

**STATEMENT OF DEPUTY INSPECTOR JESSICA E. COREY  
COMMANDING OFFICER, CRIME PREVENTION DIVISION  
COMMUNITY AFFAIRS BUREAU  
NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL  
NOVEMBER 4, 2019**

Good morning Chair Gjonaj and Members of the Council. I am Deputy Inspector Jessica Corey, the Commanding Officer of the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) Community Affairs Bureau's Crime Prevention Division. In addition to my colleagues from the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), I am joined here today by Michael Clarke, the Managing Attorney of the NYPD's Legislative Affairs Unit. On behalf of Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill, I would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to speak about the Department's efforts to help small businesses and bodegas provide a safe environment for their workers and patrons, and to comment on the bill being heard today.

Our business community is the lifeblood of this city's economy. These small, frequently family owned businesses are an integral part of every neighborhood in the city, and throughout the city's history they have represented a path to upward mobility for many of the immigrant communities that make up the fabric of New York. Bodegas are more than a place where you grab a sandwich. They are coffee shops, quasi-community centers, places to hear the latest neighborhood goings-on and most importantly, places to buy the day-to-day products everybody needs when the nearest grocery store is often many blocks or subway stops away.

Operating one of these businesses presents a unique set of security challenges. Many are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, may have only one or two employees working at a time, and may be the only business around for blocks. Because of the ubiquity of these stores and the uniformity of their security concerns throughout the city, much of the focus of the Crime Prevention Division has been outreach, coordination, and information sharing with these businesses. The innovation of Neighborhood Policing has allowed the Department to more effectively collaborate with small business owners and workers by building trust and developing relationships. We see every day that the relationships our Neighborhood Coordination Officers, sector cops, and Crime Prevention Officers develop are integral to solving and preventing crimes, both at these businesses and neighborhoods throughout the city.

The NYPD offers New York's small business community help to better secure their establishments against robberies, burglaries, shoplifting, fraud and vandalism. To start, the Crime Prevention Division and precinct Crime Prevention Officers offer these businesses information and assistance so they can better protect their establishments. Crime Prevention Officers will also conduct a free security survey of any location when requested in order to harden its physical security. They inspect and analyze a location for security deficiencies such as missing or ineffective video surveillance equipment, obstructed sightlines, insufficient lighting, lack of height markers on the doors, and unsecured high-priced items, as well as many others. They will then take the store

owner through a step-by-step breakdown of these deficiencies and offer recommendations on the best practices to correct the problems and the types of equipment that offer the best protection.

The Department has consistently worked to inform small business owners of the resources available to them, but the senseless and tragic murder of Junior Guzman-Feliz has rightly brought the risks faced by these valuable community institutions to the forefront. The Department routinely holds meetings and information sharing sessions with businesses of all kinds. Last year I participated in a conference in the Bronx with leaders and members of the United Bodegas of America where I spoke with dozens of bodega owners about the common security issues we see in bodegas, the steps they can take to prevent crime in their stores, and resources the Department provides to help them do so. Meetings like this are invaluable in getting the word out about the options available to these business owners and I look forward to participating in more of these events in the future. I also encourage business owners that have not yet taken advantage of our free security survey service to do so by contacting their local precinct.

I would now like to speak to the bill under consideration today.

**Intro. 1623** would require SBS to create a panic button pilot program. While we support store owners installing comprehensive security systems, the Department is not able to receive a direct notification from a panic button. Even if the technology could accommodate such an alert, it is not advisable. Panic buttons of any kind are not the ideal method to alert police and have become far less necessary with the prevalence of mobile phones, but they can be useful as part of a comprehensive security system. Unfortunately, at times a panic button may be the only option, but calling 911 allows the call taker to gather information so that the officers know what they are walking into which is safer for everyone involved. Any panic button should be part of an integrated security system which is installed, maintained and monitored by a third-party, central station alarm monitoring company. That is what we recommend to store owners when we meet with them or when we conduct the security surveys I mentioned. These systems typically comply with the current industry standards and certification requirements under the relevant industry regulatory bodies and are regularly checked remotely for hardware and software lapses as well as battery functionality. Additionally, under no circumstances should a panic button create an audible sound. If a person with a weapon is alerted that a panic button has been pressed, that will heighten the danger for anyone who is present before trained police officers can arrive and address the situation.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about this critical issue and we look forward to answering any questions you may have.



**YEMENI AMERICAN MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION**

**جمعية التجار اليمنيين الأمريكيين**

**تعلّم - نداءم - نرتقي** Educate - Advocate - Elevate

The Yemeni American Merchants Association (YAMA), is a nonprofit that was established after the very successful Bodega Strike in 2017, against the Muslim Ban. We, at YAMA are pleased to provide testimony on behalf of our 3,000 merchants on Int 1623.

We would like to thank Councilmembers, Gjonaj, King, Diaz, Cabrera, Cohen, Rose, Vallone, Kallos, Holden, Ayala, Torres, Brannan, Gibson, Powers, Levine, Salamanca, Moya, Cumbo, Yeger, Deutsch, Lancman, Comegy, and Lander, for taking a stand against violence impacting small business operators.

YAMA, as an organization is dedicated to elevating, educating and advocating for Yemeni American merchants to protect bodega owners and workers. We would like to ask that City Council to examine if this panic button in small businesses is an effective route in fighting violence and crime, especially in vulnerable communities of color given the high rates of black men being shot.

Merchants and customers have been equally impacted by violence for decades. On December 12, 2017, Abdulla Yafae, a Yemeni American deli clerk was shot in the chest and killed after having a dispute with a customer. We have also seen some cases where customers are targets of violence. On June 20th, 2018, Lesandro Guzman-Feliz, "Junior," was attacked by gang members inside a bodega. After the store owner was pressured into giving Junior away to the gang, the innocent teen was dragged outside and murdered. This incident happened close to St. Barnabas Hospital and in the presence of two police officers who stood there confused as Junior was bleeding out.

This past week, we polled a number of our bodega owners and found that many are interested in the panic button. To support the bill, we would like the council to take the following conditions into consideration:

- Thoroughly assess this plan in the backdrop of police brutality and violence. We are concerned with how this will play out in NYC communities of color.
- We want the City Council to research if other cities have used a panic button to determine if this is an effective route to even consider in NYC.
- We want the NYPD to respond to calls made by YAMA members immediately in incidents of threat. Our members have reported the NYPD shows up an hour or 2 after the call.
- We would like the City Council to support the Bronx Peacebuilders Program bringing bodega owners, community/faith leaders, former gang members and the general community for monthly gatherings to break bread and build trust to diffuse disputes and reduce crimes in neighborhood bodegas.

Sabrin Othman, YAMA Advocacy Director

[Sabrin@yamausa.org](mailto:Sabrin@yamausa.org) 347-938-8913



AN IMPORTANT MBFAA MEMBER UPDATE ON A PROPOSED LOCAL LAW TO AMEND THE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, IN RELATION TO PANIC BUTTONS FOR SMALL BUSINESS OPERATORS.

**This bill would require the Department of Small Business Services to establish a pilot program reimbursing small businesses for the cost of purchasing and installing panic buttons that would notify the Police Department in case of emergency**

**Committee on Small Business**

Mark Gjonaj, Chair

Members: Stephen T. Levin, Bill Perkins, Ydanis A. Rodriguez and Helen K. Rosenthal

**Monday, November 4, 2019 10:00 AM 250 Broadway - Committee Rm, 14th Fl.**

THE FOLLOWING IS A LINK TO THE CITY COUNCIL WEB SITE WITH ALL THE INFORMATION:

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=727082&GUID=2E9B16C2-8532-407E-AFE2-1ADE08FD8544&Options=info&Search=>

THE INFORMATION BELOW HAS BEEN COPIED IN PART FROM The New York Council Website.

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/Calendar.aspx>

*On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Committee on Small Business, chaired by Council Member Mark Gjonaj, will hold a hearing on safety issues facing small businesses and the following bill: Int. No. 1623, in relation to panic buttons for small business operators. Those invited to testify include representatives from the Department of Small Business Services (“SBS”) and the New York City Police Department (“NYPD”), Business Improvement Districts (“BIDs”), chambers of commerce, associations representing small businesses, and other community-based non-profit organizations. (Alan’s comments: MBFAA represents small business (as well as very large businesses.) MBFAA is a community-based (local, not national) non-profit organization providing membership in the New York Metropolitan Area.)*

**METROPOLITAN BURGLAR & FIRE ALARM ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.**

PO Box 54, Brooklyn, NY 11204-0054

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*“Establishment of a storefront panic button pilot program.*

*1. The department shall establish a one-year “storefront panic button pilot program,” during which qualifying businesses will be reimbursed for the cost of purchasing and installing panic buttons made available for use to any employee or patron in case of emergency. Upon request of a qualifying business, the department shall reimburse the business for the allowable costs of purchasing and installing panic buttons, as established by the department, provided that the business provides proof of purchase.”*

*“Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:*

***Department.** “department” means New York city department of small business services.*

***Panic Button.** “Panic button” means a help or distress signaling system that connects an individual in distress or someone assisting that individual with the police department. Such panic button shall also be equipped to alert pedestrians in the vicinity where the panic button is activated, by visual sign or sound.”*

### **“CONCLUSION**

*The Committee seeks to gain a better understanding of the dangers bodegas and other small business owners face while operating. The Chair looks forward to hearing from local small business owners and community associations about their concerns. The Council also looks forward to hearing about the steps SBS and NYPD has taken to address the issues facing bodegas and other small businesses, as well as any policies that have been implemented to ensure that these businesses have all the necessary resources to succeed.”*

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So what is the MBFAA’s role in this proposed legislation.

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- 1) We will be there representing our members (small business and large businesses who do business in New York City) who are properly licensed as per New York State Department of State, **Business of Installing, Servicing or Maintaining Security or Fire Alarm Systems, Article 6-D, General Business Law.**
- 2) We will make clear to the Committee on Small Business Services that (but not limited to):
  - a. Panic alarms, hold-up buttons, associated audible/visual signaling, video imaging, burglar alarms, are required by law to be sold, installed, serviced, maintained by properly licensed businesses.
  - b. All equipment used (since it is considered life safety) shall be either U.L. listed (or other nationally recognized testing agency) for its purpose.
  - c. Proper wiring and wiring protection where required.
  - d. Panic alarms shall be monitored by a U.L. listed and (FDNY) New York City Approved central station.
  - e. MBFAA's support and voluntary technical expertise (limited and subject to the association's attorney's approval.)
- 3) Support the New York City Police Department's view and issues concerning this bill.
  - a. MBFAA's support and voluntary technical expertise (limited and subject to the association's attorney's approval.)
- 4) Support the Bodega Association of the United States.

This is an opportunity for our member companies to support the efforts of the New York City Council, The Committee on Small Business Services, The New York City Police Department, The Bodega Association, as well as many other small businesses around New York City to help stem the threat of crime such as Robberies and Hold-ups using proven and reliable electronic security technology.

This is what your association does for you, here locally, here in New York. If you are already a member THANK YOU.

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If you are not a member please join at <http://www.mbfaa.com/Memapp.htm>

Check it out! WWW.MBFAA.COM

WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER THAN SEPARATE.

"Be a part of it" the MBFAA

Alan Glasser,  
Executive Director, MBFAA  
...and Thank You!

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Good Morning,

My name is Edward Keshecki.

I am retired from the NYC Police Department and I have been in the alarm industry since 1981. I am a past president of the NY Fire Alarm Association and I am currently on the Executive Board of the Association.

As a former responding police officer I have extensive experience in the response to alarms, and I also extensive experience in the installation, service and monitoring of security systems as well as new technology.

I am currently one of the owners of Statewide Monitoring and Statewide Fire Corp., an alarm monitoring facility based in NYC. We currently monitor thousands of burglar alarms, panic alarms, hold up alarms in commercial premises such as banks and stores and fire alarms throughout the metropolitan area, both residential and commercial.

We are the back up monitoring facility for the NYC Dept. Of Education's burglar alarms and we also monitor the fire alarms in every NYC School We also monitor all types of systems for many of the city's major facilities; ie. hospitals, colleges, city and federal buildings.

I would like to offer several considerations which may or may not have been discussed prior to this meeting, but are not addressed in the amendment as written.

Regarding the budget, would this allotment be "per store"? Would the budget include only the installation of a system or would the first year of professional licensed monitoring be included as well? If not, would the budget only include installation of a system and would the business owner be responsible for payment of the monitoring service? Licensed security company professionals are usually best for advising which type of panic device(s) to install and where to install them in line with business practices of the store owner.

Standard methods of alarm transmission are telephone line, internet and/or radio communication. Each premise would be required to provide a phone line or internet line, or a radio communicator could be used as a method of transmission.

Several UL monitoring centers such as ours have the capability to "view/and or listen" upon receipt of an alarm. The additional cost is not exorbitant and would permit the monitoring center to actually view the premise and/or listen in upon receipt of an alarm.

This would aid in the police response. One panic device on site sends a panic signal, but the NYPD would not know if they are responding to an armed holdup in progress, a verbal dispute with the store owner, or an incident where a shoplifter ran out of the store with an item minutes ago.

Proper training of business owners and employees as to when to use the panic device is key to a successful program such as this. Every individual incident which may lead to use of the panic device by the owner or employee is situational and unique both to the store owner and first responders.

I would caution the Council regarding two items in the amendment.

The first would be the use of a panic button by a patron. Patrons should probably not be aware of panic devices.



The second would be the use of audio/visual devices. I was involved in enrolling storeowners for this same type of program several years ago and it was decided to use only a visual device outside the store in the event a panic button was pressed. This served two purposes. It would alert a passing radio car and it would enhance the response. It was decided not to use an audio device since during a hold up it may induce a criminal to take immediate injurious action to the store owner or employee which he otherwise may not have taken.

In closing, I would like to thank the Council members for their time and effort to put forth this program. Additionally, feel free to contact me personally anytime with any questions or to meet for any further discussion. My cell number is below.

Further, I would like to take this opportunity to invite any Council members and any members of the NYPD who may be interested to visit our monitoring facility where we can perform a demonstration of the various panic devices, and to show how these signals are received, processed and handled.

Respectfully,  
Edward Keshecki, Retired NYPD  
Statewide Monitoring  
1 Teleport Drive Suite 202  
Staten Island, NY 10311  
Cell #917-846-8577  
Office #718-494-6414

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Municipal Attorney Michael Clarke

Address: NYPD

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

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: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Deputy Inspector Jessica Corey

Address: NYPD

I represent: \_\_\_\_\_

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: 11-4-19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Warren Gardiner

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

I represent: Small Business Services

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. 1623 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/4/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sabrina Othman

Address: 257 72 St, Brooklyn, NY 11209

I represent: Yemeni American Merchant Association

Address: 6740 5th Ave, Brooklyn NY 11220

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. 1623 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/4/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ed Kesheeki

Address: 1 Teleport Drive SI NY Suite 202

I represent: MONITORING PROVIDER

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

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



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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1623 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 11/4/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alan Glasser

Address: 2133 66<sup>th</sup> Street Brooklyn, NY 11204

I represent: Metropolitan Burglar & Fire Alarm Assoc

Address: POB# 54 Brooklyn - NY 11204

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. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

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

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: FERNANDO MATEO

Address: 100 Ave C, LIC 16

I represent: United Bodegas of America

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

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