.

2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. **I strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving, safe community for generations to come.**

Sincerely,

Jamie Cheung

Jamie Cheung

jcheung@arquitectonica.com
P +1 (212) 254 2700; ext. 2048

104 Fifth Avenue • 6th Floor
New York, New York 10011, United States

ARQUITECTONICA | Website | Social | vCard | AR0008779

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From: [Jason Wong](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 7:41:53 AM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,
My name is Jason Wong, and I am a resident of NYC and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project in Manhattan Chinatown.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I've already experienced less room to walk in a city that already caters to car owners, and the noise and air pollution is also terrible. Further, city agencies seem less than interested in communicating with residents about their concerns.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jason Wong
Senior Software Engineer/Collective Health

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [Jay Lue](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 4:53:51 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jay Lue, and I am a business owner in Chinatown and the Lower East Side. I am submitting this written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice, held on March 7, 2025, to express my deep concern about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our community.

Chinatown is one of New York City's most vulnerable neighborhoods. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the city's largest elderly populations, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain the local economy. The construction of this massive jail will only worsen the economic, social, and environmental challenges we are already struggling to overcome.

The demolition and construction have already caused significant harm to businesses and residents. I have personally experienced a drastic decline in foot traffic, as well as increased noise and air pollution. The disruption to the streetscape made it uninviting for pedestrians, ultimately forcing me to relocate my business. Chinatown is a cultural and economic hub, and what we need is investment in our community—not the imposition of a mega jail.

Historically, Chinatown has been burdened with city-imposed infrastructure projects that prioritize institutional interests over the well-being of our residents. This project, at an unprecedented scale, threatens to displace businesses, reduce property values, and further isolate our

neighborhood. Despite years of opposition from the Chinatown community, our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not implement policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars toward expanding the carceral system, those funds should be redirected to initiatives that truly enhance public safety—such as affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that strengthen rather than displace our community.

I urge the Committee to take the following actions:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the project's plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for the ongoing environmental and economic harm caused by this project and require mitigation measures.
3. Ensure a genuine community engagement process, prioritizing the voices of Chinatown residents and business owners rather than imposing top-down policies that disregard our needs.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future, not forcing a project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge the City to reevaluate its priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jay Lue

From: [Jean Ger](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 2:58:26 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jean Ger and I am a resident of New York. I am writing to submit a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025 to voice my concern regarding the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City, and **the proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our communities are already struggling to overcome.** The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents and will continue to cause severe harm to our communities **if you do not halt the jail project now.**

If the City is truly committed to justice, **you must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like the Chinatown community.**

Policies causing such harm regardless of intent are inherently unjust. Intent does not negate impact, and because our communities have put you on notice of the harm the Manhattan borough-based jail project will cause, moving forward with this project will demonstrate that the City is choosing to willfully cause harm to its residents.

Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, **those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety**—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic

investments **that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.**

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jean

--

Jean Ger

Pronouns: She/Her

From: [miette miette](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:19:41 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jean, and I am a resident in Nolita and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jean Kuo

From: jeff@canalsoundlight.com
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:16:23 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jeffrey Kwan, and I represent my family, who are a property (319 Canal, 385 Canal, 3 Mercer) and business owner as we have operated Canal Sound and Light at 319 Canal St since 1977. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of business and foot traffic, noise and air pollution from everyday life, and lack of communication from city agencies, etc. My parents also live in City Hall and their doctor is on Centre and Walker so they are constantly affected by the construction.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Best Regards,

Jeffrey Kwan

EVP

Jeff@CanalSoundLight.com



319 Canal Street, New York, NY 10013

Office 2129256575 x213

Mobile 9174785879

[@canalsoundlight](#) [@canalslpro](#)



From: [J. Bala](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:04:16 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jennifer Balacuit and I am a resident of Brooklyn with a long history of being a patron of Chinatown as a child of Chinese Filipino immigrants. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. In addition, I have personally witnessed violence enacted by the hands of law enforcement from their already ubiquitous presence in the area.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation

measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Balacuit
US Citizen and Local Resident

From: [Jennifer Johnson](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:42:27 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jennifer Johnson and I am a concerned resident of Tribeca and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply saddened by and very concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on my neighborhood.

Our co-op relies on our ground floor renter to pay for many of our expenses. As you know, many art galleries, including the one we are now grateful to be able to rent to, have moved into Tribeca and are providing many jobs as well as bringing a wide array of visitors to our neighborhood. I fear that this new development will make our neighborhood less appealing to galleries and visitors alike.

I have watched the demolition of the previous buildings with a heavy heart and can barely think about the impact the proposed, oversized building will have on all of us. The shadow it will cast for many years to come will darken our neighborhoods. And yet, this pales in comparison to the impacts it will have on our less fortunate neighbors.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced difficulties due to this project in the form of noise, air quality issues and loss of accessibility from one part of my neighborhood to others.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown and Tribeca have always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown and Tribeca remain a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Johnson

New York, NY 10013

From: [Jess](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:38:01 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025 as I am really worried about the Manhattan borough-based jail project.

The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome as Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City.

This project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

We should be investing in Chinatown's future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jessica Li

From: [Jessica Zhao](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 8:28:27 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jessica Zhao, and I am a resident in the Lower East Side and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I care deeply about the long-term health of New York City's iconic Chinatown and its community, which this jail project threatens.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jessica Zhao
Concerned Resident

[REDACTED]

From: [Jess](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 6:00:10 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jessie Wu, and I am a resident in Chinatown, Manhattan and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. The loss of foot traffic has caused multiple Chinatown institutions to either close or move out of the neighborhood. These establishments are what define Chinatown as a tourist destination. If they are gone, the people and the history will follow.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation

measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Jessie

From: [Jesus Menacho](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:05:34 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jesús, and I am a resident in LES/Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, and more air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those

resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jesús M.

From: [Joni Man-Yi Cheung](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:49:34 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Joni Cheung, and I am an artist and professor at Concordia University (Montréal) and NSCAD University (Halifax) and frequent visitor of NYC's Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities not only in New York City. Chinatown communities are historically and still one of the most uncared for spaces in countries across the world. In NYC's Chinatown, nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, has one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain the local economy. The proposed jail **will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.**

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have heard of first hand experiences from businesses and people who live in the neighborhood: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, and complete lack of transparent communication and care from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns are not being meaningfully acknowledged or addressed.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating limitless billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, accessible and affordable education, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge you to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and

require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

~  Joni 

--

Snack Witch aka Joni Cheung

Instagram: [@snackwitch](https://www.instagram.com/snackwitch)
Website: <https://www.snackwitch.ca/>
Email: jonicheung.studio@gmail.com

Master of Fine Arts, Studio Arts - Sculpture and Ceramics Concentration, 2023
Concordia University
Tiohtiá:ke | Mooniyang

Bachelor of Fine Arts with Distinction, Major in Visual Art, 2018
School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University
Unceded Coast Salish territories

From: [Joselyn Cruz](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Chinatown Jail
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:34:09 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Joselyn Cruz, and I have been a resident of Tribeca, on the border of Chinatown, for the past 13 years. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced the noise and air pollution from this construction and am concerned about the impact of the construction on local mom and pop businesses that I frequent in Chinatown. Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than

displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Joselyn Cruz

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted signature block]

From: [jah.elyse.sayers](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:20:24 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Jourdan Sayers, and I am a Harlem-based educator, Washington Heights resident, and Midtown-based doctoral student, and I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, Chinatown has one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of Chinatown businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that the community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic and noise pollution as a visitor to the neighborhood.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate the neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet their concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

I have also seen the way that deciding on a location pits neighborhoods against each other. None of our neighborhoods need for \$3.8 million to go toward jails.

New York needs resources for social services, education, housing, and social infrastructures like libraries and parks. It will be taxpayers shouldering the eventual payback of the general obligation bonds, and we deserve investment that actually meets our communities' needs.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like Chinatown. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Jourdan Sayers

PhD Candidate | Earth & Environmental Sciences | The Graduate Center,
CUNY

Adjunct Lecturer | Spitzer School of Architecture | The City College of New
York, CUNY

From: [Joyce Chau](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 7:20:25 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Joyce Chau, and I am a concerned New Yorker in Rego Park and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution when traveling to Chinatown Manhattan.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours.

Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come. Again, the money should be used for human services or more housing for seniors.

Sincerely,

Joyce Chau

From: [Juliette Campbell](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] please halt the chinatown mega jail!
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 12:24:43 AM

dear members of the committee on criminal justice,

my name is juliette campbell, and i'm a business owner and resident of grand street for 26 years. i'm asking you to please reconsider the massive impact the jail will have on the residents and community of chinatown, and stop further construction. why will the jail be in chinatown when there are already jails there? because the people of chinatown are not as affluent and powerful as those in other neighborhoods? the chinatown community as well as other communities in the vicinity, have continuously voiced opposition to this jail, and yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed.

many residents and businesses in chinatown were hit inordinately hard during covid, and the population is still reeling from the racism and financial duress the community that hit chinatown during that time. this jail will impact so many things about life there, and displace so many residents and businesses. before you continue to build the largest jail in the country, please think about the impact on on this already vulnerable community.

sincerely,
juliette campbell

Testimony to the City Council Criminal Justice Committee, Preliminary Budget Hearing
March 7, 2025

Submitted by Justyna Rzewinski, former clinical supervisor and associate director of mental health at Rikers Island

Chair Nurse and Council Members,

I submit this testimony as a professional who has worked on the frontlines of our criminal justice system but as a witness—someone who has seen, firsthand, the inhumane conditions endured by some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

At Rikers Island, I witnessed a system designed not to heal, but to punish. A system where individuals living with mental illness were confined for weeks, even months, in solitary cells—without proper medication, without sunlight, without even the most basic human needs.

Imagine that. Imagine enduring isolation, trapped in an empty cell, cut off from family, community, and hope. Day after day, I saw dignity stripped away, human rights violated, and lives unraveling before my eyes. And I could not remain silent in the face of such suffering.

I have seen patients covered in filth, trapped in cells infested with maggots and flies. I have heard the relentless cries of men banging on their cell doors, begging for freedom from the torment of their confinement. The air was so thick with the stench of human waste that I could barely breathe, let alone eat. But my discomfort was nothing compared to the unbearable suffering of those locked away—abandoned, neglected, left to deteriorate in conditions unfit for any human being.

One patient still haunts me to this day. A man living with HIV, locked in his cell, denied access to psychiatric and medical care. For months, I watched as he decompensated—screaming, tearing apart his mattress, smearing feces on the walls. He wasn't acting out. He was unraveling. He was abandoned by a system that failed him at every turn.

I pleaded with officers to release him, and for a brief moment, they did. He stabilized for a week. Just one week. But then—one complaint from an officer, claiming she felt "uncomfortable," was all it took to send him back into isolation. And there, his suffering resumed once again.

I witnessed myself individuals come back from OMH facilities as different and unrecognizable people, this shows that treatment does work!!!

This is not just a failure of justice. It is a moral failing.

Rikers Island does not rehabilitate—it traumatizes. It does not create safety—it perpetuates harm. And it does so at an astronomical cost. Over half a million dollars per person, per year. More than the cost of housing, education, and healthcare combined—wasted on a facility that does nothing but destroy lives.

This is why Rikers must be closed.

We cannot continue to fund a system that punishes mental illness instead of addressing it. The time has come to stop investing in failure and start funding real solutions—solutions that actually support our communities.

We can continue to pour money into a system that brutalizes and dehumanizes—or we can choose a path of dignity, rehabilitation, and real public safety.

The Department of Correction is budgeted for 7,060 uniformed officers—but as of January 1, 2025, they employed 5,908, with 1,152 vacancies. Currently there are 6,866 people detained in Rikers. Instead of wasting \$149.6 million annually on these unfilled positions, we must redirect those resources toward real solutions—toward housing, treatment, and support services that break the cycle of incarceration.

This year's budget must reflect our commitment to real justice. That means prioritizing alternatives that work:

Invest in Housing and Mental Health Support:

Justice-Involved Supportive Housing (JISH): Expand funding by **\$4.8 million** to provide housing for those in need.

Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) Teams: Allocate **\$22 million** to expand life-saving outreach teams and eliminate the growing waitlist.

Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) Teams: Invest **\$7 million** to ensure timely interventions for people at risk.

Crisis Respite Centers: Fulfill the promise of Local Law 118-2023 by securing **\$6 million** to open four new crisis centers, providing immediate care to those in distress.

Rikers must close.

We need to listen to the voices of those who are incarcerated who have been speaking out about these injustices for years. Their experiences and concerns have been ignored for far too long, and that is unacceptable. Other advocates have continuously raised awareness about these systemic issues, yet meaningful change has been slow and insufficient.

They have spoken about these conditions, but we don't believe them because we dismiss them as "just inmates." We dehumanize their experiences, assume they are exaggerating, and fail to acknowledge the realities they endure. This mindset allows the cycle of injustice to continue.

From: [Kaitlyn Wong](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 9:55:09 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Kaitlyn Wong, and my family has been deeply connected to the Chinatown community for 3 generations. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Kaitlyn Wong

From: [Kat St. Martin](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Friday, March 7, 2025 4:46:29 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Kat St. Martin, and I am a resident in Chinatown, and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally witnessed lessened foot traffic around the construction site to businesses, and avoided the area myself due to the massively disruptive noise and general hazardous environment. Further development of this site would be detrimental to the health of my neighborhood, and I fear the long-term implications of the project.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1.

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

2.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Kat St. Martin
Chinatown Resident

[REDACTED]

From: [Katie Luo](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:06:48 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Katie, and I am a product designer who lived for years in Manhattan, right next to Chinatown in FiDi. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship.

We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Katie Luo

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Katie Luo
katiehluo.com



From: [Katie Minh Ho](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Don't Construct The Jail!
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 9:13:49 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Minh, and I am a high school student. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced air pollution related asthma that makes it difficult to carry on with daily life.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those

resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Minh

From: [Ken Lee](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:01:45 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

Regarding the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025 - I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Many businesses and residents in Chinatown have been struggling due to unfavorable conditions and rising costs, and those remaining should not be further pushed away. This jail project would cause additional stresses on local businesses and the community concerns of personal safety.

I, among many others, are not in favor for this jail project located in the middle of a vulnerable community, and urge you folks to please reconsider the impact.

Sincerely,
Ken Lee

Kevin Ly

Forest Hills, NY 11375

March 10, 2025

New York City Council

City Hall

New York, NY 10007

Subject: Advocating for the Reallocation of \$3.8 Billion from Jail Construction to Support and Preserve New York City's Chinatowns and Ethnic Enclaves

Dear Members of the New York City Council,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed **\$3.8 billion allocation for the construction of a new jail facility** in Manhattan's Chinatown. This substantial investment could be more effectively utilized to support and revitalize New York City's diverse Chinatowns and ethnic neighborhoods, including but not limited to **Manhattan Chinatown, Little Italy, Flushing Main Street, Brooklyn's 8th Avenue Chinatown, Bensonhurst Bay Parkway, Bensonhurst 86th Street, Avenue U, K-town in Midtown, Douglaston, Bayside, Murray Hill, Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights**. These communities are integral to the cultural and economic fabric of our city and are currently facing significant challenges that threaten their sustainability.

Location and Community Impact of the Proposed Jail

The planned jail is to be constructed on the site of the former Manhattan Detention Complex, known as "The Tombs," located at **124-125 White Street in Chinatown**. This area is not only a residential and commercial hub but also a cultural landmark for the Chinese-American community. The introduction of a massive detention facility in this neighborhood poses several risks:

- **Economic Disruption:** The construction and operation of the jail could deter tourism and reduce foot traffic, adversely affecting local businesses that are already struggling due to economic downturns and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Accelerated Gentrification:** The presence of such a facility may lead to decreased property values, making the area more susceptible to acquisition by developers interested in non-community-focused projects, thereby accelerating the displacement of long-term residents.
- **Cultural Erosion:** The establishment of the jail could overshadow the cultural significance of Chinatown, leading to a loss of heritage and identity that has been cultivated over generations.

Challenges Facing Chinatowns and Ethnic Enclaves

New York City's Chinatowns and other ethnic neighborhoods are confronting numerous issues:

- **Gentrification:** Rising property values and rents have led to the displacement of residents and businesses, eroding the unique cultural landscapes of these communities.
- **Economic Hardship:** Many small businesses are struggling to survive amidst increasing operational costs and competition, a situation exacerbated by the pandemic.
- **Social Vulnerabilities:** These communities often consist of recent immigrants and low-income families who are particularly vulnerable to economic and social upheavals.

Proposed Reallocation of Funds

Redirecting the \$3.8 billion earmarked for the jail construction to these communities could yield substantial benefits:

- **Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Invest in housing projects that prevent displacement and maintain the socio-cultural fabric of these neighborhoods.
- **Small Business Support:** Provide grants, low-interest loans, and subsidies to help local businesses adapt and thrive in a changing economic landscape.
- **Cultural Preservation Programs:** Fund initiatives that protect and promote the unique cultural identities of these neighborhoods, including festivals, museums, and educational programs.
- **Community Development Projects:** Enhance infrastructure, public spaces, and community centers to improve the quality of life for residents and attract sustainable tourism.


Conclusion

Investing in the preservation and revitalization of New York City's Chinatowns and ethnic enclaves aligns with our values of diversity, inclusion, and community. It ensures that these neighborhoods continue to thrive as vibrant cultural and economic centers. I urge the City Council to reconsider the allocation of \$3.8 billion for jail construction and instead channel these funds into initiatives that support and uplift our cherished communities.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ly

Forest Hills, NY 11375



From: kp@kindsightgroup.com
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 11:10:12 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025

Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Kristyana Pham, and I am a resident in Manhattan submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution and seen a loss of foot traffic.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

*With thanks,
Kristyana*

Kristyana Pham
managing director, kindsight
[sales + marketing & more]
mobile/text: [REDACTED]
e-mail: kp@kindsightgroup.com

The forest was on fire. All of the animals, insects and birds in the forest rushed to escape. But there was one little hummingbird named Kurikindi, or Golden Bird, who stayed behind. This little bird went back and forth between water and fire, dropping a single drop of water from its beak onto the fire below. When the animals saw this they began to laugh at Kurikindi. “Why are you doing that?” they asked. And Kurikindi replied, “I am only doing what I can do.” (A South American Fable)

From: [Krystle Young](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 10:22:11 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Krystle Young, and I am a community advocate in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced [describe specific harm: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, etc.].

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours.

Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Krystle Young

From: [Laura Ceng](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 7:57:36 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Laura Ceng, and I am a resident of Hells Kitchen District 2 I and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the impact of the Manhattan borough jail project in Chinatown.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City and where my husband grew up. It is a neighborhood near and dear to my children and family as we go there and spend time there every week to visit family, buy groceries, shop at our favorite restaurants and bakeries, and have our children play. I am deeply concerned about the proposed jail project and the impact it will have on the neighborhood.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already disrupted my family. I have personally experienced cutoff pedestrian walkways, noise and air pollution, and a general lack of safety when trying to shop in the neighborhood.

I understand that historically Chinatown has had a jail for a while but I am concerned about the continued investment in corrections facilities in the area. This project, especially given it's size, has the potential to displace businesses and decrease property values. Such destruction to date has already closed several small businesses that my family used to frequent. I've heard continual opposition to this project from various Chinatown residents, yet I haven't seen any of their concerns addressed during this hearing.

I don't want my taxpayer dollars going into expanding jails and hurting small businesses. Taxes should go towards affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and support for small shops and businesses.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a highlight of the best parts of New York, that people from around the world come to see and cherish. We should be investing in the wellbeing of Chinatown, rather than making it a less safe and less welcoming neighborhood for residents and tourists. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities .

Sincerely,
Laura Ceng
District 2 Resident

From: [Laura Montalto](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:02:48 PM

Hi,

My name is Laura Montalto, and I have been a Chinatown resident for 9 years. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Laura Montalto

From: [Lela Ng Vasile](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CHINATOWN PRISON
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 2:36:15 AM

MEGA PRISON = SENIOR HARDSHIP

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Lenny Fajardo](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 11:53:25 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Lenny F., and I am a resident of NYC and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Love,

Lenny Fajardo

From: [Lily](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 9:20:37 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Lily Deng, and I am a lifelong resident of Chinatown. I am submitting this written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice, held on March 7, 2025, to express my deep concerns about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of New York City's most vulnerable communities. Nearly one-third of our residents live in poverty, we have one of the city's largest elderly populations, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The construction of this jail will only worsen the economic, social, and environmental challenges our community is already struggling to overcome. This is hard to see in comparison to the neighborhood that used to thrive on community and belonging.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already taken a toll on businesses and residents. I have personally witnessed the impact—family members, friends, and business owners have shared their struggles with me, and I have experienced firsthand the noise and air pollution while walking through my neighborhood.

For decades, Chinatown has been burdened by jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that prioritize institutional interests over the needs of our community. But this project, at an unprecedented scale, threatens to displace businesses, lower property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. Despite our community's repeated objections, our concerns have been largely ignored.

If the City truly values justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant communities like ours. Instead of spending billions of taxpayer dollars on expanding the carceral system, these funds should be directed toward initiatives that actually foster community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift rather than displace.

I urge the Committee to take the following actions:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

project's plan, budget, and timeline.

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for the environmental and economic harm already inflicted, and implement necessary mitigation measures.
- Ensure a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown is a resilient, culturally rich community built on small business entrepreneurship and deep-rooted history. We should be investing in its future, not imposing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge the City to rethink its priorities to ensure Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Lily Deng

From: [Lily Wai](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:06:36 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Lily Wai-Lee, and I am a resident/parent in Chinatown, Manhattan and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced [describe specific harm: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, etc.].

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours.

Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Lily Wai-Lee

From: [Lily Zhang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:11:40 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Lily Zhang, and I am a New York City resident submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally noticed increased noise and air pollution in the area leading to a decrease in foot traffic to local businesses.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Lily Zhang

From: [Linda Schulze](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 7:26:38 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice:

My name is Linda Schulze. I am a resident in downtown Manhattan and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan Borough based jail project in our neighborhood.

As you already know, Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. A large number of the residents live below the poverty line, many of the residents are elderly, and almost all of the businesses are small, family-owned establishments. This is a community that is already struggling to survive and a community that has weathered the economic and psychological hardships of the World Trade Center destruction in 2001 and, having started to recover strongly, were then once again hit by the Covid shutdown. The proposed jail will be another blow to this community, maybe the fatal one.

As someone who frequently walks through Chinatown, I can attest to the noise and pollution caused by the construction, and know of people avoid the area entirely because it has become so unhealthful. The damage inflicted on this community, which is so important to the city's cultural vitality, is already great; should this massive project proceed as planned, the destruction of that which the people of this community have worked so hard to rebuild is all but assured. Resilience has its limits; this project would surely deal a death blow to the community.

Billions of dollars will be spent on this jail, dollars that would better be spent on resources that would benefit this immigrant community: better housing for the elderly, better health options and community centers and activities, and relevant programs that help young people build better lives so that they do not succumb to the lure of criminal activity. I am asking only that you focus on community building rather than prison buildings.

In respect to my concerns and the concerns of the community, I urge the committee to:

- (1) Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
- (2) Hold the Departments of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Corrections accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
- (3) Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Thank you for listening to and considering the voices of the community as you make all future decisions.

Linda G. Schulze
[REDACTED]

From: [Linda Tian](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 8:26:40 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Linda Tian, and I am a resident in lower Manhattan, and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced specific harm: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, the removal of public sidewalks, disruption of daily life due to the construction.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Linda Tian

From: [Linette Kim](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 11:42:20 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I'm submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on the neighborhood.

I'm not Chinese-American, nor am I a resident of Chinatown (I've lived in Queens for almost 20 years) but I like to say that Chinatown helped raise me since I moved to NYC as an aspiring young professional and creative. When I was living paycheck to paycheck, I benefited from the small, family-owned establishments for affordable places to gather for meals with dignity with friends in the industry who were similarly scraping by, as well as for affordable groceries. Especially since the pandemic, I have seen how vulnerable the community that literally fed me really is. I believe that many creatives in NYC have benefited from Chinatown, albeit sometimes in exploitative ways which makes me believe all the more that so much of NYC's creative community is indebted to Chinatown. Put that way, I believe NYC in general owes a great debt to Chinatown for supporting a community that has made NYC the creative hub that it is.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. Seeing the steady closures of Chinatown businesses is heartbreaking to me. I believe this community deserves more support, not more tearing down. One of the last working-class communities in NYC is slowly disappearing. and I refuse to believe that their needs and vulnerabilities would go overlooked by the City. I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Linette Kim

From: [Lisa Marie Chung](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 8:21:38 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Lisa Chung, and I am a resident and work in the Financial District and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced air pollution, increased traffic and noise, and the absence of businesses in the vicinity.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Lisa Chung

From: [Maggie Lee](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Cc: [District34](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:59:21 PM

Hearing Date: March 7, 2025
Hearing: Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Committee: Criminal Justice

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Maggie, and I am a resident of Chinese heritage in Brooklyn and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

Like many Chinese people living on the East Coast, my family's roots are in Manhattan's Chinatown. The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents on Baxter Street and beyond. I have witnessed Chinatown struggle to recover after COVID and continue to experience massive gentrification and displacement of longtime, elderly residents. Building more jails in ethnic-minority neighborhoods directly conflicts with NYC's racial and environmental justice goals. Why are we having this conversation about Chinatown rather than the Financial District?

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Maggie Lee

--

Maggie Lee



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 2:36:33 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Maggie, and I am a student and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am extremely concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. The immense budget of this project is in no way aligned with promoting the community, and could be put toward other beneficial projects.

This project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for

generations to come.

Sincerely,

Maggie

From: [M.W](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 10:01:02 AM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I am a resident in Community District 1 and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution, fear of walking in and around the area, uptick in more than usually illegal vendors activities, and lack of communication from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Mannar Wong

March 7, 2025 - Committee on Criminal Justice Hearing - Chung Pak testimony

CHUNG PAK SENIORS

My name is Meiling Ng, and I speak on behalf of the seniors who live at Chung Pak at 96 Baxter Street, New York, NY 10013, who are here with me today. They live right next door to the jail site and I want to share some of their feelings.

The past two years have not been easy. There is always noise and the building is always shaking. The construction company starts super early at 7AM waking them up, sometimes even as early as 5AM and they cannot go back to sleep. The noise lasts for a very long time until nighttime.

Why are we building a jail in this beautiful Chinatown community?

They do not like it. They do not want the jail. They want more affordable housing.

Thank you.

From: [Meisee Hon](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:10:44 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Meisee Hon, and I am a life-long resident of Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced being physically harmed whilst walking on the corner of East Houston and Chrystie Street by a random stranger who was male and over six feet tall. He socked me on the side of my head and face and just casually walked away while I was standing at the corner waiting to cross the street.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Meisee Hon

From: [Michael Eng](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Cc: [Michael Eng](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:36:19 PM

To the Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Michael Eng, and I have family in Chinatown and am a previous resident on 56 Mott St.

I am also a long time member of True Light Lutheran Church at 195 Worth Street.

Chinatown is a Jewel in the fabric of NYC. It is one of the wonderful landmarks that makes NYC the destination point for anyone visiting our exciting city.

Just one visit to any one of the "dim sum restaurants", the unique souvenir shops, the tea parlors, and you will be transported to a different time and place experience that only Chinatown NYC can give you!

I am submitting written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing:

- Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025.
- I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Michael Eng
True Light Lutheran Church member


From: [MICHAEL WONG](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 4:20:46 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Michael Wong and I am a former resident and current consumer in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, lost of car traffic plus noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Michael Wong

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Michael Wong.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Miguel Mariano](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 9:28:33 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I'm a resident in the Lower East Side and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on the neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, it has one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of its businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain its local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that the community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced the loss of foot traffic and increased noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of its community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate this neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet its concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like Chinatown. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift the neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Miguel Mariano



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:41:23 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

As the Canal Street Research Association, we are submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood, a former marshland long polluted by extractive, exploitative industries, and on which generations of New Yorkers have lived, worked – and been incarcerated.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy—and not to mention offer a major draw for tourists to Lower Manhattan and create a lively, inviting, historic and beloved atmosphere for NYC residents. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. We have personally experienced the near-constant noise and air pollution. Visits to the community liaison office have yielded little reassurance or support beyond being added to an email list to receive perfunctory and technical updates of the construction.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that prioritize institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—and its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace small businesses, decrease the livability of the neighborhood, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward the services that *actually* improve community safety: affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not

forcing through an unwanted carceral project that threatens its survival.

We appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Ming Lin & Alex Tatarsky

Canal Street Research Association

Canal Street Research Association
[Shanzhai Lyric](#) archive in residence
Ragpicker's Court 2025
[@canal_street_research](#)

From: [Ming Tong](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Manhattan Borough-Based Jail
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 6:49:20 PM

Dear Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Ming Tong , and I am a proud NY native who calls Chinatown my home. I am submitting written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing on March 7, 2025, to express deep concern about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our community.

Chinatown is already burdened by economic and social challenges, and this project will only worsen conditions—harming small businesses, displacing residents, and exacerbating environmental issues. The community has repeatedly voiced opposition, yet our concerns remain unaddressed. Instead of funding carceral expansion, resources should go toward affordable housing, mental health services, and economic development that truly support public safety.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction and reassess the plan.
- Hold the DDC and DOC accountable for ongoing harm.
- Ensure genuine community engagement in decision-making.

Chinatown is a hub of resilience and culture. I urge you to prioritize investments that uplift, rather than displace, our neighborhood. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ming Tong

From: [Monica Liu](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 9:22:36 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Monica Liu and I am a Chinatown resident. I'm writing to submit testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on my neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced:

- decreased air quality to the extent that there have been times when I've had to walk through visible dust clouds. There has also been increased dust inside my apartment since demolition started. This has exacerbated my asthma. I am additionally concerned by the fact that the government already set the precedent of lying to lower Manhattan residents about air quality following 9/11 and fought the community on installing air quality monitors.
- a period of multiple months where I was woken up almost-daily by violent shaking of my building. The shaking would continue throughout the day. The shaking has been so violent that I originally thought the earthquake on April 5, 2024 was due to jail demolition. The shaking has also been severe enough to damage the low-income senior housing complex next to the jail site. I will note that the city fought the community on installing vibration monitors.
- excessive noise pollution, including on weekends. The jail demolition starts at 7am and was often loud enough to wake me up. The noise would continue throughout the day. Gramercy Group would, e.g., jackhammer through concrete without using any noise mitigation measures until the community fought for it.
- lack of communication from city agencies. I've attended community engagement sessions as well as community board meetings with various jail officials, none of which I ever found out about through city agency outreach. Moreover, the tone was always dismissive. Even the jail community liaison officer comes across as disinterested and only willing to do the bare minimum.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

The city has continually ignored the Chinatown community every single step of the way, including dismissing our proposal to renovate the Manhattan Detention Complex, a building that was less than 40 years old. Instead it has willfully doubled down on a deeply flawed plan that keeps ballooning in cost, starting from \$1.7B to \$2.13B in 2023 to \$3.8B in 2025. It is, frankly, irresponsible for the city to spend \$3.8B on a single building instead of funding social services that help communities. And make no mistake -- the \$3.8B is literally for a new physical building and completely ignores major problems with Riker's, such as dysfunctional administration and management, and long time to trial. All this at a time when the city is facing so many challenges, ranging from potential Medicaid cuts and other threats from the Trump administration, to the ongoing migrant crisis to infrastructure issues such as the crumbling BQE Expressway to lack of mental health services.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I join the rest of my community in urging the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Monica Liu

From: [Nancy L. Lindsay](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 6:16:44 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Nancy Lindsay, and I and my family have lived in Chatham Towers at 170 Park Row, NY NY 10038, in Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic on Baxter Street north and south of White Street, where the noise and air pollution are unbearable.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Nancy Lindsay
[REDACTED]
New York, NY 10038

From: [Nick Castre](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 7:52:17 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Nicholas Castre, and I am a business owner in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution as well as lower foot traffic.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Castre
le gaz



From: [Nicole Lombardo](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:33:23 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Nicole, and I am a resident in FiDi, a few steps away from Chinatown, and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, and safety.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Nicole Lombardo

--
Nicole Lombardo

From: [Nina Cheng](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:38:49 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Nina Cheng, and I am a community advocate in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally seen the loss of foot traffic and harm caused to local businesses.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Nina Cheng

From: [Nisha Mani](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 7:32:05 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Nisha Mani, and I am a resident and community advocate in Bushwick and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution and feelings of fear around the displacement of the community in Chinatown.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of

Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Nisha Mani

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Close Rikers representing the Bronx
Date: Friday, March 7, 2025 12:34:26 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Date: March 7, 2025 at 12:32:21 PM EST
To: jwhiteman [REDACTED]
Cc: Cecilia Teuber <ceciliat@bronxconnect.org>
Subject: Close Rikers representing the Bronx

My Name is Norma Ginez a single mother of three children two that are on the spectrum and my children's father was a formal incarcerated individual the horrific stories that he shared with me 15 yrs ago still is going on. We need a change in a failed system. I'm an active member of my community I'm an activist for several organizations CEJ PAC CASA JMac for Families Bronx Connect Freedom Agenda Riders Alliance. And I cry out to you as a current resident the Bronx (The Forgotten Borough) I strive to make a difference in my community by advocating and holding my city accountable. We need funding for housing mental health education community centers that are filled at capacity even lack of programs for your youth ages 19 til 24. To deter them from a life of crime. Many come from working class and kids need a Place to go were they are loved and are encouraged to strive for better even though their environment looks grim. My children's father has had many mental health issues and organizations like Osborne Association have helped but due to defunding isn't able to properly benefit from programs like this if they get cut off Our people need help when they come out of Rikers the Trauma that they endure how does the government expect them to get better without supports like housing mental health and jobs so they can contribute to their community. Thank you for your time and I hope you take in to account our ask.

\$507,317

EQUALS

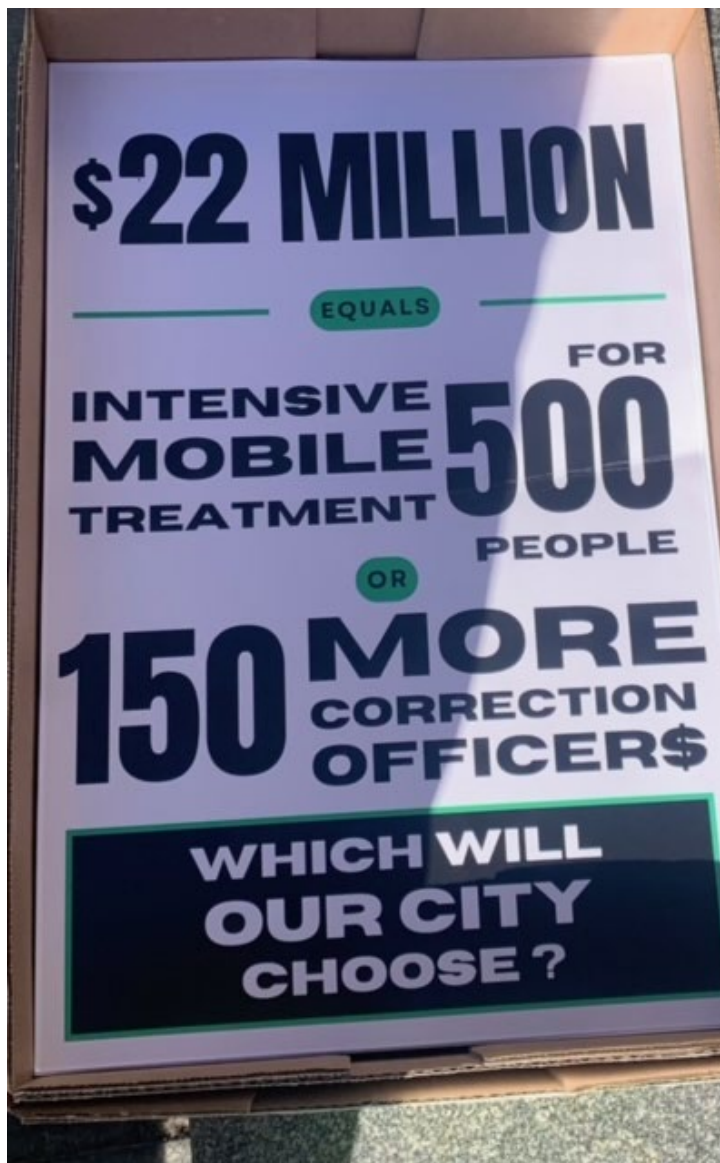
10 PEOPLE RECEIVING
MENTAL HEALTH
TREATMENT

OR

1 PERSON ON
RIKER\$

**WHICH WILL
OUR CITY
CHOOSE ?**





Sent from my iPhone

From: [Pearly Huang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:56:42 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Pearly, and I am a former longtime resident (10002), student (PS2) and former reporter (OurChinatown) in Chinatown/LES. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city (which includes my grandmother who lives in the greater LES/Chinatown area) and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. As mentioned above, my own elderly grandmother who is in her 90s lives in the Lower East Side neighborhood but frequently travels by foot to patronize Chinatown for her grocery, doctor's appointments and socializing. The obstructive location of the mega jail has led to the closing of one of our family's favorite restaurants on Baxter Street and caused a great inconvenience in foot traffic by having to reroute to avoid the never-ending construction zone.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Pearly Huang

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

From: [r.bang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 1:10:51 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Rachel, and I am a resident of Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Please, listen to the people when they are concerned for their own community. Think about your people in this city, and what is truly beneficial to real everyday people. Is it building a jail right in the middle of the community? I think not! Think about what all that money could be used for, in ways actually benefiting our community!

Think about your role, your power to do what is right, your duty to listen to and help the people.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. It is the place that I call home- would you want your home to be in the shadow of a mega jail?

We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Rachel

From: [Rachel Goldstein](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 6:16:17 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Rachel Goldstein, and I am a resident of Manhattan and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhoods.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced [describe specific harm: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, etc.].

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Rachel Goldstein

From: [Rayia Habibulla](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Cc: chinatown@welcometochinatown.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Chinatown Advocate
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 6:58:23 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Rayia, and I am a **community advocate** for **Chinatown** and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project in this neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. **Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the**

current plan, budget, and timeline.

- 2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.**
- 3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.**

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Rayia Habibulla

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:09:08 AM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Rebecca Chen, and I am a community advocate in Crown Heights. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution, and lack of communication from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- **Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.**

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Chen
Co-Founder Print Pals



From: [Rebecca Qin](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Do not allow the building of the Manhattan-based borough jail project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:51:52 AM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I'm Rebecca and I'm a resident of Brooklyn and regular visitor to Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

The impact of the project, demolition and construction, have already inflicted harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced inconveniences in walking around, and noticed much less foot traffic in general. The noise and air pollution is also a deterrent in my going to Chinatown.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate the neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift neighborhoods rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.
Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Qin

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 4:58:39 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Ron Lai, and I am a resident and business owner in Manhattan's Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am **seriously** concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced the noise and air pollution of the disassembly of the detention center. I can only imagine the construction itself of the new building that will tower over my own apartment one block away. I continue to choke on the dust it has coated us with day in and day out. It is going to destroy all the existing businesses on Walker Street due to the construction alone, and fester into unlawfulness once this facility is online and operational. I am equally afraid for my parents who also walk these streets as recidivists begin to take over and cause mayhem while being unchecked. Manhattan doesn't need a larger detention center within the city center.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Ron Lai
Owner/OMG Creative



Best,
Ron

Ron Lai
Founder, *OMG It's Bomb*, *OMG Creative*
[IG](#) / [Tiktok](#) / [FB](#) / [Twtr](#)
-> [Media Kit](#)

Good Day City Council

My name is Russell Backus. I am a U.S. Army Combat Disabled Veteran and I am also a New York City Employee. My Employee Identification number is 0860023. I write to the City Council not to fear anyone or anything. My Colleagues fear retribution and retaliation, however for me, it's different. Im known for fighting a war and I will fight this one as well. I WELCOME THE ISSUES THAT WE NEED TO SPEAK ON AS AN OPEN FORUM FOR OTHERS TO ATTEST TO. I stand with my colleagues if they are afraid. Currently, I work for the New York City Department of Probation as a Probation Officer and in my entire 3 years of working for this department, I AM DISGUSTED. LET ME TELL YOU WHY. I HAVE A NON-EXSISTENT UNION THAT DOES NOT SUPPORT OR REPRESENTS IT OFFICERS AS OTHER Law Enforcement and city agencies do. When dealing with the fairness of compensation of its employees, we are currently not receiving adequate compensation like other departments. We are currently way behind when it comes to adequate compensation. A contract was recently signed by UPOA and ratified by its members under false categorization. This union decided that this was the best contract that they can do. This contract gives us 15.5 percent but gives back 2 Vacation days as well as other benefits veterans officers have. This contract also talks about top pay for probation officers as well as supervising probation officers. The pay for probation officers start at 61000 and after 11 years tops out at 81000. This is a sad salary. In 11 years, other departments who are already over 100,000 already will be so far gone that who would want to even consider this particular job as a probation officer. Furthermore, For supervising probation officers, they start at 86,000 and reach about 95,000 in 11 years. This contract is disgusting. This union president has no idea how it is to be a probation officer anymore because she receives 2 salaries. Because of this she does not know what its like to be us anymore. On top of that she has no caseload and I feel as though she continues to not protect us. If Management comes after us, she gets out of the way and lets them roll right on top of us, furthering the abuse. This is absurd to say the least. What kind of Union allows its member to get decimated and obliterated constantly. That is no way to work. On top of this, we need a bachelor's degree to even be considered for this job. Yes, a Bachelors degree. Unlike many other departments which require experience/High school and maybe a degree to get promoted we have to come with one already. On top of this, I myself have student loans that I can't pay back due to the low salary I currently receive from this department. What am I supposed to do to take care of an entire 4-person family as well pay for groceries, pay rent along with utilities and many other things that I could go on long and long about. I also want to point out that, this department will not allow it probation officers to work another job while other departments are allowed that. To add to this, the union known as UPOA stole money from its members and a president was even indicted and convicted by the federal government of this crime. They were told to pay back 1.6 million in funds towards the federal government and the union. Now my question now becomes, who will manage this money. THE SAME UNION THAT STOLE FROM ITS MEMBERS ONLY TO PUT A NEW FACE IN CHARGE. I HAVE NO FAITH THAT WE WILL EVEN SEE THIS MONEY EVER AGAIN. We have the potential to be revictimized again. I had this one colleague come to me and cry in my arms and she stated that she worked for so long only not to receive an adequate pension that she worked her entire

life for. She hasn't retired yet. Everyone is working past the retirement age because they need to make sure they will be set for life. I just don't see this happening in the next 10 years unless we get the salary we need. At least over 100K. Everything goes up like eggs and other grocery items except the salary. I'm not going to blame the commissioner for this salary issue in this department because it starts without union president before anything. Im not going to even talk about the so-called uniforms where going to get along with no pay or benefits. I feel as though this department is trying to create a semi-police force and using probation officers to do it. We do not get UNLIMITED SICK PAY or NYPD benefits. What happens when we get hurt, we must use all of our sick and annual time to continue to get paid and when we run out of time, then were out on workers compensation if that approved. That's not even enough to survive on especially when you have 3 children and a wife to help support. This is terrible. I earned a Master degree in Criminal Justice, A combat Disable veteran, Worked for a Probation department and yet still so far behind. Im at the bottom with salary and all. Why cant we want more for ourselves and our families. I am still working on my 1 Salary with my pension. I blame the union for the salary and not educating its members. This union president does not do right by us and has never in my eyes ever did right by me. This union continues by far to be INEPT. They refused to acknowledge grievances that need to be filed and refused to create a procedure on how file them since there is no way on file grievances for members. I can't speak about everyone else. I struggle everyday living paycheck to paycheck. I receive a City salary of 58,344.00 before taxes. I have not received my pay adjustment as of yet. I receive a disability stipend from the VA for about 781.00 month. I'm not rich by any means. The problem is that our union president has forgotten what it is like to live our lives. She receives 2 different salaries from the union and the city that totals more than 180,000 roughly or maybe even more. She has forgotten what it's like to struggle. She refuses to provide us with OTC Cards. OTC Cards are something that can help us buy food and or groceries and can cover prescription drugs if need be. When we don't get a chance to utilize all of our benefits then what money is left over can be placed on the Cards for use. This makes sense. We are in a Union that uses archaize ways such as providing receipts so we can be reimbursed for any expenses. Other unions no longer do this, so why are we? This has long by outdated by many unions across the country. I believe that she is trying to keep the money for herself when we do not use all of our benefits and funds. This is ABSOLUTELY WRONG. There are extra funds that are left over because we did not use them for what reason. As city employees, we work so much and barely have time to use all the benefits we are entitled to. This lady I feel keeps them for herself even though I have no proof. The union I'm referring to is the United Probation Officers Association which is run by Dalvaine Powell. This union was victimized by former president Dominic Cullico who put MS Powell in place to run the union. I feel as though we have the chance to be revictimized by the current union leadership. She does not hold elections and puts her people in place to also help her run the union. We need help and oversight otherwise we will fall right back into the same category once again. {A Victim}. I would like to think that you would want to help me. Please any assistance will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

From: [Sandy L](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony in Opposition of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:17:41 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Sandy Ley and I am a Community Board 3 Member and community organizer with [Neighbors on Canal](#) in the LES/Chinatown. I am writing in regards to the Manhattan borough-based jail project - which has received significant opposition from elected officials, community groups, local businesses, and residents since its inception.

Instead of schools, social services, or healthcare, the city has chosen to spend \$15.6 billion dollars on a Manhattan jail. This egregious misuse of public funds is a travesty and wasted opportunity for our neighborhood.

Chinatown is already under attack - with shrinking boundaries, 20+ year road closures, negative impacts from congestion pricing, and accelerated displacement and gentrification aided by a proliferation of "wine bars."

The last thing this neighborhood needs is a bloated, unwanted construction project, with no stop in work despite the fact that 4 deputy mayors have left the government.

We urge you to hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm. We demand that you engage with local voices and listen to your constituents - **halt the construction process now and reassess the plan, budget, and timeline.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Sandy Ley [Neighbors on Canal](#) [REDACTED] [REDACTED] NY NY
10002

From: [Sara Ng](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:58:45 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Sara Ng, and I am an SLP business owner serving in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced [describe specific harm: loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, etc.].

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Sara Ng

Speech Language Pathologist, Lactation Counselor

From: [Sarah Davidman](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 3:03:59 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Sarah Davidman, and I am a writting for the neighborhood of China Town. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- 1.

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

2.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Sarah Davidman

From: [S Yang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:47:40 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Shi Xing Yang, and I am a resident of Knickerbocker Village in Two Bridges. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced lots of pollution as I walk down Baxter Street. I often come into contact with dust and noise as I visit some of the great restaurants along that street and I can see those businesses struggling due to the decreased foot traffic.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown

remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Shi Xing Yang

From: [Shirley Lin](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Cc: chinatown@welcometochinatown.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL] STOP THE JAIL
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 7:38:11 PM

Re: Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Shirley Lin and I am a current resident in LES/Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced air pollutions, loss foot traffics, closure of small businesses.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Shirley Lin



From: [Sonny Tieu](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:52:31 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Sonny, and I am a proud resident of Chinatown. I am submitting this written testimony in regard to the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice, which took place on March 7, 2025. I write to express my deep concerns about the ongoing and future impacts of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of New York City's most vulnerable communities. Nearly one-third of our residents live in poverty, we are home to one of the city's largest elderly populations, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that form the backbone of our local economy. The proposed jail threatens to exacerbate the economic, social, and environmental challenges our community already faces.

The demolition and construction phases of this project have already caused significant harm to businesses and residents. I have personally witnessed and experienced a sharp decline in foot traffic, disruptions to daily life, and a growing sense of unease among neighbors. These impacts are not just temporary inconveniences—they are symptoms of a larger, systemic issue.

Historically, Chinatown has borne the brunt of city-imposed infrastructure projects, including jails, that have consistently prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. This project, however, is unprecedented in scale and scope. It threatens to displace businesses, lower property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. Despite the Chinatown community's persistent and vocal opposition, our concerns have been largely ignored, and our voices have not been meaningfully incorporated into the decision-making process.

If the City is truly committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class, immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to expand the carceral system, these resources should be redirected toward initiatives that genuinely improve community safety and well-being—such as affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to take the following actions:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and conduct a comprehensive reassessment of the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for the ongoing environmental and economic harm caused by this project and require immediate mitigation measures.

Demand a transparent and inclusive engagement process with the Chinatown community, ensuring that local voices are prioritized in decision-making rather than being sidelined by harmful policies.

Chinatown is a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. It is a community that deserves investment in its future—not the imposition of a carceral project that threatens its very survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the City's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Sonny Tieu



From: [Sophia Cheng](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposing Manhattan Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:08:18 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Sophia, and I am a resident in Brooklyn, New York and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood, specifically as it relates to my Chinese family members and community in New York.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced disruptions to normal routes of transportation and seen loss of foot traffic to local businesses in Manhattan Chinatown, in addition to lack of communication from city agencies. This is sure to have more negative impacts on my elderly Chinese family members living in Manhattan, reduce their already limited options for community spaces, and lower their standard of life overall.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health

services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Sophia

From: [Susan Katz](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony for FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 8:35:49 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Susan Katz, and I am a resident, in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

- Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local

voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Susan Katz

From: [Ted Lee](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:27:49 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

I am a lifelong member of the Chinatown community and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome. This project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Ted Lee

From: [Tei Carpenter](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop the jail
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 9:22:41 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Tei Carpenter, and I am a business owner in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic and noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the

current plan, budget, and timeline.

2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Tei Carpenter

Agency—Agency

Tei Carpenter

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

From: [Tenzin Chophel](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 8:07:00 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Tenzin Chophel , and I am a resident in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- 1.

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

2.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

3.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Tenzin chopel

From: [Tess Weiner](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:27:18 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Tess Weiner and I am a social worker and social justice advocate in Brooklyn, and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have heard from residents and personally experienced awful noise and air pollution, lack of communication from city agencies, and an utter disregard for the wants and needs of those who live, work, and spend the most time in Chinatown.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Tess

--

Tess Weiner

pronouns: she/her/hers



currently inhabiting Lenapehoking - [whose land are you on?](#)

From: [Tessa Travis](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 12:21:27 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Tessa and I am a community advocate and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am extremely concerned about the impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally seen my favorite mom and pop restaurants crumble and disappear from the area.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects. Projects that prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. **The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been acknowledged or addressed in this process.**

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually **improve community safety**—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing

local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

--

Tessa Travis// www.tessatravis.com

C: [REDACTED]

IG @sassonsass

[REDACTED]

From: [Tina M](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 3:55:18 PM



Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Tina MacDonald, and I am a resident & big fan of Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025.

I am very worried about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood as this area has so many vulnerable businesses and families that have been through a major ordeal in the past five years. We keep coming out stronger and bonded, but sometimes, enough is enough.

This is a blow to the area and does nothing to boost the economy or lift up those in this underserved area. It damages the beauty of this place even further and displaces people and businesses from what is an already shrinking neighborhood.

Please consider the below:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,
Tina MacDonald
Long Time & Proud Resident of Chinatown

From: [Toby Turkel](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop the Jail
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 2:39:44 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

'My name is TOBY TURKEL I am a senior living across from the Jail. I have been a resident of Chatham Towers for 50 years. Being aware of the extensive needs of this community, it is most disturbing to see the tremendous expenditure on a jail which out of place in the congested streets of C Town. As tall as the Statue of Liberty!

Really??

Struggling businesses on Baxter Street have been adversely affected

The building which is being taken down—the old Tombs _ . Has bedrooms, plumbing, kitchens etc. Affordable housing anyone??

Chinatown is being taken advantage of as usual

Opposed to the new jail,
TOBY TURKEL.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Chinatown Jail Project
Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 12:34:15 PM

[REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is V Lee, and I am a regular visitor/shopper] in Chinatown and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise, air pollution, and negative effects on foot traffic and shopping.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's

priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

V Lee

From: [Vincent Tang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 6:08:19 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Vincent Tang, and I am a resident and community volunteer in Chinatown/Little Italy and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already harmed businesses and residents. I have witnessed a loss of foot traffic to businesses and the neighborhood. I have experienced worsening air pollution whenever there is construction on Baxter Street. Furthermore, there is a lack of communication from city agencies that claim they are here to support the people in our community. They continue to fail to listen and provide the needs we have persistently requested.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

1. Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.
2. Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.
3. Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown

remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Vincent Tang

--

Vincent Tang

<http://www.vincenttang.com>

From: [Watson Millison](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 8:55:51 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Watson Millison, and I am a resident in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on the neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, it has one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of its businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain its local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that the community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced the loss of foot traffic and increased noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of its community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate this neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet its concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like Chinatown. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift the neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Watson Millison

From: [William Lin](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please stop the Chinatown mega jail, its not too late!
Date: Thursday, March 13, 2025 1:34:49 AM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is William, and I am a lifelong resident of Chinatown. I grew up here—running errands, playing in Columbus Park, and watching my neighbors turn hardship into hope. Today, I write with urgency and heartbreak to oppose the Manhattan borough-based jail, a project that threatens to unravel the very fabric of our community.

Chinatown is not just a neighborhood; it's a testament to generations of immigrants who built homes, businesses, and dreams out of nothing. My family is one of them. We've survived recessions, 9/11, and the pandemic by leaning on each other. But now, the city's *3.8billionjailproject—partofastaggering* 16 billion citywide plan—is a crisis we may not survive.

The harm is already here. The demolition has choked our streets with dust, driven away customers from my aunt's herbal shop, and left seniors like my grandmother afraid to open their windows due to round-the-clock noise. Our small businesses, which make up 94% of Chinatown's economy, are hanging by a thread. Meanwhile, rents keep rising, pushing out families and elders who've lived here for decades. This jail isn't just a building—it's a death sentence for our community's future.

***16 billion could transform NewY ork City. **

** Instead of cages, imagine investing in affordable housing for our elders, mental health clinics for trauma survivors, or youth programs to*

break cycles of harm. That same 16 billion could fund 75,000 public school teachers for a year. But instead, the city is pouring this money into a jail that will house just 1,000 people—while ignoring the voices of thousands of Chinatown residents who've pleaded for alternatives.

We've been here before. From the Tombs to the detention centers, Chinatown has always been treated as a dumping ground for the city's problems. But this project's scale is unlike anything we've seen. It will isolate our neighborhood, tank property values, and erase decades of cultural history. We've packed hearings, signed petitions, and shouted our opposition—yet the city refuses to listen.

I demand the Committee:

1. **Stop the contract signing immediately** and reassess this \$3.8 billion project.
2. **Invest in Chinatown's survival**, not its destruction—fund housing, healthcare, and small businesses.
3. **Center our community's voices** in all decisions. No more empty “hearings” while bulldozers roll in.

Chinatown is more than a budget line item. We are families, workers, and elders who deserve to thrive—not drown in pollution, debt, and displacement. Do not let this contract move forward.

With urgency and pride for my community,
William Lin

From: [wilson leung](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 10:11:26 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Wilson Leung, and I am a life long resident of Chinatown and I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city's priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Winnie Cheung](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 9:42:11 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Winnie Cheung, and I am a resident of Chinatown in the two bridges area and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced lack of communication about the demolition, air pollution in the area to residents and the air pollution effects on my kids and the noise as they frequent the nearby park.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

- Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

- Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,
Winnie Cheung



From: [Xueli Wang](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 5:33:06 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Xueli Wang, and I am a New York City resident and spend a lot of time in Manhattan Chinatown. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced noise and air pollution.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those

resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Xueli Wang
NYC Resident

From: [Yankee Grg](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 11:20:38 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is Yankee Gurung and I am a community advocate residing in Queens and am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, air pollution and increased traffic, and grievances of my friends and family that live on that area.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

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I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Yankee Gurung

[REDACTED]

Good day Members of the City Council,

We are grateful for the opportunity for you to hear about the hostile environment emerging at the NYC Department of Probation under the leadership of Commissioner Juanita N. Holmes, because we fear reprisal, we don't express our concerns about the changes in policy which are negatively impacting our ability to do Probation work. Therefore, we will not disclose our identity or work location. We hope this will not impact on the Council's ability to take our concerns seriously because we need help.

In the past few years, we have lost a considerable number of highly experienced Probation professionals. Many found other opportunities outside of DOP or retired. We understand this is not exclusive to DOP. However, what is not publicly stated is that many of those Officers were invested in their work and were not ready to leave Probation, despite being severely underpaid for years. They left to avoid the chaos created, and lack of respect shown by the current administration.

While we do not know the official number of Officers who have left the agency in the last few years, we can confidently say that only two Probation Officer classes have completed the now five-month academy. This change in training policy means we will not be well staffed for years to come. Also, all the Officers in these two training classes have been sent to adult operations even though many of the family court officers report being overwhelmed by the increase in their already challenging responsibilities.

These changes in policy are greatly negatively impacting our work. Some of these changes in policy or practice involve us having to make arrests on clients with open NYPD I-Cards or other non-Violation of Probation warrants, removing the role of the Court Liaison in family court, removing security officers, mixing caseloads in family court and changes in the uniform policy.

The changes in policy often appear to lack foresight, planning, and guidance which seems to reflect the Administration's lack of knowledge on how the different departments work in conjunction to one another. For example, Supervision Officers now must appear in person for all court appearances. Often the cases are not called on time or must be recalled because parties are not ready. This causes the Supervision officer to have to sit around waiting for the court to resume. This can sometimes be hours.

At times, the Officer must travel to another borough (or multiple boroughs) for court appearances. All this time is wasted waiting instead of fulfilling the mandates that truly define the scope of our work with clients, their families, the community and the courts. These mandates include but are not limited to; conducting field visits, writing court reports, getting updates about our client's progress from various sources, documenting,

researching programming and opportunities for our clients, attending meetings, and handling whatever else may come up throughout the day. These duties then, fall on other Officers who must neglect their responsibilities to get the job done. This too impacts on an Officer's ability to build rapport with clients and to plan for effective case management.

In addition to wasting time waiting to appear in court, Officers are expected to make arrests on all matters, not just violation of probation warrants. Historically, DOP would collaborate with the arresting agency on these matters but the arresting agency, usually the NYPD, would ultimately be responsible for handling the arrest process on their complaints. Apparently, neither the Administration doesn't know or does not care about the fact that arresting an individual is a lengthy process and again can take all day or days as is the case if you must sit with someone admitted to a hospital before they can be processed. This again takes the Officer away from managing their other clients and responsibilities.

The removal of the Court Liaison Officer (CLO) role in family court without a measured plan has brought mayhem. Court orders are not communicated fast enough or at all, creating a disruption in workflow. Court Liaison Officer is what we believe to be a state mandate and if true why the change.

Family Court personnel are upset with how the department handled ending the CLO role. Probation Officers and Supervisors have been collateral damage in this feud between the Administration and the courts making it harder for us to get what we need from the Courts to carry out our official duties.

Also, ending the CLO role means there is no longer a link connecting adolescent clients to the Probation department after the court has ordered a probation service. What used to be a smooth transition between the court and Probation is now disorder. Clients are now coming to our doors from various courts without the proper court orders crowding our areas waiting to be seen without warning. These types of situations are completely unmanageable for a workforce that is dwindling by the day. These situations can also become very dangerous when you have clients from rival gangs sitting around waiting and staff scrambling to find someone to help them.

To add fuel to the fire, the administration replaced the unarmed security officers with armed ones. It is rumored that in one of the sites there is no security to help manage the clients in the waiting area, because the armed guards are not allowed to carry their weapons in the court building when not on official duty. Apparently, the new security officers, who also work for the NYPD or other law enforcement agencies, will not staff the site if they cannot be armed. Why wasn't this considered before choosing to end the previous security contract.

All Supervision Officers must also carry caseloads comprised of clients with different levels of supervision. This makes case-load management extremely chaotic because Officers manage each level of supervision by a set of specific contact requirements. Intake and Adjustment are now responsible with the task of taking on Youth part intake and adjustment cases that adds more stress in trying to complete our tasks. These changes make it impossible for us to be effective in our role of Probation officers.

Officers are also being suspended without fair warning and due process as there is nothing in writing to inform us what the procedure is. Decisions about unpaid suspensions seem to be made arbitrarily.

Often the suspension comes before being told what you've done or have not done to be suspended. The reason for an unpaid suspension is at times something that one did not know they were doing wrong and is not communicated until the end of the suspension.

We also have a new uniform policy that will take effect shortly that puts us in a compromising situation as it pertains to the relationship we have with our clients.. With all due respect to our NYPD brother's and sister's we are not NYPD. We are not afforded the training, salaries and unlimited sick leave should something happen to us. Both Agencies' responsibilities are community safety first and foremost, however we perform different tasks and that's something this Administration fails to acknowledge.

The Agency's expectation is that every officer is armed, however there are officers that have been with the Department for many years and are only provided with minimal training before being issued a firearm. (very alarming)

In conclusion, the administration is making decisions about policies without thinking of the consequences or thinking about how the changes affect operations or morale. Morale at DOP is at an all-time low. Our physical and mental health is declining further impacting on the quality of our work.

The Administration wants to run an organization that does not have enough people to do the job well. It is irrational to make unrealistic demands that are impossible to meet. Sadly, it feels like the Administration wants us to fail or leave. Many do not know how much longer they can withstand the instability at DOP. Staff's mental health should be a priority.

Please consider this an anonymous submission, as I fear retribution from both the Department of Probation commissioner and the UPOA President.

I have been a NYC Probation Officer for over 25 years. When I started the job, we worked Monday through Friday from 8/9AM to 4/5PM with one late night until 6:30/7PM. The schedule was flexible and gave us a quality of life. Our pay was never great, but we were happy. We wore business casual clothing. About 5 years ago, Commissioner Bermudez ordered supervision officers to change their work schedules to work either Sunday through Friday or Saturday through Thursday, with 2 late nights until 10PM, one of those days being a weekend day. From that point on, many people retired or resigned. We were not compensated for this change and transfers to non-supervision positions were denied.

To further add to the chaos and misery of the tour change, uniforms were then required. The uniform requirement started as a polo shirt. Tactical pants and boots were added then taken away due to the union fighting the issue. The uniform mandate has been issued and rescinded about three times. Currently, Commissioner Holmes has mandated a uniform requirement that mirrors NYPD (see attached). We are not a uniformed agency, were not trained to be a uniform Officer and do not receive any protections like NYPD. Our pay has not increased due to this uniform mandate. Most importantly, we are not given any protections, like unlimited sick nor has there been a change in our pension. We have not been trained how to interact with the public while uniformed. We do not receive a uniform allowance to purchase the long list of items that are required. We do not have locker rooms in which to change nor do we have appropriate sized lockers to secure all the required uniform items. We have been told that the department would be providing 2 shirts and 2 pants. There has not been a meeting to explain what the commissioner wants. The commissioner has previously testified before city council stating that we are only wearing "a light polo shirt" when doing consent to searches. That is clearly untrue.

There will be many issues that will arise due to Probation Officers conducting home visits in a full NYPD like uniform. Our goal is for those on probation to have steady employment and housing. I am sure that uniformed officers visiting probationers on regular basis will negatively impact those under supervision.

Most Probation Officers have to work until they are 62 years old. This commissioner is demanding that we all are armed and are required to do field visits. In the past, older Officers or those that aren't physically able to do field work, were given spots that were non-field positions. If we cannot retire until we are 62, reasonable accommodations need to be provided. The same reasoning should apply to carrying a firearm. The commissioner wants every Officer to be armed. We have Officers now that cannot walk, have cancer or other debilitating conditions being forced to go to firearm training. Multiple Officers have been armed with no psychological evaluation. Some of the Officer had their weapon taken away from them years ago, now are re-issued their weapon. This seems reckless.

Commissioner Holmes seems to want us to be just like NYPD. She is changing our shields, arming everyone and requiring 3 different types of uniforms like NYPD. Yet we receive none of the benefits or the generous salaries of NYPD.

How could this all be happening at the DOP? Well, its all due to the weak and feckless union representation of the United Probation Officers Association. The UPOA has failed over the years to establish a local contract that defines our duties, protect us from constant change and abuse by each new administration. Our last union president was sentenced to federal probation for embezzling union funds. Our current union president was installed by her criminal predecessor. Our most recent contract that was negotiated did not provide a decent salary, had a give back of 2 vacation days and left our tours and uniforms open to negotiation without member input.

The moral at the department is lower than I've ever seen. We have extremely high caseloads, excessive paperwork and very demanding field work. We are not paid a competitive salary compared to other probation departments. We are being sent to the Advocate's Office for minor and petty alleged misconducts. We work in a very hostile work environment. Nepotism is rampant. I urge you to take a deep dive into the hires of the past few years.

It should be a surprise to no one that staff are retiring at record rates. Some are taking a cut in their pension just to escape the misery. Others are being forced out. It's like a revolving door when it comes to the new hires. According to the state our attrition rate 128.6%. They don't stay because we have tours that make no sense and get paid so little. The tours make it impossible to have a second job. We do not earn enough money to survive in NYC on one salary.

I could go on and write another 10 pages describing the hostile work environment, the poor work conditions, lack of appropriate leadership by the UPOA and much more. I will end this here.

I am submitting this statement on behalf of all my fellow NYC Probation Officers. It is our hope that some type of intervention will occur to resolve the chaos and misery at the NYC Department of Probation.



PROBATION OFFICERS IN TITLE SERIES UNIFORMS SPECIFICATIONS

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Policy | <p>The Department of Probation is committed to maintaining a professional appearance that reflects the values and integrity of the department. This Uniform Classification Policy ensures that all employees are dressed and groomed appropriately for their respective duties, including formal ceremonies, field operations, and administrative tasks. Our uniform and grooming standards are designed to promote professionalism, safety, and uniformity across all roles within the department. Staff are expected to adhere to these guidelines to represent the department in a manner that commands respect and trust from the community.</p> |
| Purpose | <p>To ensure conformity for the duty uniform, uniforms at ceremonies, field duty and training attire worn by probation officer title series, ensuring professionalism and consistency throughout the Department.</p> |
| Probation Officer | <p>8-POINT CAP Navy blue, black strap and chrome cap device bearing shield number.</p> <p>DUTY JACKET Waist length, navy blue, knit wristlets and waistband, and zip side vents or Hip length, navy blue, concealed zipper front, gilt buttons, and zip side vents.</p> <p>NAMEPLATE Worn on outermost garment, centered below shield. Nameplates for probation officers are white metal; Supervising Probation Officers and above will wear yellow metal.</p> <p>NAMEPLATE HOLDER Black leather designed to affix shield and nameplate.</p> <p>LONG SLEEVE SHIRT The service stripes/hash marks will be placed on the left sleeve of the uniform shirt, positioned near the cuff. One hash added for every five years of service.</p> <p>TIE Navy blue, breakaway type (must be worn with long sleeve shirt).</p> |

EPAP

Section: 106-21
Probation Officer

Procedure No: 106-21-25

Date Effective: 03.03.2025

TIE CLASP

Regulation DOP, to be worn with tie.

BELT

Black leather, with gunmetal buckle.

DUTY TROUSER

Navy blue, (polyester and wool) with ½ inch braid attached.

SHOES

Black, plain, smooth leather with flat soles and raised heels, or black high gloss shoes, except that material other than leather or high gloss plastic may be used for portion of ankle support shoe that is not visible below the pants leg. In addition, shoes that conform in appearance to the regular duty shoe are permissible.

SOCKS

Black socks must be at least two inches above the top of shoe.

GLOVES

Black with duty jacket or winter coat, or when safety may be jeopardized, with no visible logos.

INCLEMENT WEATHER GEAR

Reversible raincoat with "DOP" stenciled letters over the right breast and on the back of the jacket with reversible navy blue or lime green cap cover, hood and leggings. Shield and nameplate will be fastened on the raincoat over left breast, and cap device on the cap cover. (Wearing of leggings, cap cover, hood, solid black overshoes or solid black rubber boots is optional).

**Supervising Probation
Officer (SPO)**

Uniform is the same as required for police officer, **EXCEPT:**

8-POINT CAP

Gilt (gold) cap device (without shield number) and gilt (gold) chinstrap.

INSIGNA OF RANK

Three pointed chevrons, worn on sleeves of all outer garments except raingear and nylon windbreaker jacket. Gilt (gold) chevrons worn on the collar of the nylon windbreaker jacket.

TROUSERS

1¼ inch braid attached

EPAP

Section: 106-21
Branch Chief

Procedure No: 106-21-25

Date Effective: 03.03.2025

Uniform is the same as required for supervising probation officer, **EXCEPT:**

8-POINT CAP

Frame is covered with black mohair braid.

INSIGNIA OF RANK

One gilt (gold) bar, worn on:

- a. Shoulders of duty jacket, summer blouse and winter coat
- b. Collar of regulation shirt and nylon windbreaker jacket.

WINTER COAT

Designated as follows:

- a. Shoulder straps
- b. 1¼ inch black mohair braid on sleeves
- c. Three gilt (gold) buttons on cuffs.
- d. DOP insignia patch on each sleeve

SUMMER BLOUSE

Designated as follows:

- a. 1¼ inch black mohair braid on sleeves.
- b. Three gilt (gold) buttons on cuffs.
- c. DOP insignia patch on each sleeve

SHIRT – LONG/SHORT SLEEVE

- a. White, long sleeve uniform shirt without chevrons. Miniature insignia of rank will be worn on collar.
- b. DOP insignia patch on each sleeve

SHIRT, SHORT SLEEVE (OPTIONAL)

- a. White, short sleeve uniform shirt without chevrons. Miniature insignia of rank will be worn on collar.
- b. DOP insignia patch on each sleeve.

Note

Branch Chief, Supervising Probation Officer and Probations Officer will affix the service stripes/hash marks will on the long shirt, winter coat and summer blouse. The service stripes/hash marks be placed on the left sleeve, positioned near the cuff. One hash added for every five years of service.

Assistant
Commissioner in The
Probation Officer
Series

Uniform is the same as required for Branch Chief EXCEPT:

INSIGNIA OF RANK

Two gilt (gold) bars, worn in the same manner as Branch Chief's insignia.

8-POINT CAP

Gilt (gold) spray design on cap visor.

UNIFORM COAT

Sleeves have two bands of black mohair braid.

SUMMER BLOUSE OPTIONAL

Navy blue, similar in appearance to the summer blouse; made of heavier material, affords access to service pistol and other items worn on equipment belt, may be used with a zip-in lining.

Note

Assistant Commissioner's and above will not affix service stripes/hash marks on their uniforms.

**Associate
Commissioner in The
Probation Officer
Series**

Uniform is the same as required for Assistant Commissioner, **EXCEPT:**

INSIGNIA OF RANK

Gilt (gold) spread eagle.

8-POINT CAP

Frame covered with black velvet.

**Deputy Commissioner
in The Probation
Officer Series**

Uniform is the same as required for Associate Commissioner, **EXCEPT:**

INSIGNIA OF RANK

Three gilt (gold) stars worn in the same manner as assistant chief's insignia.

8-POINT CAP Gilt (gold)

Spray design on cap visor.

UNIFORM COAT

Sleeves have two bands of black mohair braid.

SUMMER BLOUSE

Sleeves have two bands of black mohair braid

Note

Duty Jacket Mandatory between November 1 and March 31, optional during other months. If temperature is expected to rise above 65 degrees Fahrenheit from November 1 through March 31, the Branch Chief/Borough Directors shall authorize removal.

EPAP

Section: 106-21

Procedure No: 106-21-25

Date Effective: 03.03.2025

Additional Information

*To maintain uniformity throughout the Department, from November 1 through May 1, all uniformed members are required to adhere to the following dress guidelines. during this period, uniformed members **MUST** wear the following:*

- i. Navy blue long sleeve collared button-down shirt with navy blue breakaway tie along with the DOP tie clip or navy-blue long sleeve polo shirt (for PO's and SPO's only. Branch Chief's and above will wear white long sleeve collared button-down shirt with navy blue tie along with the DOP tie clip or white long sleeve polo shirt), or*
- ii. The navy-blue long sleeve collared button-down shirt paired the turtleneck (this combination is called the "turtleneck combo").*
- iii. Jacket with DOP patches on each sleeve.*

In instances where temperatures our expected to exceed 70° Fahrenheit, uniformed members may seek approval from the Branch Chief/Director to wear the short sleeve shirt or short sleeve polo shirt.

*DOP insignia patch **MUST** be affix on all uniform sleeves.*

Employees

BUSINESS ATTIRE Post-arraignment court or job interview appropriate attire (suit, dress shirt and tie, dress, skirt, blouse, dress shoes, etc.).

BUSINESS CASUAL ATTIRE Office appropriate attire (slacks, button down shirt/blouse, polo shirt, dress, skirt, sweater, flat shoes, closed toe shoes, etc.).

TACTICAL TRAINING ATTIRE Long pants (that extend all the way to the top of the shoe), solid color plain polo shirt, t-shirt or long sleeve shirt (no graphics), shoes or sneakers with no visible markings, solid color DOP jacket or coat.

PHYSICAL TRAINING ATTIRE Solid colored t-shirt, shorts, sweatpants, sweatshirt (with no markings or visible emblems) and any color sneakers.

Note

All employees are reminded to present themselves in a professional manner. employees are expected to be well groomed and wear clean clothing free of holes and tears. Clothing that contains offensive of inappropriate designs, stamps or messages are not permissible. Wear Department Identification Card on outermost garment when not in uniform or plain clothes.

Dress Uniform

DRESS UNIFORM

Blouse - Navy blue with regulation gilt (gold) buttons and shoulder straps worn with regulation uniform shirt and tie. OR

Coat (optional) - Navy blue fingertip length coat with regulation gilt (gold) buttons, worn with regulation uniform shirt and tie.

Trousers - Navy blue serge with appropriate braid on trouser leg.

Shoes - Black, high gloss lace type oxford shoes with flat soles and raised rubber heels, black socks.

Gloves - Black leather/white cotton, as appropriate.

8-point cap - Navy blue, rank-appropriate strap and cap device.

INSIGNIA OF RANK AND SHIELD

RANK AND INSIGNIA

SHIELD

FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER



DEPUTY COMMISSIONER



ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER



INSIGNIA OF RANK AND SHIELD

RANK AND INSIGNIA

SHIELD

**ASSISTANT
COMMISSIONER**



**BRANCH CHIEF/
BOROUGH DIRECTOR**



**SUPERVISING PROBATION
OFFICER (SPO)**



**PROBATION
OFFICER**





UNIFORM CLASSIFICATION

Purpose All employees are required to wear the appropriate uniform based on the event or duty they are performing. Uniform classifications are as follows:

Dress Uniform: To be worn for ceremonies, promotions, funerals, and other special events.

| | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Procedure | Ceremonial Unit Uniform: (For special ceremonies and funerals) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8-Point Cap• Summer Blouse• Reefer / Pea Coat (Optional)• Long Sleeve Shirt• Navy-Blue Breakaway Tie• Dress Trousers• Black Shiny (High Gloss) Shoes• White Gloves• Black Leather Belt with Black Buckle• Black Pancake Holster• White Tassels | To be worn when on field duty Summer (Class B Uniform): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8-Point Cap• Short Sleeve Shirt• Navy blue Tactical Cargo Pants (Field duty only)• Navy blue Administrative Trouser (In-office only)• Black Leather Belt with Black Buckle• Black Shoes• Black boots (optional)• Duty Belt |
|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

To be worn ceremonies, promotions and funerals.

Class A Uniform:

- 8-Point Cap
- Summer Blouse
- Reefer / Pea Coat (Optional)
- Long Sleeve Shirt
- Breakaway Tie
- Dress Trousers
- Black Shiny (High Gloss) Shoes
- White Gloves
- Black Leather Belt with Black Buckle
- Black Pancake Holster
- Duty belt (optional)

Winter (Class C Uniform):

- 8-Point Cap
- Long Sleeve Shirt
- Navy Blue Breakaway tie
- Navy Blue Tactical Cargo Pants
- Black Leather Belt with Black Buckle
- Duty Belt
- Navy Blue Duty Jacket

Note *Supervising Probation Officers (SPO) **MUST** have chevron on uniform shirts and duty jackets, position on each sleeve directly below the Probation Department patch.*

Procedure To be worn when performing administrative duties

(Continue) Summer/Winter (Class D Uniform):

- No cap
- Navy Blue Short/Long Sleeve Shirt

Section: 106-18

Procedure No: 106-18-25

Date Effective: 03.03.205

- Navy Blue Administrative Trousers
- Black Leather Belt with Black Buckle
- Black Pancake Holster
- Black Shoes



PERSONAL APPEARANCE

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purpose | To ensure conformity for the duty uniform, uniforms at ceremonies, field duty and training attire worn by a probation officer title series, ensuring professionalism and consistency throughout the Department. |
| Performance on Duty- Personal Appearance | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be neat and Clean2. Uniforms are to be properly fitted, clean, well pressed, and in good repair.3. Shoes must be shined and will not display a visible company name or logo.4. Keep uniform securely buttoned.5. Prevent non-uniform articles from showing above uniform collar.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) When the short-sleeve shirt is worn, undershirts, neck chain, or other non-uniform articles shall not be visible within the open collar or below the sleeve ends of shirt.b) When the short-sleeve shirt is worn, the collar button may be left unbuttoned, but all other buttons shall be fastened.c) Shirt sleeves may not be rolled up.6. Wear uniform hat squarely on head, with center of visor directly over nose.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) When the hat is required, long hair MUST be securely gathered and placed under the uniform hat without the use of a ponytail. The hairstyle must allow for the hat to be placed squarely on the head, without visible bulk.b) Hat must be worn when members are assigned to field duties.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optional - Blue Probation baseball hatsc) Probation officers riding in Department vehicles may remove the cap while in the vehicle.7. Officers may wear stud earrings, but no hoop or dangling styles that could interfere with job duties or present safety concerns.8. Keep fingernails neatly trimmed not extending more than ¼ inch from the fingertip and provided that they do not interfere with the performance of duties, including the safe and efficient handling of firearms.9. Smoking/vaping in uniform is strictly prohibited.10. When authorized to perform duty in civilian clothing, wear attire appropriate for assignment. |

Section: 106-19
Probation
Officer Title
Series

Procedure No: 106-19-25

Date Effective: 03.03.205

Hair Guidelines

11. For safety reasons, all officers must wear their hair in a secure bun while on duty, particularly in field operations or any other environment where physical confrontations may occur. This is intended to minimize the risk of hair being grabbed or used as a leverage point in case of an altercation.
12. Wear hair so that it is neatly groomed. All regulations regarding the appearance of employees' hair apply equally to members in the probation officer title series.
 - Ponytails are strictly prohibited while in uniform.
 - Loose hair or hairstyles that could be easily grabbed are prohibited.
 - Officers are allowed to wear their hair down, as long as it remains above the collar of the shirt and is neatly secured under the hat to maintain a professional appearance.
13. Necessary hair holding devices, when used, must be unobtrusive. Hair scarves, bows, large and decorative fabric-covered elastic bands, and large plastic clips are prohibited when in uniform.

Note

Officers who do not meet the agency's standards may be subject to disciplinary action. Branch Chiefs and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with the uniform policy.

Periodic uniform and grooming inspections will be conducted by supervisors to ensure compliance. Any employee found to be in violation of the uniform or grooming policy during these inspections will be subject to disciplinary action.

*An employee must seek approval for reasonable accommodation from the EEO Officer in cases where special duties or circumstances prevent them from adhering to the Department's uniform standards or grooming policies (e.g., medical and religious reasons). Such exceptions are temporary. The employee **MUST** complete and submit a new reasonable accommodation request annually.*

Violations of Department guidelines will result in disciplinary action.

Civilian Staff

Professional business casual attire is expected of all employees and should be in neat/clean condition.



OPTIONAL UNIFORM ITEMS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purpose | To outline uniform items that are optional to wear by uniformed employees. All items must be ordered through an authorized dealer. |
| Note | <i>Branch Chief/Borough Directors of specialized units (i.e., Intel) may authorize a specialized uniform only after requesting and receiving approval from the Agency Head.</i> |
| 5.11 Tactical Pants | 5.11 Tactical Pants may be worn by all ranks of uniformed when assigned to field duties. |
| Uniform Shirt Style Outer Vest Cover | An optional outer vest which covers the existing bullet resistant vest carrier and is designed to resemble a uniform shirt. The vest panels must be properly inserted inside the existing bullet resistant vest carrier prior to being inserted into the uniform shirt style outer vest cover. The uniform shirt style outer vest cover may not be worn without both the panels and the existing vest carrier fastened with the existing Velcro straps. Available in navy blue or white (outer vest color must match color of uniform shirt) and authorized for all ranks over the long or short sleeve uniform shirt only. The uniform shirt style outer vest cover will be worn as the outermost garment. |
| Black Boots | Plain black smooth leather with plain or lugged soles and raised heels. Grommets and laces will be black, and no buckles or hooks will be visible below the pants leg. May be worn by all uniformed employees. |
| Long Sleeve Shirt | Breakaway tie may not be worn with the long sleeve collared button-down shirt. If the tie is not worn, the undershirt must not be exposed at collar. May be worn without permission during the summer months, between May 1 - September 30. |
| Golf Type Shirt | Navy blue pullover: shield patch affixed to the left side of chest; name/shield number patch affixed to the right side of chest; letters "DOP" printed across the back and Department patches on both sleeves. |
| Turtleneck Shirt | Navy blue pullover, DOP emblem embroidered on the left side of chest with the letters "DOP" embroidered on the collar. Authorized for wear by all uniformed employees. |
| Note | <i>The turtleneck shirt shall not be used as an outer garment but may be worn under the duty jacket. It may be worn by uniformed employees of all ranks below Assistant/Associate Commissioner when performing field duties. Not to be worn when representing the Department at any function or when performing administrative duties, including scheduled appearances at court or meetings. Uniformed employees performing duty in uniform, may wear the regulation turtleneck shirt underneath the regulation long sleeve uniform shirt. Only the top button of the long sleeve shirt is to be left unbuttoned. No tie is to be worn. This combination may be worn as an outermost</i> |

garment when the duty jacket is not mandatory.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Winter Hat | Black soft vinyl with black mouton trimming for use by all uniformed when temperature falls below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. |
| Winter Knit Hat | Navy blue knitted wool hat, which must fit close to the head, without bulk. Must have "DOP" embroidered in white lettering thread on the front, with no other visible wording or logos. To be worn squarely on head with "DOP" lettering centered across the forehead. It is only to be worn if the temperature falls below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. |
| Baseball Cap | Navy blue with white letters "DOP" embroidered on front, worn by on-duty uniformed members when performing field duty. |
| V-Neck Sweater | Navy blue, acrylic or wool, waist length, vertical ribbed weave knit sweater with navy blue poly/cotton twill material over elbows, left breast and epaulettes. Gold buttons on pointed epaulettes. The Department patch will be affixed to each sleeve. |
| Note | <i>The V-neck sweater may be worn as an outer garment with the regulation tie and uniform shirt with command insignia or insignia of rank on collar of the shirt, as appropriate. Supervising Probation Officer (SPO) will wear chevrons on sweater sleeves. The sweater must be tucked inside the trousers. This sweater is approved for all ranks.</i> |
| Inclement Weather Gear | Reversible raincoat with "DOP" stenciled letters over the right breast and on the back of the jacket with reversible navy blue or green cap cover, hood and rain pants. Shield will be fastened on the raincoat over left breast, and cap device the cap cover (wearing of rain pants, cap cover, hood, solid black overshoes or solid black rubber boots is optional). |
| Wristwatch | Uniformed employees have the option to wear a serviceable watch. Watch MUST be conservative in color. |
| Other Uniform Items | <p>The New York City Department of Probation (NYC DOP) has authorized optional uniform apparel, which employees can access through the Department's intranet site. Be advised that the uniform shirts ordered on this site MUST display the employee's shield on the left side of the uniform shirt, while the employee's name and rank are displayed above the breast pocket on the right side.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sport-Tek Micropique Sport-Wick Long/Short Sleeve shirt2. Sport-Tek Ladies Micropique Sport-Wick3. Port & Company Core Blend Jersey Knit – Short/Long sleeve4. Sport-Tek Tech Fleece ¼-Zip Pull5. Port Authority Core Soft Shell Jacket6. Port Authority Zephyr Reflective Hit Full-Zip |

Section:106-20
Note

Procedure No: 106-20-25

Date Effective: 03.03.2025

All employees are reminded to present themselves in a professional manner. employees are expected to be well groomed and wear clean clothing free of holes and tears. Clothing that contains offensive of inappropriate designs, stamps or messages are not permissible. Wear Department Identification Card on outermost garment when not in uniform or plain clothes.

3/4/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

Probation officers are afraid to speak up due to fear of retaliation from Commissioner Juanita Holmes. I will provide examples: She has demoted and transferred probation officers, branch chiefs, associate commissioners, and supervision probation officers to different units simply for choosing to speak up. Several staff members have resigned due to the unprofessionalism and negative attitude displayed by this commissioner. We have lost many probation officers because they prefer to retire rather than work under her unfair rules (check the statistics).

She addressed probation officers only once last year via Zoom because the union requested it, she addressed some concerns the department was having. However, instead of listening, she chose to remind us that she is the boss and that we will do as she says. Additionally, she has not visited any job sites to check on our well-being or has addressed any concerns we may have. Our department operates in fear, and many officers would rather remain silent due to the unfairness she imposes. We have been requesting tour changes, yet she wants our department to function like the NYPD.

It is unfair for her to say that if we can't do the job, then we should quit. There are other possible alternatives, but she prefers to eliminate them instead of exploring solutions.

Furthermore, we have senior officers going into the field with canes, which is a safety hazard, and it does not seem to concern the commissioner. She has the option to provide reasonable accommodation for senior probation officers to work as CLOs or in investigations, but instead, she insists that they conduct field visits, putting both them and other officers at risk.

It is also unfair that she is only giving overtime to probation officers who must go out in the field with an SPO. We do not have enough SPOs to pair with every officer in the field. In the past, our officers have gone into the field without an SPO without any issues. So, why has this policy changed?

Thank you.

Department of Probation Officers concerns:

1. Unrealistic expectations and task
2. The Commissioner appears to not know the job duties of probation and base all her decisions on her NYPD experience. "We are not NYPD"
3. Why are veteran officers being issued firearms without updated psychological exams.
4. How come the Commissioner can humiliate so many staff member especially the Veteran officers without consequence. (Probation officers' mugshots being posted at the main office while still working for the agency)
5. Why is attrition rate so high (128%, not enough probation officer hired in the in the agency)
6. Why isn't there an open forum to allow feedback on decisions, before the commissioner makes a final decision.
7. Why haven't there been any merit promotion for a probation officer to move up pass a Branch chief.
8. How did we go from wearing soft polo shirt as per the Commissioner's previous Counsel testimony, to full uniforms that mirrors NYPD.
9. How come the Commissioner hasn't come out to all the boroughs to meet her staff and introduce herself and explain her idea of the direction of the agency.
10. What is the direction of the Agency? We have always worn both hats of Law enforcement and social workers. Now it appears that we're going more into the direction of more Law enforcement.

From: [e.p](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony in Opposition to the Size and Scope of the Manhattan Borough-Based Jail Project
Date: Monday, March 17, 2025 2:51:37 PM

Dear Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice,

My name is E Patel, and I am an artist living and working in Harlem. I am submitting a written testimony for the FY26 Preliminary Budget Hearing: Committee on Criminal Justice that took place on March 7, 2025. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing and future impact of the Manhattan borough-based jail project on our neighborhood.

Chinatown is one of the most vulnerable communities in New York City. Nearly one-third of residents live in poverty, we have one of the largest elderly populations in the city, and 94% of our businesses are small, family-owned establishments that sustain our local economy. The proposed jail will exacerbate economic, social, and environmental burdens that our community is already struggling to overcome.

The ongoing demolition and construction have already inflicted significant harm on businesses and residents. I have personally experienced loss of foot traffic, noise and air pollution, and a lack of communication from city agencies.

Historically, Chinatown has endured the presence of jails and other city-imposed infrastructure projects that have prioritized institutional interests over the needs of our community. However, this project—at its unprecedented scale—threatens to displace businesses, decrease property values, and further isolate our neighborhood from the rest of the city. The Chinatown community has continuously voiced opposition to this jail, yet our concerns have not been meaningfully acknowledged or addressed in this process.

If the City is committed to justice, it must not pursue policies that disproportionately harm working-class immigrant neighborhoods like ours. Instead of allocating billions of taxpayer dollars to a carceral expansion, those resources should be redirected toward services that actually improve community safety—affordable housing, mental health services, youth programs, and economic investments that uplift our neighborhood rather than displace it.

I urge the Committee to:

Halt further construction of the Manhattan borough-based jail and reassess the current plan, budget, and timeline.

Hold the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) and the Department of Correction (DOC) accountable for ongoing environmental and economic harm and require mitigation measures.

Demand a genuine engagement process with the Chinatown community, prioritizing local voices in decision-making rather than imposing harmful policies.

Chinatown has always been a place of resilience, culture, and small business entrepreneurship. We should be investing in its future—not forcing a carceral project that threatens its survival. I appreciate your time and consideration and strongly urge you to reconsider the city’s priorities to ensure that Chinatown remains a thriving community for generations to come.

Sincerely,

E Patel

[REDACTED]

New York, NY 10037

[REDACTED]

**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: Gordon Lee Fmr Nixon Protester

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn NY

I represent: All groups

Address: 2094 Neighbors Together

**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: 5/1/85

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dendrea Peterkin, Senior Program

Address: Director

I represent: Dep. of Probation

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: Norma Ginez

Address: [REDACTED] CHALK BLVD

I represent: Bronx Connect Freedom

Address: Agenda

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Damon Gilbert

Address: _____

I represent: NY Lawyers for the Public Interest

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: King Downing Esq.

Address: _____

I represent: American Friends Service Cte

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: Helen 'Skid' Skidder

Address: [Redacted] Bronx 10462

I represent: NAC Justice Reel Initiative

Address: 151 Lawrence St, Brooklyn NY 11201

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: _____

Name: Nadia Chait (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 4 West 125th

I represent: CASES

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Megan French-Marcelon (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [REDACTED] Park Place

I represent: Legal Action Center

Address: 725 Varied St

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 3036 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3-7-25

Name: Allia Thomas (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: South Bronx District 2

Address: [REDACTED]

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: 03/07/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tommy Readick

Address: Queens, NY St. NY, NY

I represent: Freedom Agenda

Address: 40 Rock St, NY, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jonnie Gilliam

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Edwin Santang

Address: _____

I represent: Freedom Agenda

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Melissa Cintron Hernandez

Address: 2 Lafayette St. New York, NY 10007

I represent: Board of Correction

Address: "

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Glen Williams

Address: [REDACTED] Bronx, NY 10456

I represent: NY Youth Represent

Address: 11 Park Place, Suite 1512, NY, NY 10007

**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: Jonnie Gillam

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Anti-Violence Project

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jemal M. McFarlane

Address: 264 E 14th St.

I represent: BOARD OF CORRECTION

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: Jayll Wright

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ronald F. Day

Address: _____ NY 11101

I represent: The Fortune Society

Address: Same as above

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: 7 March 25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jennifer Parish

Address: 40 Rector St, 4th fl, NY, NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Jasmine Georges-Yilla

Address: _____

I represent: Board of Correction

Address: 2 Lafayette Street, NY

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/1/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danielle Ortega

Address: 2 Lafayette Street NY NY 10027

I represent: Board of Correction

Address: _____

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

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KATRINA BLACKMAN ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MONITOR

Address: _____

I represent: BOARD OF CORRECTIONS NY, NY

Address: 2 LAFAYETTE ST. RM. 1221 10009

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: MEL EKAN

Address: 347 E 10TH STREET New York 10009

I represent: WOMEN'S PRISON ASSOCIATION

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: Amanda Berman

Address: _____

I represent: Center for Justice Innovation

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/2005

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Benny Boscio

Address: _____

I represent: Correction officer Benevolent Association

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nell McGarvey Deputy Commissioner

Address: 1000 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021

I represent: DOC - Dept. of Correction

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: James Saunders Deputy

Address: Commissioner

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alexandra Maldonado

Address: Assistant Commis

I represent: DOC

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: 6/5

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kevin Delucy, Deputy

Address: Commissioner

I represent: DOC

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: 03/07/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tammy Meltzer

Address: _____

I represent: Manhattan Community Board 1 (Chair)

Address: 1 Centre St #2202 NY NY 10007

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

#4

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

BBJ in
Chinatown

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 03/07/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kaushal Challa

Address: _____

I represent: Charles B Wang Community Health Center

Address: 125 Walker St NY NY 10013

#3

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

BBJ in
Chinatown

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 03/07/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vic Lee

Address: _____

I represent: Welcome to Chinatown

Address: 115 Bowery St NY NY 10013

#2

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

BBJ in
Chinatown

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 03/07/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Judy Lei

Address: 137 Henry St NY NY 10002

I represent: Immigrant Social Services

Address: _____

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

#1

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 03/07/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Meiling Ng (pronounced "ing")

Address: _____

I represent: Seniors who live at Chung Pak

Address: 96 Baxter St NY NY 10013

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: Mula R. Rivasan, Deputy Treasurer

Address: _____

I represent: of Finance

Address: _____

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Faizan Zubair, Ass. Commissioner

Address: of Financial Management & Budget

I represent: Dept. of Correction

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Conroy, General Counsel

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Correction

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: James Boyd, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: DOC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lynelle Maginley - Liddle, Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Correction

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FitzFragé, Senior Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Correction

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Francis Torres First Deputy

Address: Commissioner

I represent: Dept. of Correction

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sherriann Rembert, Bureau chief

Address: Chief of Staff

I represent: Dept. of Correction

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: 03/07/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Darvon Mack

Address: 40 Rector St. NY, NY

I represent: Freedom Agenda

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dalvane K. Powell

Address: _____

I represent: United Probation Officers Association

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Juanita Holmes Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Probation

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Tonya Cauley-Scott, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Probation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Albert Culler, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Probation

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Patricia Williams, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Probation

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Bridget Hamblin, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Probation

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rizwan Mirza, Chief Information Officer

Address: _____

I represent: Dept. of Probation

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sharon Brown

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Brooklyn NY 11238
Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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