

FOR THE RECORD

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moving victims of violence from crisis to confidence

Testimony of

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**Intro. 1147 – A Bill to Create a
NYC Office of Crime Victim Services**

Committee on Public Safety

Hon. Vanessa Gibson, Chairwoman

New York City Council

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony before you today on Intro. 1147, a bill to create a New York City Office of Crime Victim Services. My name is Michael Polenberg, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Safe Horizon, the nation's leading victim assistance organization and New York City's largest provider of services to victims of crime. Safe Horizon's mission is to provide support, prevent violence and promote justice for victims of crime and abuse, their families and communities.

Safe Horizon supports Intro. 1147. Among other items, this legislation will:

- Draw on the experience of victim service providers, survivors and advocates to help remove obstacles for victims of crime in New York City who are seeking assistance;
- Require the new office to work closely with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence to help ensure services for victims of intimate partner violence are coordinated and aligned with the stated needs of the survivors;
- Require the new office to create annual service directories to help New Yorkers locate and access services that address a wide range of needs – from hotlines to shelter, from case management to crisis intervention, from legal services to law enforcement assistance; and
- Provide regular updates about the services that are currently being provided to crime victims and any gaps in service that need to be addressed.

We are particularly grateful that the City Council listened to the voices of the victim advocacy community after the initial draft of this bill, and incorporated many of our individual and collective

recommendations to strengthen the City's response to crime victims, particularly those in underserved communities. We greatly value our partnership with the City Council and are once again reminded of the Council's willingness to solicit feedback from the community in order to produce the strongest, most impactful bill possible.

We recognize and appreciate the City Council's longstanding support for programs serving victims of crime in every community. From investing in services to assist victims of child abuse, human trafficking, gun violence, domestic violence and sexual assault to passing thoughtful legislation to remove barriers to service, the City Council continues to play an integral role in strengthening the response to violence and abuse throughout the five boroughs. We view Intro. 1147 as another important step towards helping individuals and families receive immediate and long-term care for the harm they experienced.

Thank you.