



**Commission on  
Gender Equity**

Testimony of Azadeh Khalili  
Executive Director  
Commission on Gender Equity

In Support of Intro #4345

New York City Council  
Committee on Women's Issues

April 12, 2016

Good afternoon, Chairperson Cumbo and distinguished members of the Committee on Women's Issues. My name is Azadeh Khalili. Five weeks ago, I was appointed by Mayor de Blasio as the founding Executive Director of the New York City Commission on Gender Equity. It is a great pleasure to appear before the Committee to talk about this critically important topic.

I am pleased to report that the de Blasio Administration has made an unprecedented commitment to New York City's women and girls. I look forward to sharing details with you about our achievements from the first two years of the Administration. The City Council has been a key partner in many of these accomplishments and we look forward to working with you on Intro 4345

Let me begin by providing some background information on the Commission on Gender Equity, its mission and goals, and some of the Administration's key accomplishments.

### The Commission on Gender Equity

The New York City Commission on Gender Equity – or CGE – was created in July 2015 by Executive Order and signifies the administration's commitment to deepening work in this important area—a commitment that is further evidenced by my appointment as the first ever full-time Executive Director of the Commission.

Executive Order 10 structures the CGE as an advisory body that supports City agencies to dismantle institutional barriers for women and girls and help achieve the Mayor's commitment to reduce gender-based inequity and build a safer, more inclusive and economically mobile city for women and girls.

### CGE Commissioners

New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray and Silda Palerm serve as the honorary Co-Chair of the Commission. City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, who established the Young Women's Initiative and writer, lecturer and feminist leader Gloria Steinem also serve as Honorary Commissioners along with activist, writer and lecturer Robin Morgan. There are 20 additional Commissioners who were appointed by the Mayor to three-year terms. They are a diverse group of leaders spanning public and private industries, non-profit organizations, and academia, including longtime women's rights advocates, civil servants, clergy, journalist and FDNY's first female Battalion Chief. I have attached a list of Commission members at the end of my written testimony.

### Role of the CGE

Our Administration is committed to leveraging the full power of city government to expand and increase opportunity for all New Yorkers regardless of sex, gender, or sexual orientation – and build a city that is safe and free of discrimination. The Mayor and the First Lady have stated over and over that we cannot address inequality without making sure that creating good outcomes for women and girls is a top priority.

The CGE is integral to achieving these goals, supporting City agency initiatives and examining policies through a gender lens to identify ways of promoting gender equity.

Specifically, the Commission on Gender Equity:

- Serves as an advisory group to the Mayor on initiatives and methods to achieve the goals of the Mayor's platform to reduce inequality, with a focus on gender-based inequality
- Advocates for women, girls, transgender and intersex residents and support programs that have been created to remove barriers to full participation in all areas of women's personal and work lives
- Studies the nature and extent of both the intentional and unintentional discrimination that women face in the City of New York, and their impacts on the economic, civic and social well-being of women
- Makes recommendations to the Mayor regarding legislative or executive action to improve the lives of women
- Educates the public about women's issues
- Supports and work collaboratively with networks of organizations in the public and private sectors working to expand opportunities for women

### Achievements and Highlights

Over the past year, New York City has made huge strides towards gender parity, including:

- Establishing a historic partnership with UN Women and becoming the first American city to join the United Nation's Safe Cities Initiative
- Setting new goals and improving upon MWBE policies and practices to make contracting opportunities more easily accessible for businesses owned by women.
- Creating innovative maternal mental health services through ThriveNYC, a mental health initiative led by First Lady Chirlane McCray
- The historic roll-out of Universal Pre-K
- Expanding paid sick leave to many of the lowest paid industries that employ disproportionate amounts of women
- Signing new amendments to the Human Rights Law, including Intro 832, which protects victims of domestic violence from housing discrimination
- Making unprecedented investments in domestic violence response and education through the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence

- Signing legislation to provide six weeks of fully paid parental leave to City employees
- Signing legislation to mandates City facilities provide bathroom access to people consistent with gender identity.
- Establishing the City's Commission on Human Rights as the first human rights agency in any major U.S. city to certify U and T visas for immigrant victims of crime and human trafficking
- Framing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) as a woman's issue and encouraging low-income women and mothers to take advantage of 200 free tax prep services and the EITC.
- Appointing and promoting an unprecedented number of women to leadership positions in agencies and City Hall – with women serving in fifty percent of the administration's senior leadership positions

### The Work Ahead

Even though, I was appointed 5 weeks ago, we have begun developing our short term goals. To build off of the Administrations accomplishments, the CGE plans in the next year to:

- Continue to conduct listening sessions with key stakeholders in the public and private sectors
- Convene public town halls to hear from members of the public directly
- Address four key issues – economic mobility and opportunity, access to health and reproductive justice, public safety, and gender policy analysis – by forming workgroups that provide the opportunity for Commission members, experts in each of these areas, to dialogue with City Agency leaders
- Prepare a report with recommendations to the Mayor
- Establish a website to provide public access to the findings and recommendations of the Commission and other relevant resources

Reflecting Mayor de Blasio's commitment to increase women's safety and decrease violence against women and girls, the CGE has established a very close working relationship with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence. Commissioner Noel has personally met with Commission members on several occasions.

### Support for Intro 4345

I would like to commend Chairperson Cumbo for your leadership on this issue. As you know, despite the strong commitment of Mayor de Blasio, we know that achieving the ambitious goals of the CGE will take years of sustained and consistent effort.

We appreciate the Council's plan to recognize the importance of the Commission's work by codifying the Commission in law. We note that in order to transition the Commission from executive order to Charter status, we will be recommending certain language changes to the bill that will ensure that the Commission's responsibilities are consistent with the structure of the Charter and the role of advisory bodies created under it.

### Conclusion

I would like to reiterate that there is still much work to be done to insure true equality in New York City and I look forward to working together to make that happen. CGE helps to advise the Mayor and the Administration as we work to create meaningful and sustainable change in New York City. We are committed to making sure women and girls know that their government is working for them, that we won't give up, and that we will accept nothing short of creating a world in which women don't experience gender-related discrimination and violence, in which transgender people feel safe in their communities, and in which girls are thought that there are no limits, and no glass ceilings.

In closing, I want to recognize the incredible work of the Speaker, The Young Women's Initiative, and Chairperson Cumbo and the Committee on Women's Issues. Your work on behalf of New York City women and girls has been exemplary. We look forward to continuing to work collectively with our partners to advance gender equity.

Thank you.



Bill de Blasio  
Mayor

## **Commission on Gender Equity**

Azadeh Khalili  
Executive Director

## **Commission on Gender Equity**

### **Co-Chairs of the Commission**

Chirlane McCray, First Lady of New York City

Silda Palerm, Chair, Violence Intervention Program Inc. previously VP & Senior Litigation Counsel at Warner Music Group

### **Honorary Commissioners**

Jimmie Briggs, An award-winning journalist and human rights advocate

Robin Morgan, An award-winning poet, novelist, journalist, activist, and best-selling author

Jane Mock, writer, transgender activist, MSNBC host

Gloria Steinman, journalist, political activist, feminist organizer

### **Commissioners**

Abigail Disney, CEO Daphne Foundation

Mallika Dutt, President and CEO, Breakthrough

Taina Bien-Aime, Executive Director, Coalition against Trafficking in Women

Radhika Balakrishnan, Executive Director, Faculty Director, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Rutgers University

Yrthya Dinzey-Flores, Executive Director, Corporate Social Responsibility & Diversity, Time Warner Inc. Senior Director Global Diversity & Inclusion, Thompson Reuters

Cecilia Gaston, Executive Director, Violence Intervention Program

Anne Hess, Co-Founder & Co-Chair, MADRE

Tiloma Jayasinghe, Activist Fellow, Barnard Center for Research on Women

Shahara Ahmad-Llewellyn, President, S. Ahman-Llewellyn Family Foundation

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez, Executive Vice President for Multicultural Markets & Engagement, AARP

Katherine S. Kahan, women and children's rights activist

Nancy Kolben, Executive Director, Center for Children's Initiatives

Dr. Danielle Moss Lee, CEO, YWCA

Sherry Leiwant, Cofounder, A Better Balance Executive Director, A Better Balance

Rochelle (Rocky) Jones, Former Battalion Chief, FDNY

Joan Malin, President and CEO, Planned Parenthood, NYC

Sonia Ossorio, President, NOW NYC Executive Director, National Organization for Women

Walthene Primus, President, Local 957

Celeste Smith, Vice President, VP Morgan Private Bank

Rev CB Stewart, Minister for Justice Ministries, Greenpoint Church

**Ex-Officio Member**

Carmelyn P. Malalis, Commissioner, New York City Commission on Human Rights

**Testimony for Public Hearing on Committee on Women's Issues  
Oversight: Commission on Gender Equity**

**New York City Council  
April 12, 2016**

**Gloria Malone, Co-Chair  
Amanda R. Matos, Co-Chair  
Young Women's Advisory Council, New York City Young Women's Initiative**

Good Afternoon New York City Council Members. We are Gloria Malone and Amanda Matos, Co-Chairs of the Young Women's Advisory Council, which is housed within Girls for Gender Equity and a part of the Young Women's Initiative, launched by New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. In August and September 2015, New York City Council convened over 200 key stakeholders, including young women and girls of color themselves, to help lead a six month assessment process to determine needs for programming, policy changes, data collection, and long-term research on issues impacting young women and girls of color, ages 12-24 in New York City.

On behalf of the Young Women's Advisory Council, we would like to thank New York City Council, the Mayor's Office, city agencies, and all stakeholders for making the Young Women's Initiative a priority in New York City. This is the first campaign in history that is both fully dedicated to low-income girls of color and included young women themselves in advisory and decision-making roles. It is wonderful to see New York City's commitment to women and girls through YWI and now the Commission on Gender Equity and its proposed Gender Equity Advisory Board.

We see an incredible opportunity for collaboration between the Commission on Gender Equity and the Young Women's Advisory Council. Unique to the Young Women's Initiative is the intentional inclusion of young women themselves through a participatory governance model. The Young Women's Advisory Council served as a governing body of youth experts who actively participated in workgroup meetings with policymakers, community leaders, city agency staff, and New York City Council staff in issue areas on health, education, economic mobility, criminal justice, and anti-violence. Our framework arcs toward addressing issues experienced by women and girls of color, knowing that dis-aggregating inequity by race and gender elucidates the disparities in outcomes concentrated among communities of color. The Young Women's Initiative actively embraces an open and inclusive definition of "women and girls" by centering the voices and experiences of trans women and gender nonconforming people and by using a lens that addresses the intersectional experiences of immigrant and LGBTQ&T young women and girls of color.

We propose that The Commission on Gender Equity and its proposed Gender Equity Advisory Board:

1. Use the intersectional, intergenerational, and collaborative framework that the Young Women's Initiative and the Young Women's Advisory Council meticulously and intentionally built together.
  - a. We propose this because as co-chairs of the Young Women's Advisory Council we witnessed the powerful and thoughtful dialogue, recommendations, and relationships that were forged by the young women of color, community stakeholders, city staff, and elected officials by being able to show up as their full selves to these weekly collaborative working group meetings



2. Centers the voices of women and girls of color while giving equitable opportunities for trans and gender nonconforming women and girls of color to be involved in the advisory board by; appointing them to the advisory board in a way that is safe, meaningful, and accessible; listening to their lived experiences as young women in New York City and accepting their personal experiences as truth; making sure that advisory council has leadership opportunities for the trans, gender non-conforming, and non trans young women of color.
3. Be a microcosm of the diversity of New York City residents by having and maintaining a variety of ages, genders and gender expressions, race, ethnicities, religious affiliations, educational levels, sexual orientations, boroughs of residency, immigration statuses, and those who are differently abled as members at all times
4. Hold meetings in ways that are accessible to all by having language interpretation, making sure meeting spaces are physically accessible by the standards set forth in the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, and include sign language and braille when necessary
5. That both internal meetings and the yearly public meeting be held at times that make it possible for school aged youth to attend-- i.e after school hours but before late evening hours
6. That meetings include childcare options and/or are child friendly so that parenting individuals will be able to attend and participate
7. Include 'disconnected youth" (youth who are not in school and or working)
8. Procedures include group agreements/rules that are created as a group and adhered to

As a team, we believe that we must ensure that the voices of young women of color continue to be at the forefront of New York City through participatory governance and ongoing education on the experiences we face. By centering young trans and cis women of color as active participants in governance, we are demonstrating the impact of intergenerational collaboration to create the city we all envision. And we believe this is an ideal opportunity for the Commission on Gender Equity and the Gender Equity Advisory Board to adopt an intersectional framework to support trans and cisgender women and young girls of color.



NATIONAL  
INSTITUTE FOR  
REPRODUCTIVE  
HEALTH

**Testimony of the National Institute for Reproductive Health  
Campaign for a Pro-Choice New York**  
before  
**The New York City Council Committees Women's Issues**  
regarding  
**Gender Equity Advisory Board, Int. 1137**  
**April 12, 2016**

Thank you Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chairwoman Cumbo, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. My name is Danielle Castaldi-Micca and I am the Director of Political and Government Affairs at the National Institute for Reproductive Health and our Campaign for a Pro-Choice New York. We work in New York State and across the country to ensure that every woman has the right and ability to make the reproductive health decisions that are best for her life and her family. This includes preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing safe, legal abortion.

As an organization dedicated to promoting reproductive rights, we were pleased that the administration updated the Commission on Women's Issues to become the Commission on Gender Equity, which signaled a new inclusion of trans\* people in the fight for gender equity, and was announced during LGBT pride month. However, we were quite displeased that the Commission's appointees did not include any individuals whose focus will be reproductive health and rights, and worried that the issue would not be included in the Commission's mandate. This was rectified in January with the appointment of several new members who do have a reproductive rights focus.

Notwithstanding the Commission's composition and agenda, there are longstanding substantive issues of reproductive health and rights that must be addressed. There are striking disparities in reproductive health outcomes and maternal mortality rates across the city, with poor women and women of color facing much more negative outcomes. Meetings with the Mayor's office in 2015 bringing these issues to light were met with the recommendation that the Commission on Gender Equity would be the best means of addressing them.

**Comprehensive Sex Education**

While New York City has taken positive steps to advance comprehensive sex education and this Council has recently passed reporting legislation on it, this administration must prioritize keeping our young people healthy and safe by taking the next step toward implementing medically accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive sexual health education in schools from kindergarten through high school. We urge the Commission to support a Chancellor's Regulation that would require New York City schools to provide such a program and give the schools, teachers, administrators and the Office of School Health and Wellness the resources necessary to deliver that program.

### **Contraceptive Equity**

For more than a decade, advocates have worked to advance contraceptive equity for New York City employees. Despite the Affordable Care Act (ACA) guaranteeing contraceptive coverage without a co-payment for millions of Americans, many health insurance plans for New York City employees either do not cover contraception or cover it with a co-payment. This is absolutely unacceptable. While New York City's failure to provide contraceptive coverage without a co-payment is legally questionable, the principle is clear as day and blatantly ignores the idea of gender equity. Lack of comprehensive contraceptive insurance coverage and high co-payments are significant barriers to consistent and effective contraceptive use. We urge the Commission to conduct a full review of City employee benefits and ensure that all plans cover contraception without a co-payment, regardless of whether specific plans are grandfathered under the ACA. New York City should be setting the example in advancing affirmative reproductive health measures, not attempting to avoid this responsibility through loopholes in the federal law.

### **Access to Reproductive Health Care Facilities**

In 2008, this Council passed the Access to Reproductive Health Care Facilities Act, which updated the city's protections regarding protester activity outside of reproductive health care clinics. The law was cited in the 2014 Supreme Court decision, *McCullen v. Coakley*, as a model that balanced free speech with patient protection. However, despite regular reports of patient and staff harassment outside of clinics, New York City's law has never been enforced. In the seven years since the law's enactment, there has not been a single arrest for its violation. While the Police Department's Deputy Commissioner for Collaborative Policing and her staff have met with clinic staff and advocates and reportedly observed questionable protestor activity outside of health centers, there has not yet been action taken by the Department. We urge the Commission to require the Police Department to designate a City liaison for clinics, train officers in precincts with reproductive health facilities about the law, and establish standardized enforcement guidelines to improve the consistency and effectiveness of officers' responses to complaints.

### **Abortion Training and Access at HHC**

In 2002, New York City's Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) became a national leader among public hospital systems by integrating abortion care training into all eight of its obstetrics/gynecology residency training programs. In addition, HHC serves as a key provider of abortion services in circumstances in which a hospital setting is most appropriate. However, this commitment has eroded over time. HHC facilities are slipping back into practices and conditions that undermine abortion access. For example, some sites require multiple visits for an abortion and capacity is diminished throughout the system for both medication abortions and the provision of care in complicated cases. We urge the Commission to review the provision of abortion services in all HHC hospitals in order to assess and improve the delivery of clinical services, and to designate a center of excellence in every borough with an HHC hospital, so that all New Yorkers have access to the full range of sexual and reproductive services that they need.

With so many battles being fought across the country that center on access to abortion and sexual and reproductive healthcare, we call upon the Commission and the Administration to make this a priority and to make a commitment to greater communication with the advocates who are experts

in this field. Our city should be a beacon for reproductive rights and health, and we hope that the Council will use its oversight capacity to advance this cause. New Yorkers' lives are counting on it.

The National Institute for Reproductive Health and its Campaign for a Pro-Choice New York support Int. 1137 and urge the Commission on Gender Equity to address these pressing issues limiting reproductive rights in New York.



# NYCLU

NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

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Testimony of the New York Civil Liberties Union  
before

The New York City Council Committee on Women's Issues Regarding Int. No. 1137 -  
In relation to creating a gender equity advisory board; and oversight of the Commission on  
Gender Equity  
April 12, 2016

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Good afternoon. My name is Katharine Bodde and I am a Policy Counsel with the New York Civil Liberties Union's reproductive rights program. I would like to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Council Member Cumbo and the Committee on Women's Issues for the opportunity to provide testimony at today's hearing. On behalf of the NYCLU, I respectfully submit the following testimony in support of Int. No. 1137, a bill that seeks to establish a gender equity advisory board, and to provide guidance and oversight regarding the composition of that body and the procedures by which it will operate.

The NYCLU, the state affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization with eight offices across the state and 50,000 members. The NYCLU's mission is to defend and promote the fundamental principles, rights and constitutional values embodied in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution and the Constitution of the State of New York. This includes the rights to equality, privacy, and personal autonomy that form the foundation of gender equity under our state and federal constitution. In light of the NYCLU's long history of vigorously defending and promoting the rights of girls and women in New York State, the NYCLU is well situated to provide testimony in support of Int. No. 1137.

In June of 2015, Mayor de Blasio created a Commission on Gender Equity (hereinafter "the Commission") tasked with "achiev[ing] economic mobility and social inclusion of all New Yorkers, particularly women and girls, and ensure their public safety."<sup>1</sup> While the NYCLU fully

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<sup>1</sup> Mayor de Blasio Establishes Commission on Gender Equity, The Official Website of the City of New York,

supports the Commission's mission, we have concerns regarding the individuals appointed to the Commission and the process by which those appointments were made; as well as the need for transparency and public input regarding the manner in which the Commission functions.

After Mayor de Blasio announced that the Commission had been established, a number of gender equity advocates sent a letter to the mayor regarding the composition of the Commission and the Commission's priorities. The advocates subsequently met with representatives of the mayor's office to address their concerns regarding the lack of expertise among the Commission's members on certain issues affecting women and girls – in particular, issues affecting access to reproductive health care services. The advocates offered a number of recommendations as to the Commission's priorities in the area of reproductive health. These recommendations included initiatives to promote comprehensive sex education, ensure contraceptive coverage for city employees, protect access to reproductive health care facilities, establish accountability for Crisis Pregnancy Centers, and improve abortion training and access at HHC facilities. A letter sent to the Mayor regarding these policy issues, signed by representatives of twenty-eight organizations, is attached to my testimony.

Since this meeting, the administration has appointed a reproductive health service provider as a member of the Commission. The NYCLU applauds this appointment. However, there are continuing concerns. One year later after its creation, the Commission has yet to engage with the network of advocacy organizations specializing in gender equity issues and access to reproductive health care in New York City. As a consequence there is a lack of clarity about how the Commission is determining issue priorities, and about the process by which the Commission will develop recommendations to improve the lives of girls and women in New York City. Further, neither records from these meetings nor the meetings themselves are open to the public. This lack of transparency shuts out impacted people, policy experts, and direct service providers – all of whom are best positioned to inform the Commission regarding appropriate policy proposals.

The NYCLU strongly supports those provisions in Int. No. 1137 that would increase transparency – including requirements for record keeping, reporting of activities and plans, and

for convening at least one annual meeting open to the public. These measures will promote accountability and the development of objectives that serve to advance equal opportunity for girls and young women in New York City, especially the most vulnerable among them. The bill would also require that individuals appointed to the Commission represent the demographic diversity of New York City's population, and have experience advocating on issues of law and policy important to the health and well-being of women and girls. This provision will help to ensure that individuals serving on the Commission possess requisite expertise. Lastly, by formalizing the Commission's existence in local law, Int. No. 1137 will ensure that this body has the requisite independence to continue its important work beyond the term of the de Blasio administration.

In conclusion, the NYCLU supports Int. No. 1137. We look forward to working with the gender equity advisory board in promoting the wellbeing and equal opportunity of girls and women in New York City.

July 14, 2015

Mayor Bill de Blasio  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Re: New York City's Commitment to Reproductive Health and Rights

Dear Mayor de Blasio:

As representatives of organizations dedicated to promoting reproductive rights, we are pleased that your administration has created the New York City Commission on Gender Equity. We write, however, out of concern that the Commission's appointees do not include an individual whose focus will be reproductive health and rights, and that the issue will not be included in the Commission's mandate.

In her capacity as honorary chair of the Commission on Gender Equity, First Lady Chirlane McCray has stated, "We will accept nothing less than the full inclusion of women and girls of all ethnicities in our City ... economically, socially and politically." However, without addressing the importance of comprehensive reproductive health care for all communities, this goal is unattainable. The ability to decide when, or whether, to have a child is fundamental to full participation in the economic, political and social life of our city. Access to comprehensive sex education, contraception and abortion is directly related to reducing income inequality and to promoting equal opportunity and civic engagement.

We recommend that you include among those appointed to the Commission at least one individual whose primary responsibility will be to advocate for reproductive health and rights. And we urge that your charge to the Commission include support for the full range of sexual and reproductive health care.

Notwithstanding the Commission's composition and agenda, longstanding substantive issues of reproductive health and rights must be addressed. There are striking disparities in reproductive health outcomes and maternal mortality rates across the city, with poor women and women of color facing much more negative outcomes. In light of your status as a national leader of the progressive movement, we call upon your administration to take steps to affirmatively and publicly advance these issues.

### **Comprehensive Sex Education**

New York City has taken positive steps to advance comprehensive sex education; however, this administration must prioritize keeping our young people healthy and safe by taking the next step toward implementing a medically accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive sexual health education program in schools from kindergarten through high school. We urge you to support the creation of a Chancellor's Regulation that would require New York City schools to provide such a program and give the schools, teachers, administrators and the Office of School Health and Wellness the resources necessary to deliver that program.

### **Contraceptive Equity**

For more than a decade, advocates have worked to advance contraceptive equity for New York City employees. Yet, despite the Affordable Care Act (ACA) guaranteeing contraceptive coverage without a co-payment for millions of Americans, many health insurance plans for New York City employees either do not cover contraception or cover contraception with a co-payment. This is absolutely unacceptable.



While New York City's failure to provide contraceptive coverage without a co-payment is legally questionable, the principle is clear as day. Lack of comprehensive contraceptive insurance coverage and high co-payments are significant barriers to consistent and effective contraceptive use. The failure to cover contraception without a co-payment for New York City employees blatantly disregards principles of gender equity. We urge you to conduct a full review of City employee benefits and ensure that all plans cover contraception without a co-payment, regardless of whether specific plans are grandfathered under the ACA. New York City should be setting the example in advancing affirmative reproductive health measures, not attempting to avoid this responsibility through loopholes in the law.

### **Access to Reproductive Health Care Facilities**

In 2008, you co-sponsored the Access to Reproductive Health Care Facilities Act, which updated the city's protections regarding protester activity outside of reproductive health care clinics. The law was cited in the 2014 Supreme Court decision, *McCullen v. Coakley*, as a model that balanced free speech with patient protection. However, despite regular reports of patient and staff harassment outside of clinics, New York City's law has not been enforced. In the six years since the law's enactment, there has not been a single arrest for its violation. While the Police Department's Deputy Commissioner for Collaborative Policing and her staff have met with clinic staff and advocates and reportedly observed questionable protestor activity outside of health centers, there has not yet been action taken by the Department. We urge you to require the Police Department to designate a City liaison for clinics, train officers in precincts with reproductive health facilities about the law, and establish standardized enforcement guidelines to improve the consistency and effectiveness of officers' responses to complaints.

### **Accountability of Crisis Pregnancy Centers**

Over a year and a half has passed since the Second Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the central provisions of a New York City law mandating transparency by crisis pregnancy centers, anti-abortion "clinics" that masquerade as licensed medical offices; nonetheless, the Department of Consumer Affairs still has yet to implement the law. In the absence of accountability, crisis pregnancy centers continue to use tactics that mislead women about the care they are receiving or discourage them from seeking care from licensed medical providers. Consumers must have accurate information when they make important decisions about their health.

### **Abortion Training and Access at HHC**

In 2002, New York City's Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) became a national leader among public hospital systems by integrating abortion care training into all eight of its obstetrics/gynecology residency training programs. In addition, HHC serves as a key provider of abortion services in circumstances in which a hospital setting is most appropriate. However, this commitment has eroded over time. HHC facilities are slipping back into practices and conditions that undermine abortion access. For example, some sites require multiple visits for an abortion and capacity is diminished throughout the system for both medication abortions and the provision of care in complicated cases. We urge you to review the provision of abortion services in all HHC hospitals in order to assess and improve the delivery of clinical services, and to designate a center of excellence in every borough with an HHC hospital, so that all New Yorkers have access to the full range of sexual and reproductive services that they need.

With so many battles being fought across the country that center on access to abortion and sexual and reproductive health care; we call upon your administration to make this a priority and to make a commitment to greater communication with the advocates who are experts in this field. Our city should be

a beacon for reproductive rights and health, and we hope that you will use your influence to advance this cause. New Yorkers' lives are counting on it.

Thank you for your attention to these issues. We look forward to hearing from you soon. If you have any questions please direct them to Danielle Castaldi-Micca ([dcastaldi-micca@prochoiceny.org](mailto:dcastaldi-micca@prochoiceny.org), 212-343-0114 x3513), Katharine Bodde ([kbodde@nyclu.org](mailto:kbodde@nyclu.org), 212-607-3375), or Christina Chang ([christina.chang@ppnyc.org](mailto:christina.chang@ppnyc.org), 212-274-7293).

Sincerely,

Andrea Miller  
President  
NARAL Pro-Choice New York

Donna Lieberman  
Executive Director  
New York Civil Liberties Union

Joan Malin  
President & CEO  
Planned Parenthood of NYC

Donna Seymour  
Public Policy Vice President  
American Association of  
University Women - NYS

Stephanie Nilva  
Executive Director  
Day One

Miriam Yeung  
Executive Director  
National Asian Pacific American  
Women's Forum

Bianca Lopez  
Vice President of Prevention  
Programs  
Boom!Health

Renee McConey  
Director of Adolescent Health  
Services  
The Door - A Center of  
Alternatives, Inc.

Sonia Ossorio  
President  
National Organization for Women -  
NYC

Nancy Northup  
President & CEO  
Center for Reproductive Rights

Brette McSweeney  
President  
Eleanor's Legacy

Angy Rivera  
Field Coordinator  
New York Latina Advocacy  
Network

Tracy Hobson  
Executive Director  
The Center for Anti-Violence  
Education

Nathan M. Schaefer  
Executive Director  
Empire State Pride Agenda

Rachael Morgan Peters  
Executive Director  
Peer Health Exchange NYC

Michele Giordano  
Executive Director  
Choices in Childbirth

Carol Blowers  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Family Planning Advocates of New  
York State

Jodi Magee  
President & CEO  
Physicians for Reproductive Health

Karen Scharff  
Executive Director  
Citizen Action of New York

Jennifer Jones Austin  
Chief Executive Officer &  
Executive Director  
Federation of Protestant Welfare  
Agencies

Mary Beth Morrissey  
President  
Public Health Association of New  
York City

Sheelah Feinberg  
Executive Director  
Coalition for Asian American  
Children & Families

Carlton S. Mitchell  
Interim Executive Director  
Inwood House

Lois Uttley  
Director  
Raising Women's Voices-NY

Robert Hayes  
President & CEO  
Community Healthcare Network

Deborah Levine  
Executive Director  
Love Heals

Lisa Maldonado  
Executive Director  
Reproductive Health Access  
Project

Dr. Danielle Moss Lee  
CEO  
YWCA of the City of New York

***TESTIMONY BY the Metro NY Chapter of the US National Committee for UN WOMEN at the hearing to amend the New York City charter, in relation to creating a gender equity advisory board.***

***April 12, 2016***

**My name is Mary Luke, a board member of the Metropolitan NY Chapter of the US National Committee for UN Women. We are a not for profit organization registered in the US and our primary role is to advocate, educate and raise funds for UN Women programs that advance the status of women worldwide.**

We thank the City Council for this opportunity to offer our views on the formation of a gender equity advisory board. UN Women shares a common agenda with the newly formed Commission for Gender Equity and **we fully support this legislation to codify it through the formation of a gender equity advisory board.** We congratulate the Mayor's office and the City Council for their deep commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls through this model legislation.

**As the United Nation entity dedicated to accelerating gender equality and the empowerment of women globally, UN Women** coordinates with other UN departments and civil societies to accomplish its mission, focuses its advocacy efforts and resources on targeted campaigns such as HeforShe and works to ground policy initiatives like the Beijing Platform for Action, Planet 50/50 by 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) signed off by 100+ world leaders. UN Women's Safe Cities Initiative urges cities to develop policies that prevent and respond to various forms of violence against women and girls in public spaces. **New York City was the first US city to join Safe Cities.**

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/11/un-women-and-new-york-city-sign-agreement-to-enhance-safety-and-empowerment-of-women>

The United States has a crucial role to play in ensuring the domestic success of these initiatives, especially the ambitious SDG agenda to end poverty by 2030 and promote shared economic prosperity,

social development and environmental protection for all. Women's equality is an integral part of the SDGs, particularly standalone Goal 5 which focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The SDGs cannot be attained without it.

We believe the Gender Equity Advisory Board could and should strive to incorporate the objectives and targets of the **Beijing Platform for Action, SDGs, and Safe Cities initiatives** into its planning as a priority and to ensure synergies between them in their execution. As one of the most influential, international and trend setting cities, New York can play a pivotal role by embracing the values upon which these agendas are built and accelerating their implementation to help transform our world at the global level.

**As such, we strongly encourage the Commission and its Gender Equity Advisory Board to:**

1. Ensure NY City develops cohesive, integrated and sustainable strategies that mainstream a gender perspective across all government policies and programs; and promote women's increased participation and leadership at all local levels of political, economic and public life;
2. Support institutionalization of a gender-responsive approach to NY City public financial management, including gender-responsive budgeting and tracking across all sectors of public expenditure, to address gaps in resourcing for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Make sure all gender equality policies are fully costed and adequately resourced to ensure their effective implementation; establish targets and indicators to monitor and measure all progress and results;
3. Safeguard the safety, health and well-being of women and girls in NYC through public education, police training, and technologies designed to prevent gender based violence, along with law enforcement against abusers and adequate treatment for survivors. Engage men as critical contributors in the struggle for gender equality and in preventing and combating of all forms of violence so that women and girls may fulfil their fundamental right to live free from violence in both the public and private spheres;

4. Continue to advocate for policy and legislative reforms at the city and state levels to give women equal rights to economic resources including equal pay for equal work, and access to benefits such as the new paid maternity leave benefit;

5. Make sure that women and girls in NY City have access to confidential sexual and reproductive health resources, and that reproductive choice and rights for everyone, regardless of sex, gender or sexual orientation are respected and protected;

6. Ensure that NYC continues to advocate for and strengthen policies, legislation and support international treaties, such as the SDG's and Cities for CEDAW campaign that aim to eliminate discrimination against women, and promote gender equality and women's basic human rights.

We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with NYC developed over the past few years as well as our positive relationship with Executive Director Azadeh Khalili, who graciously accepted to be the keynote speaker at our March reception held in conjunction with the UN Commission on the Status of Women meetings.

In closing, the Metro NY Chapter of the USNC for UN Women thanks the City Council for this opportunity to testify. We welcome future opportunities for collaboration and sharing of resources to achieve greater gender social equality in NYC so that it NOT ONLY serves as a **SAFE CITY, but a shining example worldwide of an EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CITY for ALL women and girls.**

Thank you.



[Home](#) [News](#)

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

## UN Women and New York City sign agreement to enhance safety and empowerment of women

*City joins Safe Cities Global Initiative; promises to scale-up advocacy and action*

Date: 25 November 2014



UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and First Lady of New York Chirlane McCray, following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding to work together for a safer New York, through UN Women's Safe Cities initiative. Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

**New York**— UN Women and the City of New York today signed an agreement to work together in order to enhance the safety and empowerment of women and girls. It is the first such agreement signed between the City and a United Nations entity. As part of the pact, the City will support public education and advocacy efforts organized by UN Women in the context of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the visionary roadmap for gender equality adopted by 189 governments in 1995. The City will also join the Safe Cities Global Initiative.

UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Chirlane McCray, the City's First Lady, signed the Memorandum of Understanding at UN Headquarters during the official UN commemoration of the International Day to End Violence against Women. Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka welcomed New York to a worldwide partnership that includes cities in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Latin America.

"We deeply appreciate the commitment of the City of New York to make the streets and public spaces safe for women and girls," said Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka. "With this agreement, New York City demonstrates its global leadership as a champion of women's security and gender equality. We look forward to working together in this important partnership."

New York City is known within the United States for its leadership on gender equality and broader equity issues. It will now join UN Women on activities such as scaled-up support for implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, considered the global bill of women's rights. It will widely disseminate information on successes

in increasing the safety of women and girls as good practice that can be replicated, and call on other cities to join Safe Cities through the US Conference of Mayors.

"Every day, in cities across the globe, women and girls are trapped in lives defined by fear and violence. Here in New York City, we have launched a comprehensive effort to connect victims to the resources they need to break the cycle and establish their independence. But we must do even more, which is why we are joining the UN Women's Safe Cities Global Initiative," said New York City First Lady Chirlane McCray. "We are committed to doing our part to create a world – and a city – where all women and girls can live their lives without fear of violence."

Under the Safe Cities Global Initiative, UN Women works with municipalities to make public spaces free from sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence. As a new member, New York will develop and advocate policies and practices to boost women's safety, equality and empowerment.

The theme of the 2014 International Day to End Violence against Women, and the following 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, is "Orange Your Neighbourhood." The UN Secretary-General's campaign UNITE to End Violence against Women designated the bright and optimistic colour to symbolize hope for a future free from violence. This pervasive human rights violation currently affects up to one-in-three women and girls worldwide. New York's iconic Empire State Building, UN Headquarters and large screens in Times Square will light up in orange to mark the International Day and galvanize public awareness.

**Watch the webcast of the Noon briefing, in which our Executive Director and the Legal Counsel to the City of New York talk about the new Memorandum of Understanding:**



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1377 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Katharine Rodde

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

I represent: N YCLU

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: 4/12/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amanda Matos & Gloria Malone

Address: 3400 Fort Independence St, Bronx, NY 10463

I represent: Girls for Gender Equity - Young Women's Advisory Council

Address: 30 3rd Ave, Suite 103, Brooklyn NY 11217

**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: 4/12/2016

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gloria Malone + Amanda Matos

Address: 1500 Grand Concourse #504 Bronx NY 10457

I represent: Girls for Gender Equity - Young Women's Advisory Council

Address: 30 3rd Ave, Suite 103, Brooklyn NY 11217

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 4145 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Brittany Saunders

Address: City Hall

I represent: Mayor's office - Council unit

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

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**THE COUNCIL  
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Appearance Card

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1137 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 4/12/16

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danielle Castaldi-Micca

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

I represent: National Institute For Reproductive

Address: 470 Park Ave - South Health

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

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

Name: Azadeh Khalili (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 253 Broadway 10th floor

I represent: The Mayor

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

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: April 12

Name: MARY LUKE (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 230 Park Place, 6E Brooklyn

I represent: UN Women Metro NY

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

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms