



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

# Jumaane D. Williams

**STATEMENT OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS  
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON  
WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY  
OCTOBER 25, 2022**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. Thank you very much Chair Cabán and members of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity for holding this vote and allowing me the opportunity to provide a statement.

We are no strangers to the rippling effects of the COVID-19 pandemic across a range of pressing issues; domestic violence unfortunately was directly impacted as well. In 2020, NYC Hope registered 89,000 unique visitors to its resource page; in 2021, approximately 94,000 calls were made to the city's domestic violence hotline. These figures are alarming; they mean every single one of these individuals were seeking help from our city. We have an obligation to each and every one of these callers.

The three bills up for vote today work in tandem to reinforce the City of New York's commitment through action, by providing culturally competent and comprehensive support to survivors of domestic, intimate partner, and gender-based violence. I have worked with this body for over a decade to address the housing crisis in this city.<sup>1,2</sup> We know the cost of housing in New York is an impediment to many seeking stability and opportunities to pursue their goals and dreams. For survivors of domestic violence seeking to leave abusive households, the lack of safe, affordable housing can often be an "insurmountable barrier".<sup>3</sup> It is within our capacity to fix this crisis within a crisis.

Intro. 0153 would reaffirm survivors' autonomy and tell survivors that the City of New York trusts their decision making and discretion. It would rebuke the spiritual and psychological denigration that arises from economic control. Intro. 0154 would enhance survivors' access and ensure that no matter where a survivor turns for assistance in this city, they will be given a complete understanding of resources available to them. We have an obligation to ensure that survivors receive resources which are culturally appropriate and accessible. As for Resolution 0111, it is our responsibility to protect paid leave and help restore survivors' physical, mental, and economic wellbeing.

We have a duty to support and affirm survivors of domestic, gender-based, and intimate partner violence. While New York has made great strides, survivors are still forced to surmount barriers and transcend gaps the city could help ameliorate. These bills create clear guidelines for organizations, center survivors' backgrounds and journeys, and reflect the diverse array of needs that this city and its organizations have the capacity to address. We can create a system of support that reiterates this city's full unshakeable commitment to survivors of domestic and gender-based violence. I hope my colleagues can vote yes to the passage of these bills. Thank you.

<sup>1</sup> N.Y.C. Loc. Law Int. 0659 (as introduced Aug. 17, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> N.Y.C. Res. 0410 (2014).

<sup>3</sup> Amber Clough, et al. "Having Housing Made Everything Else Possible": *Affordable, Safe and Stable Housing for Women Survivors of Violence*, Qualitative Social Work, vol. 13, no.5, pp. 671-688 (2014), doi:10.1177/1473325013503003