

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT BARROWS NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

COUNCIL CHAMBERS AUGUST 30, 2022

Good morning Chair Hanks, Speaker Adams, and Members of the New York City Council. I am Robert Barrows, the Executive Director of Legal Operations and Projects for the New York City Police Department. I am joined here today by Juliane Farruggia, the Managing Attorney of the Department's Legislative Affairs Unit, and Deanna Logan, Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice. On behalf of Police Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell, I am pleased to testify before your committee regarding Intro. 602 under consideration today.

At the outset of my testimony, I would like to recognize the importance of Times Square. Times Square is the "Crossroads of the World," an iconic piece of New York City and one of its most representative symbols. It is a location where people from every part of the globe can come together in a communal gathering. Located in the heart of Manhattan, it is home to some of the city's most famous attractions and is one of the world's most visited areas with over 50 million tourists visiting annually. In a typical year, over 360,000 people pass through Times Square each day.

New York State recently enacted section 265.01-e of the penal law which enumerates several "sensitive locations" and prohibits possession of a firearm in those sensitive locations. Violation of this law is a Class E felony. The law identifies the Times Square area as one of these locations and directs the City to define the area's boundaries. Intro. 602 amends the Administrative Code to define the geographic area of Times Square for purposes of declaring it a sensitive location pursuant to section 265.01-e of the penal law.

The state law and this introduction recognize that Times Square is a dense, complex and highly trafficked area, and the state and city are right to act to protect this iconic piece of New York City while at the same time recognizing the particular interests of those who live or work in the area by authorizing the Department to promulgate rules with respect to those licensees.

The Department fully supports this bill and looks forward to working with the Council and our other agency partners in the implementation of this bill.

Thank you and we look forward to answering any questions you may have.



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Jumaane D. Williams

TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AUGUST 30, 2022

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank Chair Hanks and the members of the Committee on Public Safety for holding this hearing today.

Intro 0602-2022, a bill I am proud to co-sponsor, defines and identifies Times Square, which has some of the heaviest foot traffic in the city. Despite the pandemic, more than 300,000 people pass through Times Square every day. With crowds this large, the presence of guns is especially dangerous, and this is a good first step.

By clearly defining Times Square, the city can designate it as a "sensitive location." After the U.S. Supreme Court struck down New York's limits on carrying concealed handguns in public, the state passed legislation prohibiting the carrying of guns in designated places, including Times Square.

Incidents of gun violence have devastated our communities, and I am committed to pursuing action that protects New York City and its visitors from gun violence. As our city recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vitally important to ensure that we also address the pandemic of gun violence.

I look forward to working with the Committee on Public Safety as we pursue measures to end gun violence in our city.

Thank you.



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Courtney Bryan. Director

Research. Development. Justice. Reform.

Center for Court Innovation New York City Council Committee on Public Safety August 30, 2022

Good morning, Chair Hanks, and esteemed members of the Public Safety Committee. Since its inception, the Center for Court Innovation (the Center) has supported the vision embraced by Council of a fair, effective, and humane justice system by building public safety through sustainable community-driven solutions. The Center's longstanding partnership with Council over the past twenty-five years has helped bring this vision to life through evidence-based programming. This work spans the entire justice continuum and strengthens communities and systems.

Gun violence is one of the most urgent crises facing this country. In 2020 alone, more than 45,000 Americans died in gun related incidents – the highest number ever recorded. While there are many complex drivers of gun violence, the Center operates a broad spectrum of anti-violence programming, and engages in research efforts to develop policy recommendations that reduce shootings. Our firsthand experience operating direct service programs and conducting original research uniquely positions us to offer insights that the Council can look to as it considers the development of initiatives that respond to needs of New Yorkers in the Times Square area.

In each instance, our aim is to provide a meaningful and proportionate response, to treat all people under our care with dignity and respect, to prioritize public safety, and to produce much-needed cost savings for the city. And, as an anti-racist organization, we work to ensure that the needs of marginalized New Yorkers are addressed.

Reducing Gun Violence in the Times Square Area

In this time of increased shootings in New York City, we recognize that while communities around the city are calling on its leaders to prioritize safety, they also want a fair, safe, and proportionate response, especially as research increasingly reaffirms the broad harms of criminal records, incarceration, and distrust in systems. We support the steps that New York City is taking to reduce gun violence by building on existing programming and community strengths and call for an increased investment in diversion initiatives. We believe the goal of reduced gun violence is attainable without returning to inequitable systemic practices of the past.

Further, youth facing gun possession charges can be diverted from incarceration and helped to heal from behavior and ways of thinking that have led to violence—or the potential for violence—in the past.

Court-Based Diversion: Midtown Community Court Youth Diversion for Gun Possession Initiative

In 1993, **Midtown Community Court**, a project of the Center, opened its doors to address low-level crimes and violations that defined the Times Square/Hell's Kitchen neighborhood at the time. Times Square remains part of Midtown Community Court's catchment area. To appropriately respond to the complex drivers of gun violence, the Midtown Community Court is piloting a program, in partnership with the Law Department, offering diversion options for young people (ages 14-17) with gun possession and related charges – the **Youth Diversion for Gun Possession Initiative**. This pilot works with the Law Department, defense agencies, and the Department of Probation to divert youth in family court cases to holistic diversion option if they are arrested for gun possession and related charges. It employs a team of case managers and a credible messenger who utilize their own experiences to connect with young people and help to change their behavior while simultaneously attaching them to meaningful services.

Since the initiative received its first referral in October 2021, 22 youth have been referred for diversion programming from across New York City. Youth are expected to complete programming within 60 days of enrollment. Program participation is highlighted by goal-setting workshops, community-building circles, deliberative dialogues with a credible messenger, weekly engagements, and individualized case management support. The vast majority of participants have been slated to engage in voluntary programming to contribute to further development of diversion programming. Graduates of the initiative will be provided the opportunity to complete surveys, lead advisory board sessions, and participate in circles with current participants and will receive a stipend for their efforts. Additionally, participants and graduates have streamlined access to workforce development support, individual and family counseling, harm reduction services, sexual wellness services, and community-based arts and music programming. Of the 22 referrals, the program has successfully closed 14 cases, has six open cases, and 2 cases pending enrollment. Only the very first program participant has had justice system involvement since the program launched.

Initially serving youth with ties to Manhattan (either arrested or living in Manhattan), the program has since expanded city-wide without geographical barriers to receiving services. Of the 22 Law Department referrals, eight referrals were made by Manhattan precincts, eight by Brooklyn precincts, four by Bronx precincts, and two by Queens precincts. Although the initial eligibility requirements allowed for several referrals to the program, due to the transient nature of New York's young people and the popularity of the transportation hub that is Midtown Manhattan, citywide expansion has allowed all underserved youth with gun and weapons related charges to receive meaningful programming and offramps away from criminal behavior.

Through this work, Midtown Community Court aims to serve up to 30 youth per year. The resulting trust, respect, and empowerment of participants are especially crucial to the success of this pilot. By focusing resources on those small number of individuals at highest risk of perpetrating gun violence, we can reduce violence. Continued support for this program would

allow Midtown Community Court to continue this work as a longer-term initiative that serves a greater amount of youth on expanded eligibility.

Why do young people carry a gun?

In groundbreaking research on the drivers of urban gun violence, 'Gotta Make Your Own Heaven': Guns, Safety, and the Edge of Adulthood in New York City, the Center surveyed over 300 young people in neighborhoods with historically high rates of gun violence to determine their reasons for seeking out firearms. The findings demonstrated widespread feelings of diminished safety and pervasive experiences of violence and trauma that motivated the 'security' of carrying a gun. Study participants—most of whom had experienced someone close to them being shot—pointed to disputes between rival gangs and housing projects, as well feeling a lack of protection from law enforcement, as major factors in their decision to carry. Above all, the findings suggest that effective public safety strategies must begin with the perspectives of young people, build community trust and well-being, and account for the violence—both interpersonal and systemic—that shapes young people's daily lives.

Upstream Gun Violence Prevention: The Heights

Understanding the drivers of carrying a gun is the first step in supporting evidence-based interventions. The Center's findings highlight there is a difference between gun carriers and shooters, and evidence-based interventions can offer promising outcomes. These findings, in tandem with the Center's success with multi-disciplinary and inter-agency collaboration, violence interruption work, and research/deep engagement of gang- and gun-carrying youth have inspired new thinking in programmatic interventions. One such pilot, **The Heights**, although not located in Times Square, could positively impact Times Square public safety since many of those engaging in gun violence in Times Square reside outside of its borders and may live in the program's catchment area.

The Heights pilot program seeks to build safe space and supportive community for guncarrying and gang-involved youth. The Heights is a collective of these young people, advocates, researchers, and street-involved adults working to bridge young people and the supports they need to achieve self-knowledge, self-determination, and lasting personal and community safety and wellness.

Through a community storefront and partnerships with local gang leadership, social service agencies, local tenants' associations, and community businesses, The Heights will be a space designed to help participants feel at ease, and serve as an initial touch-point with new participants who are feeling the program out. The program's activities include individual and group sessions rooted in mindfulness, multi-session art groups, weekly community conversations that bring together gang members from multiple generations with healing justice activists, and participatory action research that provide some employment opportunities to participants. Healing will take center stage at The Heights, with weekly on-site groups offering harm-reduction substance use counseling, somatic therapy, and other traditional medicine approaches to support participants' holistic healing. Finally, the Center will contract with specialists in education and employment to bring meaningful, specialized support to participants.

In the short-term, the Center believes The Heights will lead to participants increasing their self-knowledge, self-efficacy, and self-worth; having their basic needs met; and forming positive connections to themselves and others in their community. Longer-term outcomes for participants include an increase in community activism around safety and well-being, more prominent roles in shaping discourse around public safety, a reduction in harm experienced and perpetrated, and a decrease in the likelihood of gun use.

Conclusion

The Center's Midtown Community Court is intimately familiar with the challenges facing the Times Square area and stands ready to partner with Council to go further than reducing gun violence. Midtown hopes to cultivate a vibrant and prosperous Times Square region that centers public safety and security for residents and visitors alike. We thank the Council its continued partnership and are available to answer any questions you may have.

Notes

¹Swaner, R. & White, E. & Martinez, A. & Camacho, A. & Spate, B. & Alexander, J. & Webb, L. & Evans, K. (2020). Guns, Safety, and the Edge of Adulthood in New York City. New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation. Available at: https://www.courtinnovation.org/publications/gun-violence-NYC

To whom it may concern,

Regarding the Public Safety Hearing (Tue, August 30th 2022), as part of the Leadership Team of Madame Tussauds New York (a Merlin Entertainments group attraction), I'd like to voice our support on considering Times Square as a "sensitive location zone" where carrying a firearm is forbidden.

At all our Merlin Entertainments attractions and resorts our Health, Safety, and Security are a critical part of our business and our number one priority for our guests and our staff. Our robust procedures have been developed over a number of years with the police and the security services and these remain under constant review.

Below is guidance on what cannot be brought into Madame Tussauds New York. Please be aware this list is not exhaustive and is subject to change.

- Any item deemed to be a weapon
- Fireworks and/or smoke bombs
- Glass bottles or other articles which may cause injury and/or be deemed offensive or dangerous
- Sharp objects or anything which may be considered a security risk including knives, penknives, scissors, corkscrews, metal nail files, toy or replica guns.
- Intoxicating liquor
- Illegal substances and/or legal highs
- Skateboards, scooters and rollerblades
- Drones

As a venue that sees millions of people walk in and out every year, security of our guests, our employees, and contractors/vendors/providers, is our biggest priority. Therefore, actions that aim to increase the safety of our guests are welcomed and supported by us.

As a reference, we're in the process of installing mandatory security screening for everyone that enters our building.

Tiago Mogadouro
Head of Marketing
Madame Tussauds New York



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New York, NY 10036

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NYC Council Committee on Public Safety Tuesday, August 30, 2022 **Testimony**

Good morning, Chairperson Hanks, and members of the Committee on Public Safety. My name is Tom Harris, and I am the President of the Times Square Alliance. The Times Square Alliance is the business improvement district that exists to make Times Square clean, safe, and desirable for all. I stand before you today on behalf of the Times Square community to help define and discuss the area commonly known as Times Square. We fully support Int 0602-2022 in its definition and identification of Times Square as a sensitive area as it related to the state penal law in carrying guns.

First, the Alliance thanks the City for the collaborative approach it has taken in defining Times Square for this legislation. Times Square has always been treated differently due to its nature as a major tourist and pedestrian space, which the City recognizes through unique zoning and regulatory policies. Further, we very much appreciated the opportunity to work with City agencies on defining the boundaries of Times Square. Thank you for working with us to make our neighborhood safe for all.

More than two and a half years into the COVID-19 pandemic, Times Square is finally back to pre-pandemic pedestrian crowding. In July, our neighborhood had an average of 367,947 pedestrians per day, only 8.9% shy of 2019 statistics. Further, we have seen growing pedestrian counts over time, with some daily averages exceeding prepandemic rates. Given high and continuously growing levels of foot traffic, we appreciate the State's recognition as a very dense area deserving of an extra layer of public safety protection. Additionally, we wholeheartedly support Governor Hochul's legislation to make concealed carry in Times Square illegal.

At this juncture, Times Square faces many challenges besides gun violence. We welcome the opportunity to work with the members of the Public Safety Committee to make Times Square safer. As we have seen with other pilot programs, we believe whatever we try in Times Square could be a model for other neighborhoods citywide. Thank you for your time and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Tom Harris President

Times Square Alliance

President Tom Harris

Board of Directors

Actors' Equity Association

Barbetta Restaurant

Boston Properties

Breaking Ground Brookfield Properties

Carolines on Broadway

Center for Court Innovation

Coro New York

Craig Newmark Graduate School of

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Davis Realty

Disney Theatricals

Disabled Vietnam Veteran Vendor **Dramatists Guild of America**

Entertainment Community Fund

Equitable

GFP Real Estate LLC

Havana Central **HR&A Advisors**

Jamestown LP

Jasmine's Caribbean Cuisine

Jujamcyn Theaters

Manhattan Community Board 4

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Nasdag

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Paramount Paramount Group Inc

Project FIND

Proskauer Rose LLP

Ross D3 LED

Roundabout Theatre Company Rudin Management Company, Inc.

Sherwood Equities, Inc.

SL Green Realty Corp

Spectacular Cities

The Alicart Restaurant Group Theatre Development Fund

Theater of the Oppressed NYC

The Broadway League

The Durst Organization The Lambs Club

The New 42nd St, Inc.

The New York Times

The Shubert Organization, Inc.

Times Square Residents

Times Square Studios Tishman Hotel Corporation

Urbanspace

Vornado Realty Trust

IN FEBRUARY 2021, I WAS THROWN TO THE GROUND BY A YOUNG BLACK WOMAN AT A BUS STOP ON 57TH STREET. MY GLASSES FLEW OFF OF MY FACE. THE YOUNG WOMAN KICKED ME REPEATEDLY. THE COPS CAME BY AND HELPED ME AND VISITED ME EVERY DAY FOR A WEEK. THEY TOOK PHOTOS OF MY BRUISES AND TWO DAYS AFTER THE ATTACK THE CAUGHT THE YOUNG WOMAN WAS 20 YEARS OLD. I WAS 74 YEARS OLD WITH A CANE.

A FEW MONTHS LATER I HAD TO GO TO A GRAND JURY HEARING. THE THIRD TIME THEY SHOWED THE VIDEO, I CRIED. THE D.A. ASKED ME WHAT I THOUGHT SHOULD HAPPEN TO HER. I SAID I DIDN'T THINK ANGER MANAGEMENT CLASSES WOULD HELP. I TOLD THEM THAT I DID NOT THINK JAIL WOULD HELP HER. MAYBE INTENSIVE THERAPY – REAL HELP FOR HER. SHE DID PLEAD GUILTY AND WE ARE PLANNING TO HAVE A RECONCILIATION MEETING. I WISH HER NO ILL WILL. SHE REMINDS ME OF MANY TROUBLED STUDENTS THAT I TAUGHT AND LOVED. IN NOVEMBER OF 2021, I HAD MY 14TH ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY AT THE HOSPITAL FOR SPECIAL SURGERY.

SOLUTIONS AND REASONS

- A. MY YOUNG FRIENDS TELL ME "SOME FEEL THEY ARE ENTITLED" AND NO CONSEQUENCES IF THEY DO SOMETHING ILLEGAL.
- B. POLICE NEED TO BE WALKING A BEAT NEIGHBORHOODS NEED TO KNOW THE COPS, COPS NEED TO KNOW NEIGHBORHOOD MEMBERS. OPEN UP THE ABANDONED POLICE STATIONS IN THE PROJECTS
- C. TELL PEOPLE THE TRUTH MOST CRIMES COMMITTED BY BLACK PEOPLE AGAINST BLACK PEOPLE THEN SPANISH AGAINST SPANISH. ETC. (POLICE REPORTS, WITNESSES AND VIDEOS)

- D. PREACH THE TRUTH IN CHURCHES IN THE MEDIA, BILLBOARDS, BUS STOPS, ETC. CAN'T FIX PROBLEM IF YOU REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT EXISTS.
- E. RALLY COMMUNITIES TO HELP FIX THE PROBLEMS.
- F. ARREST PARENTS ARREST PARENTS CHILDREN IN THE EARLY AM HOURS COMMITTING CRIMES.
- G. WHEN A PERSON IS ARRESTED AND RELEASED WITHOUT BAIL THEY MUST WEAR A 2 INCH IN CIRCUMFERENCE METAL (IRON) BRACELET ON BOTH ANKLES AND WRISTS BRACELETS HAVE GPS. WEARER CAN GO TO SCHOOL, WORK, WALK, RIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, SHOP ETC. MAKE THEM ATTRACTIVE SO PEOPLE DON'T COMPLAIN.
- H. PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN PUBLIC HOUSING AND HARBOR CRIMINALS WILL BE GIVEN ONE MONTH NOTICE TO LEAVE THEY ARE EVICTED. NO EXCUSES.
- I. I LIVED IN PUBLIC HOUSING FOR 12 YEARS 90-95% OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE ARE DECENT PEOPLE. THEY WOULD WELCOME GETTING RID OF THE RIFF RAFF. I NOW LIVE ON 57TH STREET IN A BUILDING WITH A BILLIONAIRE AND MILLIONAIRES CITY HOUSING LOTTERY APARTMENT. SAME APARTMENT AS OTHERS EXCEPT I HAVE WHITE APPLIANCES AND THEY HAVE STAINLESS STEEL.
- J. EVERY PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECT NEEDS LOTS OF SOCIAL WORKERS THERE AND ACCESS TO INTERPRETERS, OPENING EXISTING POLICE STATIONS, STAFF HAS NO IDEA OF WHO LIVES IN APARTMENTS. PEDOPHILES, PEOPLE WANTED BY THE POLICE, DRUG DEALERS, EX CONS, SEX WORKERS HAVING SEX IN THE HALLS, ADULT CHILDREN WITH JOBS NOT REPORTED, ELECTRICIAN BOY FRIEND OF 20 YEARS LIVING IN 2 BEDROOM APARTMENT THEY HAVE A HOUSE UPSTATE; PEOPLE HAVE HOUSES IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND STATES; ALL SORTS OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITY AND MORE. ALL THIS CAN BE FIXED AND MILLIONS ADDED TO HOUSING COFFERS. SOLUTION SALARIED WORKERS MUST WORK 60 HOURS A WEEK FOR A MONTH IN VARIOUS PROJECTS, PHOTO ID CARDS FOR TENANTS, AND MORE.

- K. SCOOTERS, BIKES, OTHER METHODS OF TRANSPORT MUST HAVE LICENSED DRIVERS, INSURANCE, LICENSE PLATES REGISTER THEM. CITY BICYCLE STANDS MUST NOT BE ON THE SIDEWALK. NOT ALLOWED TO RIDE BIKE ON SIDEWALK.
- L. ALL OF YOU ON THIS COMMITTEE MUST GET INVOLVED RULES MUST BE PUT IN PLACE AND ENFORCED. THERE MUST BE BOUNDARIES IMPOSED AND ENFORCED.

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THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card
I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. Res. No.
- Production
Date: 8/30/22
Name: Robert Barrows + Xecutive Director of
Name: Robert Barrows, Executive Director of Address: Legal Operations and Project, Stor NYP)
I represent: NYPD
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. 602 Res. No
in favor in opposition Date: 8/30/22
Name: Juliane Farraggia, Managing Attorney Address: of the Dept. of Legislative Affairs at MPD
in favor in opposition Date: 8/30/22
Name: Juliane Farraggia, Managing Attorney Address: of the Dept. of Legislative Affairs at MPD

THE COUNCIL THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card
I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 605 Res. No.
in favor in opposition
Date: 8/30/25
(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Judith Let
Address: Senior Counsel at Moct
I represent: MOCT
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. 602 Res. No.
in favor in opposition
Date: 8/30/22
(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Deanny Logan Director of the
Address: Mayor's office of Criminal Justice
I represent: MOCT
Address:
Address: