



DISTRICT OFFICE
930 FLATBUSH AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NY 11226
TEL: (718) 287-8762

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1752
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: (718) 788-7352

DISTRICT40@COUNCIL.NYC.GOV

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
RITA C. JOSEPH
COUNCIL MEMBER, 40TH DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

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March 24, 2026

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT (Legislation: Int. No. 260)

Bill Title: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to reporting on warming centers.

I write in strong support of a local law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in establishing a warming centers program legislation. This bill would require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), in collaboration with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), to annually submit reports on warming centers in New York City to the Mayor and the Speaker of the Council and post such reports on its website. These reports would include information related to the locations, space types, days and operating hours, number of staff, number of visitors disaggregated by age group and zip code, accessibility and utilization of each warming center operated by DOHMH. Reports would also include an assessment of the geographic availability and accessibility of warming centers to vulnerable populations, and recommendations to improve such availability.

Additionally, this bill also establishes important transparency and accountability measures by requiring annual reporting on the program's implementation, including outreach efforts and usage. These reports will be submitted to the Mayor and the Speaker of the Council and made publicly available online, allowing the City and the public to assess the program's effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

As a city, we have a responsibility to ensure that no New Yorker is left exposed to dangerous conditions simply because they lack access to a warm and safe place. Establishing a dedicated warming centers program is a commonsense step that prioritizes public health, preparedness, and dignity.

Sincerely,

Rita C. Joseph
Council Member, 40th District