

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES  
  
Of the  
  
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN & GENDER  
EQUITY

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February 28, 2025  
Start: 12:13 p.m.  
Recess: 2:57 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Farah N. Louis  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Tiffany Cabán  
Jennifer Gutiérrez  
Kevin C. Riley  
Inna Vernikov

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Ronald Porcelli  
Executive Director of NYC Unity Project

Bryan Ellicott-Cook  
SAGE

Nadia Swanson  
Ali

Zephyr Merkur  
GMHC

Dr. Victoria Ngo  
Committee of Interns and Residents

Queen Jean  
The People of of NYC Black Trans Lib

Dahlia Abrams

Aspen

Soren Beck

Jaclyn Blake

Julia Davidson

Tiffany Jade Munroe  
Caribbean Equality Project

Kimberleigh Joy Smith  
Callen Lorne Community Health Center

Jasmina Salimova  
Girls for Gender Equality

Mason Crawford  
Safe Horizon

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Allyssa Lamb

Joyati Ray-Chaudhuri

Debi Ray-Chaudhuri

Michael Jarvela

Kristine Dicolandrea

Diana Adams  
Chosen Family Law Center

Ethan Lin  
Legal Aid Society

Julian Castranovo  
Brooklyn Legal Services

Vladimir Martinez  
LGBT Community Center

Poonam

Sam Skallar

Alaina Daniels  
Transformative Schools

Ro Pena  
Transformative Schools

Sharon Leslie Brown

Raul Martinez

Kate Tiskus  
Collective Public Affairs

Audacia Ray

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Julia Daunis

Amelia Prochaska

Natalie Fiorenzo

Dr. George Dania

Erika Nunez-Cespedes

Andy Izenson



2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon and  
3 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for  
4 the Committee on Women and Gender Equity. At this  
5 time, we ask that you silence all electronic devices,  
6 and at no time are you to approach the dais. If you  
7 have any questions throughout the hearing or would  
8 like to sign up for in-person testimony, please see  
9 one of the Sergeant at Arms. Chair Louis, we're  
10 ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [gavel] Good afternoon  
12 everyone. Thank you for joining us today. My name  
13 is Farah Louis and I'm the Chair of the Committee on  
14 Women and Gender Equity. Before we begin, I would  
15 like to note that we are joined by Council Members  
16 Schulman and Hanif. I would also like to welcome  
17 everyone that has joined our hearing for-- our  
18 hearing-- this hearing on oversight ensuring access  
19 to supports for transgender, gender non-conforming  
20 and non-binary people in New York City.  
21 Additionally, we will be hearing eight pieces of  
22 legislation today. Introduction 1203-2025, sponsored  
23 by Council Member Chi Ossé, requiring the Chair of  
24 the Commission on Gender Equity to develop a plan to  
25 support newly-arrived migrants 24 years old and

1  
2 younger and transgender, gender non-conforming, non-  
3 binary, and intersex newly-arrived migrants.

4 Introduction 1204-2025, also sponsored by Council  
5 Member Ossé, requiring the Commission of Health and  
6 Mental Hygiene to develop a health agenda to promote  
7 the health and wellbeing of transgender, gender non-  
8 conforming, non-binary, and intersex New Yorkers.

9 Introduction 1200-2025, sponsored by Council Member  
10 Cabán, in relation to a public information and  
11 outreach campaign regarding legal rights and  
12 resources available to TGNCNBI individuals.

13 Introduction 1201-2025, sponsored by Council Member  
14 Hanif, in relation to access to gender-affirming care  
15 facilities and a case-- sorry-- and a cause of action  
16 related to interference with gender-affirming care.

17 Resolution 0771-2025, sponsored by Council Member  
18 Bottcher, in relation to extending protection of  
19 personal health information. Resolution 0774-2025,  
20 sponsored by Council Member Hudson, in relation to  
21 the Department of Health implementing regulations  
22 requiring hospitals in New York City to adhere to the  
23 World Professional Association for Transgender Health  
24 Standards of Care. Resolution 0781-2025, sponsored  
25 by Council Member Schulman, in relation to the

1 prohibition of out-of-state access to the New York  
2 State Prescription Monitoring Program data for  
3 certain medications including abortion medications,  
4 hormone therapy, and puberty blockers. And finally,  
5 Pre-considered Resolution T2025-324-- that was a  
6 tongue-tier [sic]-- also sponsored by Council Member  
7 Schulman, in relation to providing additional  
8 protections of sensitive health information for  
9 patients, and requiring all health information  
10 networks and providers to provide patients with a  
11 right to restriction of the disclosures of such  
12 patient health information. According to Behavioral  
13 Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey which  
14 collected responses on sexual orientation and gender  
15 identity an estimate of 0.5 percent of people in New  
16 York State identify as transgender or gender non-  
17 conforming. In 2023, the National Youth Risk  
18 Behavior Survey assessed transgender identity in high  
19 school students in the United States and reported an  
20 estimate of 3.3 percent high school students identify  
21 as transgender. In New York City, gender-affirming  
22 care is provided among others by New York City Health  
23 + Hospitals. Health + Hospitals offers services  
24 which include hormone therapy, puberty blockers, and  
25



1 gender-affirming surgeries. Other gender-affirming  
2 care procedures include voice therapy, hair removal,  
3 breast augmentation, chest reconstruction, facial  
4 plastic surgery, and genital reconstruction.  
5 Additional Health + Hospitals provides training to  
6 all staff members on the special health,  
7 psychological and social issues of TGNCNB  
8 individuals. However, some groups face more  
9 challenges when seeking services related to gender  
10 transition in New York City, and overall the  
11 challenges of TGNCNB individuals face in assessing  
12 and utilizing care can contribute to disparities in  
13 healthcare outcomes. More often than not, TGNCNB  
14 individuals suffer from prejudice and discrimination  
15 in access and use of healthcare services. Because of  
16 this discrimination in many health settings, these  
17 negative experiences make them less likely to seek  
18 healthcare services. This is concerning because  
19 studies reveal that members of this community are  
20 more susceptible to health problems such as abuse of  
21 alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, obesity, unprotected  
22 sex, mental disorders, sexually transmitted diseases  
23 as HIV/AIDS, bullying, and cervical and breast  
24 cancer. The relationship between consumers and  
25

1 health services is essential to strengthening the  
2 quality of care. So, in sum, experiences of  
3 discrimination and prejudice against the TGNCNB  
4 community that can directly contribute to a poor  
5 health status. Recently, out of 70 Executive Orders  
6 issues by the federal administration, at least six  
7 have explicitly related to-- are related to sex and  
8 gender identity. One example is Executive Order  
9 14187, designed to withhold federal funding for  
10 organizations that provide gender-affirming care for  
11 19 year olds and younger. In New York City, two  
12 families reported that NYU Langone cancelled  
13 appointments for their teenagers to receive puberty  
14 blockers. In response, the New York State Attorney  
15 General Letitia James issued a warning to healthcare  
16 providers, ordering them to defy President Trump's  
17 orders, saying, "Electing to refuse healthcare to a  
18 class of individuals based on their protected status  
19 is considered discrimination." The Commission on  
20 Gender Equity created by Local Law 45 of 2020 is a  
21 component of the Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial  
22 Justice. CGE operating principles stresses  
23 recognition of the diversity of gender and gender  
24 identity expression. The importance of operating  
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1 with an intersectional lens, the populations of focus  
2 include girls, women, intersex, transgender, and  
3 gender non-conforming and gender non-binary people  
4 regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, race,  
5 faith, gender expression, immigrant status, sexual  
6 orientation, and socioeconomic status. Additionally,  
7 CGE partners with other city agencies to recommend  
8 and advocate for policy changes that advance gender  
9 equity in New York City while supporting research and  
10 analysis of relevant issues to better understand both  
11 the challenges and opportunities for gender equity in  
12 New York City. At today's hearing, the Committee  
13 will seek to understand how CGE will partner with  
14 other agencies to advance gender equity, support  
15 research that will reflect gender identity beyond the  
16 binary male/female, and support community  
17 organizations in light of the Executive Orders and  
18 quickly changing legal landscape of gender  
19 discrimination protection. This hearing will  
20 consider the current landscape of healthcare issues  
21 for TGNCNBI people in New York City to gain a deeper  
22 understanding of how the Council and the City can  
23 address such barriers and support the TGNCNBI  
24 community. The committee will also seek feedback on  
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1 the legislation being heard today. Today, we look  
2 forward to hearing from the administration and  
3 members of the public and other interested  
4 stakeholders, including those with lived experience  
5 who have taken the time to come here today to join  
6 us, and we do thank you. I would like to thank my  
7 own staff as well as Committee Council staff members  
8 who worked so hard on preparing this hearing.  
9 Finally, I now will pass it over to my colleague,  
10 Council Member Hanif, to share her brief remarks.  
11 After Council Member Hanif, we'll have Council Member  
12 Schulman. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Good afternoon.

15 I'm Council Member Shahana Hanif. Thank you to Chair  
16 Louis for holding this critical hearing and including  
17 Intro 1201, the Affirm Act, on today's agenda. I'd  
18 also like to thank Chair Louis, Brooklyn Borough  
19 President Reynoso, and Council Members Bottcher,  
20 Rivera, Ossé, Restler, Hudson, Nurse, and De La Rosa  
21 for introducing this bill alongside me. In the 1990s  
22 and 2000s the Council responded to violent protests  
23 at reproductive health clinics by passing and  
24 strengthening the Clinic Access Law which established  
25 protections for reproductive health patients and to

1 providers who serve them. While there are still  
2 issues with enforcement, this law had set important  
3 prohibitions on unsafe activities that threaten  
4 people entering reproductive health clinics. It is no  
5 secret that anti-Trans protests are growing across  
6 the country, as bigots feel increasingly emboldened  
7 by President Trump's trans erasure agenda. In this  
8 volatile political environment it is important to use  
9 every tool we have to ensure trans patients an access  
10 care. That's why I've introduced the Affirm Act, to  
11 have facilities that provide gender-affirming care  
12 covered by the same protections that apply to  
13 reproductive health facilities. If passed, the Affirm  
14 Act would make it illegal to physically block a  
15 person from entering a facility providing gender-  
16 affirming care, follow or harass a person within 15  
17 feet of the entrance of a facility providing gender-  
18 affirming care, damage a facility providing gender-  
19 affirming care, and interfere with the operation of a  
20 facility providing gender-affirming care. This bill  
21 would also update previous legislation that I passed,  
22 Local Law 76 of 2022 to clarify that if a person  
23 wrongfully has their ability to access gender-  
24 affirming care infringed upon either physically or by  
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1 a lawsuit, they have a private right of action under  
2 New York City law. I look forward to hearing  
3 testimony from the Administration and community  
4 members with us today. I recognize that this is a  
5 complex issue, and I'm eager to hear from experts who  
6 will share how the text can be amended to better meet  
7 our legislative intent. Trans healthcare is  
8 essential. The recent actions of the Trump  
9 Administration and the cowardly compliance of certain  
10 providers are absolutely shameful. I'm proud to be  
11 fighting with my colleagues in this committee and in  
12 the LGBTQ Caucus to ensure New York City is a safe  
13 place for our trans siblings to access critical  
14 medical services. I'd also like to thank gratitude--  
15 extend gratitude to the local trans-led advocacy  
16 groups that are doing so much to support trans New  
17 Yorkers. As we enter the thick of fiscal year 2026  
18 budget cycle, I urge the Council to reflect their  
19 importance in our funding. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you,  
22 Councilwoman Hanif. I want to recognize Council--  
23 we've been joined by Council Member Hudson, and now  
24 we'll hear from Council Member Schulman.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Thank you. I

3 am Council Member Lynn Schulman, Chair of the New  
4 York City Council's Committee on Health and member of  
5 the LGBTQ+ Caucus. Thank you all for being here  
6 today for this important oversight hearing on  
7 ensuring access to supports for transgender, gender  
8 non-conforming, and non-binary people in New York  
9 City. I want to thank Chair Farah Louis and the  
10 Committee on Women and Gender equity for convening  
11 this discussion and for their ongoing commitment to  
12 equality and inclusion. New York City has always  
13 been a place where people of all backgrounds can come  
14 together to build better lives. Our diversity is our  
15 strength, and it is our responsibility to ensure that  
16 every New Yorker regardless of gender identity has  
17 access to the support, resources and opportunities  
18 they need to thrive. Over the years, the City has  
19 taken important steps to expand protections and  
20 services for TGNCNB individuals, from increasing  
21 access to gender-affirming healthcare to  
22 strengthening anti-discrimination laws, but we know  
23 there's still more work to do. Many individuals in  
24 this community continue face barriers in accessing  
25 healthcare, securing stable housing, and finding safe

1 and affirming workplaces. These challenges affect  
2 not just individuals, but families, neighborhoods,  
3 and the entire fabric of our city. Today's hearing  
4 is an opportunity to listen, learn and collaborate on  
5 solutions. We will hear from advocates, service  
6 providers and members of the TGNCNB community about  
7 what is working, where gaps remain and how we can  
8 improve city services to better meet people's needs.  
9 Our goal is to ensure that every person no matter  
10 their gender identity feels safe, supported, and  
11 empowered to reach their full potential. I also just  
12 want to take a moment to address an issue that has  
13 become even more urgent in recent months, the growing  
14 efforts in other states to limit access to gender-  
15 affirming care and reproductive healthcare. That is  
16 why I am proud to sponsor a resolution calling on the  
17 New York State Legislature to introduce and pass and  
18 for the Governor to sign legislation to prohibit out-  
19 of-state access to New York's Prescription Monitoring  
20 Program data for certain medications including  
21 abortion medications, hormone therapy, and puberty  
22 blockers. This legislation is essential to protect  
23 the privacy of our transgender, non-binary and gender  
24 non-conforming residents and ensure they can receive  
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1 the care they need without fear of surveillance or  
2 criminalization. By working together across  
3 government, nonprofit organizations and the private  
4 sector, we can continue making New York City a leader  
5 in inclusivity and opportunity. I look forward to  
6 today's discussion and to finding ways to strengthen  
7 our city's commitment to equity and fairness for all.  
8 Thank you. I'll now hand the mic over to Chair Louis.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council  
11 Member. Now we'll hear from Council Member Hudson.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so  
13 much, Chair Louis, both for your leadership and  
14 allyship [sic], particularly in this moment. I don't  
15 need to tell anyone that the federal government is  
16 making consistent and aggressive efforts to undermine  
17 the rights of the trans community. As a member of  
18 the New York City Council's LGBTQIA+ Caucus and its  
19 former co-chair, I'm proud that this council is  
20 matching its solidarity with real action. The  
21 legislative package we're hearing today will work to  
22 improve standards for trans healthcare, strengthen  
23 privacy measures, protect access to gender-affirming  
24 care, and take crucial steps to uphold fundamental  
25 human rights at both the city and state level. And

1 these bills will not only protect our transgender,  
2 non-conforming and non-binary neighbors, it will also  
3 safeguard all New Yorkers, because when our most  
4 vulnerable communities are protected, everyone  
5 benefits. Thank you.

6  
7 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council  
8 Member. I will now turn the mic to Committee Counsel  
9 to administer the oath to the Administration.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please raise your  
11 right hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
12 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your  
13 testimony for this committee and to respond honestly  
14 to Council Member's questions?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: I do.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Sorry. You may  
18 begin.

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Chair  
20 Louis, members of the Committee on Women and Gender,  
21 distinguished members of the City Council and the  
22 public, good afternoon. I am Ronald Porcelli,  
23 Executive Director of the NYC Unity Project. I'm  
24 grateful to the New York City Council and the  
25 Committee on Women and Gender for hosting this

1 hearing today. The NYC Unity Project is the City's  
2 LGBTQ+ interagency coordinating body housed in the  
3 Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice. As an  
4 innovation hub of novel programming, the NYC Unity  
5 Project coordinates across city agencies to incubate  
6 culturally competent services tailored to meet the  
7 needs of the LGBTQ+ community, particularly TGNCNB  
8 people, people of color, and youth. The Unity  
9 Project works across three main sectors: economic  
10 mobility, acceptance and anti-discrimination, and  
11 health equity. The Unity Project implements  
12 programming through a community-driven approach,  
13 investing in community-based organizations, and  
14 developing strategic partnerships across the private  
15 sector, nonprofit organizations, and academia.  
16 Beyond fostering culturally competent services, the  
17 Unity Project focuses on four additional pillars:  
18 interagency coordination, community engagement and  
19 education, policy and protections, and resource  
20 access. NYC government has taken enormous strides to  
21 uplift and support the TGNCNB community, and the  
22 wider LGBTQ+ community. After centuries of  
23 discrimination and persecution, the past few decades  
24 have seen extraordinary advances in equity for TGNCNB  
25

1 folks, beginning here at the birthplace of Stonewall,  
2 where a rebellion ignited a movement that liberated  
3 countless individuals from shame, ostracization, and  
4 persecution—both in New York City and across the  
5 globe. We have witnessed a profound push for greater  
6 rights, protections, and services for LGBTQ+ people.  
7 Yet, the work is far from over. We persist,  
8 navigating evolving challenges and confronting gaps  
9 that remain. We will continue to approach these  
10 needs with compassion, commitment, and empathy. We  
11 look forward to this hearing, the opportunity to  
12 speak before the council, and candid, thoughtful  
13 public testimony. First, with regards to policies and  
14 protections, the robust protections of the New York  
15 City Human Rights Law prohibit discrimination based  
16 on sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and  
17 gender expression in employment, housing, and public  
18 accommodations. The law safeguards employment rights  
19 related to reproductive health, including gender-  
20 affirming care and hormone therapy. To uphold these  
21 protections, the New York City Commission on Human  
22 Rights, CCHR, enforces the Human Rights Law through a  
23 combination of investigations, legal action,  
24 settlements, penalties, and public education. LGBTQ+

1 individuals deserve respectful, high-quality, and  
2 culturally affirming healthcare without fear of  
3 discrimination or bias. Knowing and understanding  
4 their rights is essential to ensuring they can access  
5 care, services, and support. To uphold these rights,  
6 the Health Department developed the LGBTQ+ Health  
7 Care Bill of Rights, a critical initiative that  
8 outlines local and state protections designed to  
9 empower community members in advocating for their  
10 health and well-being. This bill of rights,  
11 available in multiple languages, serves as a tool for  
12 awareness and action, reinforcing that health care  
13 providers and staff are legally obligated to treat  
14 LGBTQ+ individuals with dignity and equity.

15 Similarly, the Non-Discrimination Policy of the New  
16 York City Public Schools ensures that all students  
17 can learn in a safe and supportive environment, free  
18 from harassment, intimidation, bullying, and  
19 discrimination based on actual or perceived classes,  
20 including gender, gender identity, gender expression,  
21 and sexual orientation. New York City Public Schools  
22 is committed to upholding inclusivity and protecting  
23 all students, ensuring that school environments are  
24 welcoming to all. To further support TGNCNB  
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1 students, the New York City Public School Guidelines  
2 on Gender Inclusion provide a clear framework of best  
3 practices and protocols for school-based and central  
4 office staff. These guidelines help foster  
5 understanding, inclusivity, and respect for TGNCNB  
6 students while ensuring they receive the same rights  
7 and protections as all students. As part of this  
8 commitment, New York City Public Schools mandated  
9 that every NYC school must have single-occupancy  
10 restrooms available to provide privacy and comfort  
11 for students of all gender identities. In the child  
12 welfare and juvenile justice sectors, the  
13 Administration for Children's Services, ACS, upholds  
14 its Non-Discrimination Policy to protect LGBTQ+ youth  
15 and families. Its core policy, Promoting a Safe and  
16 Respectful Environment for LGBTQAI+ Youth and Their  
17 Families, mandates inclusive, discrimination-free  
18 environments in child welfare and juvenile detention  
19 systems. Additionally, ACS provides Trans Health-  
20 Related Policy & Guidance to facilitate affirming  
21 health care, including coverage for services not  
22 reimbursable by Medicaid. Similarly, the Department  
23 of Homeless Services, DHS, Policy on Serving  
24 Transgender, Nonbinary, and Intersex Clients aims to  
25

1 close service gaps for clients of all gender  
2 identities experiencing homelessness, with a focus on  
3 respectfully accommodating clients who identify as  
4 transgender, non-binary, and intersex. DHS is  
5 committed to a policy of respect for all individuals  
6 and does not tolerate discrimination based on gender  
7 identity or expression. Many members of the LGBTQ+  
8 community continue to face disproportionate rates of  
9 HIV and other STIs, making access to affirming and  
10 culturally responsive sexual health care essential.  
11 The Health Department launched the New York City 2020  
12 Ending the HIV Epidemic Plan, a community-driven  
13 roadmap developed through a year-long planning  
14 process. This plan guides innovative, equity-focused  
15 HIV and sexual health initiatives that address social  
16 and structural factors driving disparities. Through  
17 community engagement and education, we foster  
18 understanding and interconnection between the  
19 government and the public, while equipping  
20 individuals with the knowledge and resources to build  
21 a more supportive society. The City's inaugural  
22 TGNCNB Health Summit, held in May 2024 and organized  
23 by the Health Department and the Unity Project,  
24 represents a groundbreaking initiative designed to  
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1 foster collaboration, education, and community  
2 engagement to promote TGNCNB health. The summit  
3 serves as a dynamic forum that brings together TGNCNB  
4 individuals, community-based organizations, health  
5 care professionals, policymakers, and advocates to  
6 engage in meaningful dialogue and collective action.  
7 The summit spotlights critical issues in transgender  
8 and non-binary health, including barriers to care,  
9 culturally competent medical practices, and  
10 innovative approaches to improving health outcomes.  
11 It provides a platform for sharing best practices,  
12 advancing community-driven health care, and  
13 addressing systemic challenges. The Transgender,  
14 Gender Nonconforming, and Non-Binary Community  
15 Advisory Board, TCAB, operated through the Health  
16 Department and supported by the Unity Project, serves  
17 as a vital bridge between TGNCNB New Yorkers and the  
18 Health Department, ensuring that policies, programs,  
19 and services are shaped by those most impacted.  
20 Created to bridge community with local government and  
21 to address the persistent barriers TGNCNB individuals  
22 face, TCAB provides critical guidance on programming,  
23 educational materials, marketing campaigns, and  
24 clinical services. By fostering direct community  
25



1 engagement, TCAB helps drive meaningful, informed  
2 change, making health care more inclusive and  
3 accessible. To further improve health care  
4 provision, the Health Department and Unity Project  
5 have partnered with Transgender Equity Consulting,  
6 Incorporated to develop a LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency  
7 Training for Health Department Sexual Health Clinic  
8 staff. The three-hour training covers language, key  
9 health considerations, and best practices for  
10 providing affirming care. The Hidden Voices project,  
11 created by the New York City Public School's  
12 Department of Social Studies & Civics, allows  
13 students to find their voice in history, including  
14 LGBTQ+ historical figures, as they become analysts of  
15 the past while making connections to the present. The  
16 Department of Records and Information Services  
17 operates the For the Record Blog, which includes  
18 blogposts with primary sources that give an in-depth  
19 look at the city's LGBTQ+ history. Additionally,  
20 through the DORIS YouTube Channel, DORIS documents  
21 historic footage in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights.  
22 Annually, ACS conducts its Youth Experience Survey  
23 for youth in foster care ages 13 and up. The survey  
24 includes questions on sexual orientation, gender  
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1 identity, and gender expression, aiming to provide  
2 services and improve those services for youth. In  
3 addition, ACS runs the Youth Leadership Council that  
4 places a strong emphasis on the voice of LGBTQ+ youth  
5 to empower youth in the foster care system and  
6 improve existing services. Cultural competency is  
7 further supported through the Family Engagement and  
8 Acceptance Training, FEAT, and LIFT programs under  
9 ACS and the Unity Project. FEAT provides intensive  
10 training for LGBTQ+ mental health clinicians of color  
11 to address family rejection of transgender youth.  
12 Meanwhile, the LIFT program is a six-month  
13 certification designed to equip social workers with  
14 the skills needed to support youth and their  
15 families. The Department of Youth and Community  
16 Development, DYCD, Street Outreach Program is a vital  
17 first point of contact for youth experiencing  
18 homelessness, many of them members of the LGBTQ+  
19 community, providing direct education, service  
20 navigation, and referrals to essential services. CCHR  
21 is deeply committed to community engagement and  
22 education. CCHR's lead advisors and liaisons play a  
23 vital role in educating New Yorkers about their  
24 rights and responsibilities. The Commission also  
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1 provides extensive training, including Human Rights  
2 Law 101 and Working with Transgender and Gender Non-  
3 Conforming Communities. Delivery of culturally  
4 competent services to TGNCNB individuals is at the  
5 core of our work in addressing disparities facing the  
6 community. Ensuring access to high-quality,  
7 affirming health care is essential to the well-being  
8 of the LGBTQ+ community, including TGNCNB people.  
9 Through strategic investments, we are expanding  
10 inclusive primary care, gender-affirming services,  
11 sexual health programs, and HIV prevention efforts.  
12 The Health Department launched PlaySure Network 2.0,  
13 a citywide network of 18 agencies that provide a  
14 comprehensive package of HIV and sexual health  
15 services in health care and non-health care settings  
16 using a one-stop shop model. Through the Building  
17 Equity: Intervening Together for Health, BE InTo  
18 Health initiative, the Health Department supports  
19 nine clinics to implement evidence-based HIV care  
20 models that address the needs of communities most  
21 impacted by HIV. The Health Department's Sexual  
22 Health Clinics provide low-to-no-cost services for  
23 STIs, including HIV. The Health Department is  
24 unwavering in its commitment to ensuring the Sexual  
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1 Health Clinics offer safe, affirming spaces. The  
2 clinics offer STI testing and treatment, expanded HIV  
3 services, counseling, as well as vaccinations,  
4 contraception, and more. The Health Department's  
5 Express Clinics provide a fast and hassle-free option  
6 for STI and HIV testing, with results available in  
7 just hours. Beyond medical care, patient navigators  
8 and social workers offer up to 12 no-cost counseling  
9 sessions, connect individuals to essential support  
10 services, such as substance use treatment, and  
11 continued counseling. In 2022, our clinics led the  
12 city's response to the mpox outbreak, providing  
13 diagnosis, treatment, and vaccination. These  
14 services integrated into existing clinic workflows.  
15 As part of HIV prevention efforts, the Unity Project  
16 supported the Judson Pride Clinic, H+H's flagship  
17 pride health center, to improve access to  
18 confidential, PrEP, services for patients with  
19 privacy concerns. Judson is able to directly  
20 dispense PrEP medication, pre-exposure prophylaxis  
21 medication, directly to patients as part of a  
22 confidential visit for sexual and reproductive health  
23 care. Judson has also started offering the  
24 injectable form of PrEP, which allows patients to  
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1 access PrEP medication confidentially and without  
2 worrying about adherence to daily medication, a  
3 barrier to consistent and effective use. Lastly, to  
4 further ensure high-quality, affirming health care,  
5 the Health Department partners with Callen-Lorde  
6 Community Health Center to provide comprehensive  
7 services for uninsured LGBTQ+ individuals. These  
8 services include primary care to behavioral health  
9 care, ensuring that care is accessible, holistic, and  
10 affirming. Economic empowerment is a critical pillar  
11 of equity, ensuring that individuals have access to  
12 the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. We  
13 are expanding workforce development programs tailored  
14 to the LGBTQ+ community, including TGNCNB people.  
15 Investments in career readiness, job placement, and  
16 leadership development are breaking cycles of  
17 economic hardship and fostering long-term stability.  
18 By prioritizing inclusive hiring practices, workplace  
19 protections, and pathways to success, we are building  
20 a future where every person can achieve financial  
21 security and professional fulfillment. DYCD's SYEP  
22 Pride connects young New Yorkers to supportive and  
23 welcoming early career opportunities by engaging with  
24 employers specifically committed to LGBTQ+ youth  
25

1 through their organizational missions and/or employee  
2 resource groups. DYCD works closely with the NYC  
3 Unity Project to provide training and programming to  
4 providers, worksite supervisors, and participants.  
5 SYEP Pride has partnered with a variety of private  
6 partners, including Google, Disney Theatrical Group,  
7 Louis Vuitton, ABC7, Hermes, Republic Records, Fendi,  
8 Playbill, Nordstrom, and others to deliver innovative  
9 career exploration, career mentorship, and pride-  
10 related events. Supporting mental health, promoting  
11 family and community acceptance, and expanding access  
12 to affirming care are essential to community well-  
13 being. With Unity Project support, Judson Pride  
14 Clinic is building and providing more robust  
15 programming and helping a greater number of patients  
16 access mental health and community support. The work  
17 includes peer support groups, mental health and  
18 wellness groups, vocational workshops, and staff  
19 training in workshop facilitation. In addition, the  
20 Unity Project has supported the renovation of the  
21 second floor of the clinic's century-old facilities  
22 to create a community space for this programming.  
23 The Family Acceptance of LGBTQ+ Youth Initiative,  
24 supported by the Unity Project and implemented by the  
25

1 Health Department, is a groundbreaking program  
2 dedicated to fostering acceptance for LGBTQ+ youth,  
3 particularly TGNCNB youth, among parents, caregivers,  
4 families, and community. Recognizing that family  
5 support plays a crucial role in the mental health and  
6 well-being of young people, the initiative provides  
7 resources to bridge gaps in understanding. The  
8 initiative offers support groups for parents and  
9 caregivers, educational workshops for families,  
10 community members, educators, and service providers,  
11 and one-on-one counseling and conflict mediation to  
12 strengthen families. Additionally, it empowers youth  
13 through a filmmaking initiative for individuals up to  
14 21 years old, allowing them to share their stories  
15 and experiences through creative expression. Social  
16 marketing campaigns further amplify messages of  
17 acceptance. By emphasizing mental health, education,  
18 and cultural competency, the initiative works to  
19 create a more supportive environment where young  
20 people feel valued, respected, and loved. The LGBTQ+  
21 Coalitions are an initiative, supported by the Unity  
22 Project and implemented through the Health  
23 Department, dedicated to reducing trauma and  
24 addressing substance use within LGBTQ+ communities.  
25

1 Recognizing that traditional drug prevention  
2 approaches often fail to consider the unique  
3 challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, LGBTQ+  
4 Coalitions takes a community-driven, culturally  
5 responsive approach that prioritizes risk reduction  
6 and protective factors specific to these communities.  
7 The Health Department's crystal methamphetamine harm  
8 reduction program provides vital support for men who  
9 have sex with men and transgender individuals who  
10 have sex with men and who use crystal  
11 methamphetamine, offering a holistic, affirming, and  
12 non-judgmental approach to care, including supportive  
13 services. The Health Department's Psychosocial  
14 Support Services for TGNCNB People with HIV supports  
15 partners to provide trauma-informed, culturally  
16 affirming care, including individualized counseling,  
17 connections to HIV care and treatment, and referrals  
18 to essential medical and supportive services.  
19 Building strong support systems is essential for the  
20 well-being of TGNCNB youth, especially those  
21 navigating housing instability or food insecurity.  
22 Our initiatives focus on creating safe, affirming  
23 spaces where young people can access resources,  
24 connect with community, and receive support. LGBTQ+



1 youth comprise approximately 40 percent of youth  
2 experiencing homelessness. DYCD's Youth Drop-In  
3 Centers, open to young people aged 14 to 24, serve as  
4 safe havens where youth can access food, clothing,  
5 showers, laundry facilities, and case management  
6 services. These centers also provide referrals to  
7 crisis service programming and additional support  
8 services, ensuring that youth experiencing  
9 homelessness or instability can find the resources  
10 they need. DYCD's Youth Drop-In Centers Expansion,  
11 supported by the Unity Project, is a transformative  
12 progression aimed at providing around-the-clock  
13 support for LGBTQ+ youth in need. With the expansion  
14 to five centers with 24/7 service in all boroughs,  
15 this initiative ensures that young people have access  
16 to safe spaces, essential resources, and supportive  
17 community services at any hour. DYCD's Transitional  
18 Independent Living Youth Housing Program, TIL,  
19 provides longer-term shelter and essential support  
20 for youth experiencing homelessness, aged 16 to 21,  
21 with extended services available for young adults  
22 aged 21 to 24 at designated Homeless Young Adult  
23 sites. DYCD's Food Assistance Program ensures that  
24 food pantries are available in every borough,  
25

1 providing nutritional support to individuals and  
2 families facing food insecurity. Lastly, DYCD's  
3 Crisis Services Programs, offer emergency shelter and  
4 crisis intervention for youth aged 16 to 24 and 21 to  
5 24 at Homeless Young Adult sites. These voluntary,  
6 short-term residential programs provide a safe space  
7 for young people experiencing homelessness while  
8 working toward family reunification when possible. If  
9 returning home is not an option, the program helps  
10 youth access transitional and long-term placements.  
11 Underpinning these efforts across City agencies, the  
12 NYC Unity Project runs the LGBTQ+ Work Group, Shaping  
13 the Future Together, a collaborative effort to  
14 enhance government operations and ensure that city  
15 agencies effectively support LGBTQ+ communities. The  
16 work group brings together LGBTQ+ liaisons from key  
17 agencies to foster interagency cooperation. Through  
18 this coordinated LGBTQ+ Action Group, the city is  
19 committed to building a coalition that advances  
20 LGBTQ+ representation in government, enhances  
21 culturally competent service delivery, and  
22 strengthens engagement with LGBTQ+ New Yorkers. Our  
23 work would not be complete without promoting access  
24 to resources. The Pride and Care health resource  
25

1 booklet, funded by the NYC Unity Project and  
2 developed by the Health Department, provides  
3 information specifically for TGNCNB individuals.  
4 This booklet, available in multiple languages, offers  
5 critical information on gender-affirming care,  
6 primary care, sexual health, safety tips, and  
7 community resources. The Health Department provides  
8 essential tools to help LGBTQ+ individuals find  
9 knowledgeable, affirming, and LGBTQ+-competent health  
10 care providers. The NYC Health Map's LGBTQ Health  
11 Services Directory serves as a vital resource for  
12 those seeking safe, accessible, and high-quality  
13 medical care tailored to their needs. The online  
14 directory features a diverse network of NYC  
15 providers. Beyond simply listing providers, the  
16 LGBTQ+ Health Services Directory is designed to help  
17 individuals make informed decisions about their  
18 health care by highlighting providers with a  
19 demonstrated commitment to cultural competency and  
20 inclusive practices. Additionally, the Health  
21 Department maintains a suite of LGBTQ+ webpages that  
22 offer health information for men who have sex with  
23 men, women who have sex with women, transgender,  
24 TGNCNB individuals, intersex individuals, and also  
25

1 suicide prevention resources. These webpages provide  
2 affirming and compassionate care guidance, outline  
3 health care rights, and include resources for  
4 individuals and their families to make informed  
5 health care decisions. The NYC Department of  
6 Veterans' Services connects LGBTQ+ veterans with  
7 services tailored to their needs. This includes  
8 specialized caregiver support, discharge service  
9 upgrades, medical care access and navigation, support  
10 groups, resource access, and navigation of survivor  
11 and dependent compensation. In addition, veterans who  
12 received an other-than-honorable or dishonorable  
13 discharge due to their sexual orientation, gender  
14 identity, or gender expression may experience  
15 difficulty accessing benefits, including VA home  
16 loans, GI Bill educational benefits, and VA health  
17 care. DVS helps LGBTQ+ veterans impacted by past  
18 discriminatory policies get the benefits they deserve  
19 by connecting them to discharge upgrade assistance  
20 services. Lastly, the NYC Unity Project Website  
21 serves as a digital hub for LGBTQ+ New Yorkers. The  
22 newly launched digital platform serves as a  
23 comprehensive and user-friendly resource hub,  
24 connecting individuals with vital services, programs,  
25

1 and support networks tailored to their unique needs.  
2 Whether seeking health and wellness resources, legal  
3 assistance, housing support, or community-building  
4 opportunities, the NYC Unity Project website offers a  
5 centralized destination designed specifically for  
6 LGBTQ+ New Yorkers. The platform ensures that  
7 individuals can access the information and services  
8 they need to thrive. By bringing together citywide  
9 initiatives and nonprofit and advocacy organizations  
10 under one digital roof, this hub fosters a stronger,  
11 more connected community, while considering privacy  
12 needs. From mental health resources to legal  
13 assistance, the website is more than just an  
14 information portal, it is a lifeline, a support  
15 system, and a multimedia celebration of the  
16 creativity and diversity of LGBTQ+ individuals across  
17 New York City. With regard to the position on  
18 proposed legislation: We are generally in support of  
19 the intent behind proposed legislation that offer  
20 additional protections to the TGNCNB community. At  
21 this time, we, along with our partner agencies, are  
22 still reviewing the specifics of the proposed  
23 legislation. It will be important to protect the  
24 rights of TGNCNB New Yorkers to be free from  
25

1 discrimination and to access care while at the same  
2 time protecting privacy during this volatile time.  
3 We would like to have further discussions with the  
4 Council to discuss the benefits and limitations of  
5 each bill and how we can best address the health and  
6 safety needs of the TGNCNB community. We want to  
7 thank the Council for bringing attention to this  
8 important topic and we look forward to working with  
9 you. From the first bricks thrown at Stonewall to the  
10 policies and protections we fight for today, our work  
11 is part of a long legacy. As we reflect on recent  
12 progress made and new and ongoing challenges, one  
13 thing remains clear: our commitment to dignity,  
14 compassion, and support for the LGBTQ+ community,  
15 particularly TGNCNBI individuals. From the dawn of  
16 time, TGNCNBI people have shaped humanity as healers,  
17 spiritual leaders, innovators, and more. In New York  
18 City, they have played a critical role in shaping our  
19 history and culture. In New York City and throughout  
20 all the collaboration with all of our agencies,  
21 innovation, and continued investment in culturally  
22 responsive services, we continue to build a city  
23 where every person is supported and empowered to  
24 thrive. By focusing on what truly strengthens our  
25

1  
2 community, we move closer to a future of greater  
3 opportunity. Together, we continue our work,  
4 uplifting New Yorkers.

5 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for that  
6 testimony. We'll start with our questions.  
7 President Trump signed several Executive Orders  
8 signaling a change in policy at the federal level to  
9 assert their-- to assert there are two sexes and no  
10 longer recognize transgender and non-binary people.  
11 How has this affected the work of the Commission on  
12 Gender Equity, and what changes will the Commission  
13 make this year in regards to supporting transgender  
14 and non-binary people?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Thank you,  
16 Council Member. I want to reaffirm our protections  
17 at the city level. This is the-- one of the  
18 strongest, if not the strongest, Human Rights Law in  
19 the country. In addition to our local jurisdiction,  
20 we also exist within the jurisdiction within the  
21 state. The state also has a powerful state Human  
22 Rights Law, and then in addition to that, the State  
23 Attorney General has interpreted and enforced this  
24 Human Rights Law. And so with regards to New York  
25 City, we will continue to enforce these provisions,

1 and we will continue to educate on them so that  
2 people are aware of them and the protections that  
3 they have at the local level and also the protections  
4 that they're offered in our wider jurisdiction, the  
5 State of New York.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Has the Commission on  
8 Gender Equity and the Unity Project seen a change in  
9 requested services from the public since the new  
10 federal administration came to office?

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Yes. Thank  
12 you for that question. So, I want to frame this in  
13 the context of we are not new to these challenges.  
14 These are challenges that we have unfortunately been  
15 facing for quite some time, and absolutely since the  
16 time of our immediate local administration. So, this  
17 is work that is ongoing. As to regards to increase  
18 in services, I think that would be Parks Department  
19 salient for H+H, and I don't want to speak on their  
20 half, but-- on their behalf, but it is more than  
21 likely that people will continue to avail themselves  
22 of these services. That is why I also think it is  
23 important that people visit the NYC Unity Project  
24 website. It includes and is newly updated to include  
25 TGNCNBI resources and rights. That includes the City



1 Human Rights Law. It includes different examples on  
2 the Human Rights Law, and it includes how to follow  
3 up to ensure enforcement. It also includes  
4 provisions on hate crimes and a variety of other  
5 information including legal assistance from legal  
6 advocacy organizations. So people should absolutely  
7 avail themselves of those resources, and I would also  
8 say they should avail themselves of those resources  
9 before any particular crisis situation. There is no  
10 doubt a significant number of resources-- it can be  
11 challenging to educate oneself on all of them. I  
12 would encourage people to familiarize themselves with  
13 those resources, to take advantage of them, and  
14 particularly to do it before any particular emergency  
15 situation. During those times it's obviously far  
16 more difficult to navigate, and so it's truly  
17 incumbent that we are aware of our protections and  
18 know how to enforce them.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. One of the  
21 Executive Orders signed by President Trump calls for  
22 the ending of federal funding for organizations that  
23 support gender ideology or transgender people. What  
24 impact will this have on city agency programs, and  
25

1  
2 how will this impact city community-based  
3 organizations?

4 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Thank you,  
5 Council Member. So, that is absolutely a salient  
6 issue, and I would say that that is something that we  
7 are continuing to navigate. That is not only in this  
8 jurisdiction, but that is in jurisdictions across the  
9 country. Obviously, these are issues that were  
10 relatively anticipated. So we will continue to work  
11 through them. I can say that our particular programs,  
12 we continue to work at the local level with OMB to  
13 ensure that they are resourced, and we continue every  
14 single year to assess our needs and to develop  
15 appropriate new needs. So that, I think, answers  
16 your question.

17 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. I'll call  
18 on Council Member Hanif for questions.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you, and  
20 thank you for joining us. I know you didn't provide  
21 a clear position on the package of legislation. Are  
22 you able to talk a little bit about my proposed  
23 legislation, 1201?

24 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, what I  
25 would say to that is we want to continue discussions

1 with you and partner with you to support the bill.

2 As I mentioned, we generally support the intent

3 behind all of these bills. This could not be more

4 pertinent time. So I would like to genuinely express

5 my thanks for the council for all these proposed

6 bills, for also hosting this hearing. That is

7 certainly something that we would like to continue to

8 have follow-up conversations with you to strengthen

9 the bill and really to engage in that partnership.

10  
11 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Could you share

12 how the administration has enforced the existing

13 clinic access law that applies to the reproductive

14 health facilities?

15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, I would

16 say-- and let me actually point you to some of the

17 recent work that we are doing, because I think that

18 it would interest you. So, in response to some of

19 the access to care and safety challenges facing

20 TGNCNB folks in New York City. The Unit Project has

21 funded H+H to develop a coalition of community-based

22 organizations to counter attacks on care. To combat

23 the fear and intimidation tactics that deter

24 individuals from seeking healthcare, this initiative

25 aims to establish durable, embedded support systems

1 within impacted communities. By partnering with  
2 frontline CBOs that serve as trusted advocates,  
3 particularly for TGNCNB individuals, this effort  
4 integrates healthcare advocacy into broader community  
5 initiatives. key activities include participating in  
6 H+H Community Advisory Groups to enhance healthcare  
7 services, visiting H+H Clinics serving targeted  
8 populations to assess care environments, and then  
9 likewise, engaging in peer education sessions to  
10 expand awareness of healthcare options and resources.  
11

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Which CBOs are  
13 funded?

14 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Yeah, that  
15 is a great question. So, that is currently being  
16 contracted with H+H. So, when that is available I'm  
17 happy to share that information with you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And how long has  
19 this been-- how long has this initiative been--

20 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI:  
21 [interposing] So, that's something that we're  
22 starting now in light of these challenges, and when  
23 there is further information we're happy to share  
24 that. It will be on the Unity Project website. Also  
25 happy to share that with you given your interest

1 likely in collaborating with those organizations, and  
2 again, this is really in anticipation of some of the  
3 challenges, but overall this is an important effort  
4 in ensuring access to care.  
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: What other-- Chair  
7 if I could continue my line of questioning? Thank  
8 you. What other steps is the administration taking  
9 in light of our current times?

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Yes. I  
11 love that question. So, as I mentioned before, this  
12 is unfortunately challenges that we have been facing  
13 for quite some time. So, I would reiterate, and I  
14 know that this testimony is lengthy. I would also  
15 share with you with regards to this testimony that  
16 this is essentially a first-of-its-kind historic  
17 document. There has never been a more comprehensive  
18 compilation of services for the LGBTQ+ community and  
19 the TGNCNB community. So, essentially, continuing to  
20 implement these services, continuing to grow these  
21 services, and then most importantly, continuing to  
22 educate on these services. This is why I'm very  
23 grateful that you all have called this hearing today.  
24 We take numerous different routes to educate the  
25 public on these services. Sometimes there are so

1 many services it can be truly challenging to navigate  
2 them, especially the various nuances and how to  
3 access that care. And then lastly, I would say  
4 we're continuing our LGBTQ+ interagency group. We  
5 recently relaunched that late last fall in light of  
6 any potential challenges, and that group brings  
7 together a number of different agencies. I could  
8 rattle them off for you, but DYCD, ACS, COH, DSS,  
9 Commission on Gender Equity, and so on so that we're  
10 partnering across the City and that is in services,  
11 service provision, development of new services, and  
12 then community engagements so that we're getting this  
13 information out there and so that people know we  
14 support you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. And then  
17 I know you-- you know, this is a comprehensive  
18 breakdown of our city agencies are ensuring  
19 inclusivity of the trans community and ways to expand  
20 protections within each agency. Is the City doing--  
21 what is the City doing in terms of just the broader  
22 population of New York City as we're listening to  
23 fear-mongering rhetoric from Trump to including our  
24 leaders here? How are we not just specifically  
25 looking at how-- looking to ensure that trans people

1 receive the care they receive, but how are we also  
2 making sure that New Yorkers know that this is a city  
3 where we welcome trans people, this is a city where  
4 we know not to violate a trans person's right? Like,  
5 what are we doing to like push that home?  
6

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Can you  
8 clarify? Are you speaking, like, writ large? Are  
9 you speak--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: [interposing] Writ  
11 large.

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Are you  
13 speaking for the TGNCNB community specifically with  
14 that question?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yeah.

16 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Okay. So,  
17 definitely with regards to the TGNCNBI resources and  
18 rights, that is a new update that was made on the  
19 Unity Project website. We will continue to find ways  
20 to share that out and educate for people. It's-- it  
21 can be challenging. When you're faced with some  
22 particular crisis, sometimes you don't know what to  
23 do. You face something that's particularly  
24 emotional, it's challenging to navigate. So we have  
25 that information there available. As I previously

1 mentioned, I think it is absolutely important that  
2 people know your rights and familiarize yourself with  
3 your rights. That information is available online.  
4 CCHR continues to educate on this, and I think that  
5 is more salient than ever. They have a transgender  
6 community liaison. They also have an LGBTQ+ lead  
7 advisor, and so they're constantly engaging, and that  
8 is in a number of different trainings, but also in  
9 response to bias incidents, community organizing.  
10 There's an upcoming LGBTQ+ Iftar where they will at  
11 one point also be celebrating, but then also  
12 educating people and showing how they can access  
13 these sorts of resources. So all of that work is  
14 ongoing, and if anything it is ramping up. These are  
15 obviously challenging times writ large. So, you  
16 know, in response to that, we're getting to work.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And are you-- do  
19 you have the data as to like how many complaints were  
20 reported through CCHR, and what actions? And I only  
21 ask this because CCHR is not well-funded.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: I do have  
23 that data. Let me find it for you. Okay. In fiscal  
24 year 24-- yeah, excuse me-- 24 cases were filed based  
25 on membership of NYC's LGBTQ+-- I totally read that



1  
2 wrong, excuse me. In fiscal year 24, cases that were  
3 filed based on membership of NYC's LGBTQ+IA  
4 communities include 59 cases filed involving gender  
5 which encompasses gender identity and gender  
6 expression. This is also a common area of inquiries.  
7 So there are 200+ inquiries that have been related to  
8 this subject. And then 24 cases were filed related to  
9 sexual orientation. This is also a common area of  
10 inquiry with 81 inquiries in that particular case.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And is this, like,  
12 steady or is this more than the previous year? I'm  
13 just trying to understand how our city both is like  
14 collecting or being a resource for these kind of  
15 reporting, and also are we reducing the cases and  
16 solving the ones that are coming to the agency?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, with  
18 regards to that extra follow-up for additional fiscal  
19 years and really illustrating that sort of trend that  
20 you're alluding to, I would defer to the City  
21 Commission on Human Rights. They would be able to  
22 provide you that information, and then it would  
23 really elucidate what we're seeing. Hopefully we  
24 don't see a rise, but you know, obviously that is a  
25 potentiality and so I would-- we can definitely

1 connect and showcase that sort of data. And then I  
2 would also say writ large-- and this is beyond the  
3 local jurisdiction-- there is a tremendous amount of  
4 catch-up that needs to be done with regards to SOGIE.  
5 That is sexual orientation gender identity expression  
6 data, and so that is an ongoing trend. To put this  
7 in the wider context, the conversation that we're  
8 having today would have been very different from the  
9 conversation 10 years ago and 15 years ago with  
10 regards to this entire population. So, this is  
11 something that I think writ large, and perhaps it's a  
12 call of action to academia and nonprofit  
13 organizations to really focus on this SOGIE data  
14 collected and get more information with regards to  
15 the community, particularly the numbers that you're  
16 looking for.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. Yeah, I  
19 would really appreciate that, and I think that  
20 information should be made available to us  
21 irrespective of what the political climate is,  
22 because this is one of CCHR's, like, main-- a main  
23 task, because these protections are in our city, and  
24 for us not to notice a trend or for us to not like  
25 really be more proactive I think is an issue that I

1 have. I want to ask about the denials at the various  
2 hospitals, NYU Langone and Mount Sinai. I had heard  
3 from families in my district who've had pre-existing  
4 appointments. Their appointments were cancelled.  
5 What steps is the city taking to ensure healthcare  
6 providers are not discriminating against patients?  
7 And if you could just be succinct since I have two  
8 more questions.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Yes, I will  
11 be succinct. So, that is obviously a sensitive and  
12 challenging issue now. The-- for that in particular  
13 two bodies I would refer to is the City Commission on  
14 Human Rights with regards to enforcement there. I  
15 would also point you to the State Attorney General's  
16 Office who has also au pined on this particular  
17 issue. And then H+H is doing an extraordinary job to  
18 fill the gap here, and they have continued to do an  
19 extraordinary job. And so, folks can avail  
20 themselves of H+H, and then likewise for concerns  
21 reach out to--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: [interposing] So,  
23 do you know if these families, patients, were able to  
24 receive the care they needed? Like, was the

Administration in touch given how much of a-- this was big news in our city. There was a big uproar.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Absolutely. So with regards to the specifics of that, I don't-- I can't say definitively, so I don't want to offer that or offer speculation. My understanding is that that indeed has happened and that those patients have been able to access care at H+H. That is my understanding.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: At H+H?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then is the administration tracking which healthcare providers within the city are continuing to deliver or resuming delivery of gender-affirming care? I know you mentioned H+H is. What's the funding capacity for H+H given, you know, this council, we ask for more-- there to be more H+H facilities and for there to be more funding to H+H facilities.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: I share the same commitment as you do. The past two-- this fiscal year and last fiscal year I dedicated my entire budget to H+H, particularly the Judson Pride Clinic with is H+H's premier Pride Clinic and renders

1 a significant number of these services. So while I  
2 can't speak to H+H's budget, and I don't know if they  
3 would want me to in this particular instance. That  
4 is definitely a concern, and that is definitely  
5 something that we would continue to work with.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then the State  
8 Attorney General, State Education Department, and  
9 even the State Health Department have put out  
10 statements making clear that many of Trump's  
11 Executive Orders are for the most part not  
12 enforceable on their faces, and in many cases  
13 contravene not only New York law, but also federal  
14 law and the Federal Constitution, and that New York  
15 entities should not be complying in advance. Has our  
16 City put out similar statements? Are there  
17 statements in the works?

18 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Thank you  
19 for that question. I want to acknowledge that  
20 question. So, what I would say, and I framed this  
21 already, that these are challenges that have been  
22 ongoing, and they will continue to be ongoing  
23 challenges, unfortunately. And we will continue to  
24 do this work so I can provide further context. But I  
25 will say preliminarily that not only is the work

1 ongoing, not only is it being strengthened, but it is  
2 being shared out, and I think that commitment is  
3 clearly available. As I mentioned, we just shared out  
4 the TGNCNBI rights and resources. It very much  
5 coincides quite similarly with the information that  
6 was in the proposed bill of Council Member Cabán, and  
7 then I could walk you through all of the  
8 administration's commitments that have occurred these  
9 past three years. It would be quite lengthy and  
10 quite-- much of that is enshrined in our existing  
11 testimony. The only other thing I would add to  
12 address that question is in an effort to support  
13 LGBTQ+ community, the Mayor signed Executive Order 32  
14 to protect access to gender-affirming healthcare in  
15 New York City. The Executive Order prevents the use  
16 of city resources to detain any individual who is  
17 providing or receiving gender-affirming healthcare  
18 services in the five boroughs. Additionally, the  
19 Executive Order denies the use of resources by the  
20 City of New York to cooperate with any prosecution or  
21 investigation by another individual for providing or  
22 receiving gender-affirming care.  
23

24 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: I think the Council  
25 Member's question was is-- has the administration

1  
2 been vocal? Is there a statement or any information  
3 out there about that? And that's what she's asking.  
4 It's a yes or no.

5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: I under-- I  
6 want to-- let me say, I understand that question, and  
7 I want to acknowledge that question, and--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: [interposing] So  
9 not yet.

10 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, I would  
11 reaffirm that we have through our information that we  
12 have shared and communicated particularly with  
13 regards to TGNCNB rights and resources. We have  
14 shared all that information, but I also want to  
15 acknowledge your-- the question. I understand your  
16 question, and I have-- I believe I've answered it.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yeah, I mean, I  
18 think as the city with the most protection, that we  
19 still have more to do, and if these other legislative  
20 entities have been able to put out statements that  
21 show that trans rights will be protected and not  
22 weakened, we have a responsibility to do even better.  
23 And then you-- as we were doing this back and forth,  
24 it really dawned on me that having H+H and CCHR, some  
25 of these other agencies, would have been helpful to

1  
2 today's conversation given you're leading the  
3 interagency effort, but then there's like H+H  
4 funding, and I'd love to know how many patients they  
5 are seeing. And then with CCHR, the kind of-- you  
6 know, they're filling this important gap of-- people  
7 are unlikely to report to let's say the NYPD and  
8 would rather go to CCHR, and so I'm very curious as  
9 to like how those cases are handled. Do we have  
10 enough case mangers? But that's just one reflection.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Yes. Thank  
12 you for that. I totally understand your point. What  
13 I would offer is there is significant benefit to  
14 having the NYC Unity Project. This is a very high,  
15 broad overview, and as I mentioned, the document, the  
16 testimony is unequivocally historic and first of its  
17 kind document. And so, while there might not be that  
18 particular, you know,-- there's a number of agencies  
19 that would have been highly relevant. This does  
20 afford the Council the opportunity to see this high-  
21 level overview, to hear from the NYC Unity Project.  
22 There is no comparative agency to provide this sort  
23 of information this in-depth and this broad across  
24 city agencies. So, I could have had my fellow, you  
25 know, government workers here with me, but, you know,



1 at the same time it doesn't afford you the  
2 opportunity to ask in-depth questions on these  
3 various programs, services, engagement. And then  
4 what I would, you know, further add, this document is  
5 a tool for you all. This document is a tool for the  
6 people in this room. So avail themselves of it.  
7 Familiarize themselves of it, and then access those  
8 resources. The more people access those resources  
9 and engage, the better resources that we can render.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank-- and it is a  
13 robust document, so I thank you for sharing it with  
14 us. With so many young people in chambers today,  
15 some have come in, some are still here, and with so  
16 much uncertainty with the Administration, I just have  
17 some quick questions regarding some of the bills that  
18 we heard today. Relating to Introduction 1200-2025,  
19 are there any obstacles to implementing a public  
20 information and outreach campaign for legal rights  
21 and resources for transgender and gender non-  
22 conforming New Yorkers?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, with  
24 regards to that bill, again, I would say we generally  
25 support the intent of that bill. Unity Project was

1 not really a named agency. I believe-- I don't know  
2 if there was a named agency for that bill. I would  
3 also say that I believe that the broad intent of this  
4 is absolutely essential. I am very much in line with  
5 this bill. We can continue to flesh it out, but  
6 every single thing that is in the bill is also on the  
7 Unity Project website, and I believe and I continue  
8 to stress throughout this entire Q&A and in the  
9 testimony getting people access to these resources is  
10 absolutely essential, availing themselves of it.  
11 There's a lot to navigate. So having that sort of  
12 understanding and doing it before you're in an  
13 emergency situation is absolutely essential. We  
14 don't create these resources, you know, just for  
15 ourselves. We don't exist in some white ivory tower.  
16 We are working with the community, and we want people  
17 to avail themselves of these resources.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Relating  
20 to Introductions 1202, how has the City responded to  
21 the unique needs of transgender and non-binary  
22 migrants?

23 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Thank you.  
24 Thank you for that question. So with regards to that  
25

1  
2 proposed legislation, all the services that we have  
3 mentioned today are available to all New Yorkers.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay. And what are  
5 the barriers to responding to the needs of  
6 transgender and non-binary migrants?

7 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, that is  
8 a great question. There's a number of barriers, so I  
9 won't wax too poetic on that, but for sure language  
10 access is an absolute issue. Educating people and  
11 having them understand that this is available to all  
12 New Yorkers. People are frequently concerned about  
13 what some of the limits on this is, whether there's--  
14 what are the potential age limits, etcetera,  
15 etcetera, etcetera. And so having people understand,  
16 and this is often language that's frequently included  
17 in any of those communications is that this is  
18 available to all New Yorkers. And then of course,  
19 and this is writ large, educating on the actual  
20 services. There's no doubt that the population of  
21 the community that you're speaking to, you face a  
22 number of challenges coming here, navigating language  
23 challenges, so on and so forth. And so, again,  
24 familiarizing yourself with really the mountain of  
25 services and taking advantage of them.

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: thank you for that.

3 And I know the Council Member already asked a  
4 question about Executive Order 14187, but I wanted to  
5 know if you could highlight, because you know this is  
6 an interagency response. I wanted to know what steps  
7 are you aware of that DOHMH has taken to ensure that  
8 patient of H+H facilities will be protected in this  
9 situation? Well, if a situation arises. Because  
10 that would be reported back to you guys at some  
11 point, right?

12 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, with  
13 regards to that question, we continue to educate on  
14 the City Human Rights Law and educate on it with  
15 regards to healthcare. When you have such an  
16 extensive Human Rights Law-- I remember when I was a  
17 practicing attorney and I was first introduced to the  
18 Human Rights Law, it is quite comprehensive, and it  
19 can be challenging to understand all the different  
20 factual circumstances in which it is applicable. And  
21 so, continuing to educate on that particularly in the  
22 healthcare context is absolutely essential. It's not  
23 necessarily super intuitive. When there is a lot of  
24 text, it takes times. So, we will continue to  
25 educate on that, and continue obviously to enforce

1  
2 the City Human Rights Law in those healthcare  
3 settings.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for that.  
5 Local Law 30 of 2021 established a Gender and Racial  
6 Equity Advisory Board to advise the Mayor and Council  
7 on issues relating to gender and racial equity in the  
8 provision of covered healthcare services and  
9 healthcare services in hospitals. The board is  
10 required to deliver a report with the result of its  
11 review of protocols that hospitals use to address  
12 inequity and recommendation measures to address  
13 gender and racial equity in hospitals. I'm aware  
14 they're not here, but if you could answer that  
15 interagency response or what you're aware of. What  
16 is the status of the board?

17 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, I  
18 cannot speak to that directly. What I would say is  
19 Commission on Gender Equity, we work very closely  
20 with them. They have been absolutely instrumental  
21 partners in furthering the work of the NYC Unity  
22 Project and marketing that work and educating the  
23 public in that work and doing outreach. So we are  
24 absolutely instrumental partners. I am not on that  
25 particular board that you speak of, but that is

1 definitely something that I can engage with CTE on. I  
2 would also say that CTE is the Unity Project's sister  
3 office. We are within the same family, the Mayor's  
4 Office of Equity and Racial Justice.  
5

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for that. I  
7 don't know if you have one more question. We have a  
8 robust testimony.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yeah, I'll-- I'll  
10 ask a final question. This is a yes or no. Does  
11 the City uphold existing New York State and New York  
12 City insurance health protections for TGNC people?

13 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: So, I don't  
14 know if I can necessarily answer that particularly if  
15 it's in a private context, I would have to follow up  
16 with you on that question. I will definitely follow  
17 up.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: But I just want to  
19 know if like we are upholding the existing medical  
20 insurance process to make-- protections in insurance?  
21 I would hope that it's a yes.

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: That is my  
23 understanding. That is--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: [interposing] I  
25 would hope that it's a yes.

2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: That is my  
3 understanding, but I would definitely, before I offer  
4 anything to you like to follow up on that particular  
5 point, and so I could absolutely engage with you.  
6 Again, that's my understanding, but I don't want to  
7 overstate that without providing further  
8 clarification.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much for  
10 your time. You're dismissed.

11 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PORCELLI: Thank you  
12 so much, and I will be staying afterwards to hear  
13 public testimony. Everything that people share is  
14 absolutely invaluable and critical, particularly in  
15 this time. You have to lean on and rely on  
16 communities. So my generous thanks to the City  
17 Council, and I look forward to very candid public  
18 testimony.

19 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for  
20 sticking around. I now open the hearing for public  
21 testimony. I remind members of the public that this  
22 is a government proceeding, and that decorum shall be  
23 observed at all times. As such, members of the  
24 public shall remain silent at all times. The witness  
25 table is reserved for people who wish to testify. No

1 video recording or photography is allowed from the  
2 witness table. Further, members of the public may  
3 not present audio or video recordings as testimony,  
4 but may submit transcriptions of such recordings to  
5 the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion of the hearing  
6 record. If you wish to speak today-- at today's  
7 hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the  
8 Sergeant at Arms and wait to be recognized. When  
9 recognized, you will have two minutes to speak on  
10 today's oversight topic: Oversight Hearing Ensuring  
11 Access to Support for Transgender, Gender  
12 Nonconforming, and Non-binary TGNCNB people in New  
13 York City, and one of the pieces of legislation being  
14 heard today. If you have written testimony or  
15 additional written testimony you wish to submit for  
16 the record, please provide a copy of that testimony  
17 to the Sergeant at Arms. You may also email written  
18 testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) within 72  
19 hours of the hearing. Audio and video recordings  
20 will not be accepted. I now call the first panel.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Bryan Ellicott-Cook,  
23 Nadia Swanson, Zephyr Merkur, Victoria Ngo, Queen  
24 Jean. Bryan, you may begin.



2 BRYAN ELLICOTT-COOK: Good afternoon,  
3 Chair Louis, members of the Committee, my name is  
4 Bryan Ellicott-Cook. My pronouns are they and he,  
5 and I'm the Director of Government Relations at SAGE,  
6 the nation's largest and oldest organizations  
7 dedicated to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ elders,  
8 especially those who are TGNB people who served and  
9 people living with HIV. SAGE fully supports all of  
10 the agenda items before the committee today, as those  
11 measures are essential to ensuring dignity, safety,  
12 and the wellbeing of trans women, trans men, and non-  
13 binary individuals. Across the country an alarming  
14 push to erase our existence from the public is here.  
15 There are respective laws, roll-backs on our rights,  
16 and denials to basic healthcare. Even the policing  
17 of how we have the ability to travel and live our  
18 lives. SAGE fully supports the asks from the trans  
19 equity fund to raise-- to be raised to \$10 million  
20 prioritizing trans-led and trans-serving  
21 organizations. We support Resolution 0771 which  
22 calls on the Governor to sign S929 and A2141  
23 protecting personal information to not just to a  
24 privacy issue, it is now an issue of survival.  
25 Beyond this specific policy measure, I want to urge

1 the Committee to consider renaming itself to better  
2 reflect the TGNB community it serves. Language  
3 matters, and a more inclusive name would send a  
4 powerful message that all gender diverse individuals,  
5 especially those most marginalized that we are seen,  
6 valued and protected under the scope of this  
7 committee's work, at a time when our committee faces  
8 escalating threats from hostile policies. Visibility  
9 and inclusion in the institutions meant to protect us  
10 is more critical than ever, and SAGE remains  
11 committed to working alongside this committee, the  
12 City Council and all of our advocates to advance  
13 policies that uplift and safeguard TGNB older adults  
14 and the next generation of TGNB New Yorkers. Thank  
15 you.  
16

17 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Nadia  
18 Swanson?

19 NADIA SWANSON: Thank you, Chair Louis  
20 and Council Member Hanif, for holding this hearing.  
21 My name's Nadia Swanson. I use they/them pronouns.  
22 I'm the Director of Technical Assistance and Advocacy  
23 at the Ali Forney Center, the world's largest and  
24 most comprehensive program for LGBTQ unhoused youth.  
25 We support all the, you know, testimony, the hearings

1 and bills and resolutions that are in the agenda  
2 today. I'm going to focus on a few key areas. One,  
3 seconding of my colleague over there, that we support  
4 the trans equity funding be increased to \$10 million  
5 at least, that the-- that fund prioritizes trans-led  
6 organizations, being the organizations that are going  
7 to benefit from that increase, and to also fund  
8 technical assistance support for trans-led serving  
9 organizations to be able to actually apply and keep  
10 up with the rigorous requirements that we have for  
11 funding. I would secondly like to speak about trans  
12 runaway and homeless youth in transitional housing,  
13 specifically ages 21 to 24. We operate the only  
14 runaway and homeless youth transitional housing  
15 program from 16 to 20. It's an 18-bed site. This  
16 program has been incredibly successful in providing  
17 specialized services led by trans directors and staff  
18 to ensure youth are able to graduate to stability  
19 after a two-year length stay. We need a transitional  
20 program for 21 to 24 year olds. 21 to 24-year-old  
21 trans youth are our most vulnerable. They are the  
22 ones who are at the most risk and the ones who are  
23 experiencing the most risky coping mechanisms, and  
24 they're left out, especially with our very, very,  
25

1 very long wait list. They're often waiting six  
2 months to even get out of a Drop-in Center. And then  
3 I want to focus on Ossé's bill Intro 1203. The  
4 Mayor's plan for asylum-seekers released in March  
5 2023 left 16 and 24 year olds out completely and took  
6 away the critical access to DHS. Because RHY  
7 programs are severely underfunded, we rely heavily on  
8 referring youth to Marsha's House while they wait an  
9 average of six months to be placed in our housing  
10 program. Trans youth leave the HERRCs because they  
11 don't feel safe and would rather stay in the 24/7  
12 Drop-in Center even though they don't have access to  
13 a bed due to the no-sleep directive in 2023. I'll  
14 just briefly just name that like I have spoken to the  
15 Mayor directly. I've spoken to the Commissioner of  
16 DHS. I've spoken to OASO. I've done testimony all  
17 about this issue, and it's been just passed and  
18 passed and passed, and I'm thankful for that.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Thank  
21 you. Zephyr?

22 ZEPHYR MERKUR: Thank you, Chair Louis  
23 and members of the Committee on Women and Gender  
24 Equity and other esteemed Council Members for the  
25 opportunity to testify. My name is Zephyr Merkur

Ferrera [sp?] and my pronouns are they/them/theirs.

I am Outreach Coordinator at GMHC's Testing Center.

I've been working at GMHC for five years serving in

our transgender, gender non-binary, and gender non-

conforming, or TGNCNB Hub as an HIV testing

counselor. I'm here to update you on GMHC's ongoing

commitment to serving TGNCNB New Yorkers to express

our support for the introductions and resolutions on

today's agenda. Founded in 1982 as Gay Men's Health

Crisis, the world's first HIV/AIDS service

organization, GMHC provides comprehensive services to

nearly 5,600 New Yorkers living with and affected by

HIV and AIDS every year. Our clients represent

populations with a high risk of HIV infections. In

2024, on intake over 78 percent lived under the

federal poverty level; 49 percent of all clients of

people of color; nearly 50 percent were ages 50 and

older; 65 percent identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual,

or questioning; and five percent were TGNCNB or

questioning on their gender. Given the New York

City's estimate of this population is between one and

two percent, GMHC is serving a high proportion of our

city's population, an example of our reputation as a

safe and affirmative provider. GMHC's TGNCNB Hub

1 provides comprehensive peer-led case management and  
2 referrals including to Project Transcend, our support  
3 group that provides safe and affirming spaces where  
4 clients can feel seen, heard and valued in a  
5 judgment-free and [inaudible] environment. Project  
6 Transcend prioritizes community health by integrating  
7 HIV education with trans-sensitive STI testing and  
8 PrEP education. It recognizes the importance of  
9 communal experiences by hosting catered in-person  
10 events. These gathering foster deep connections when  
11 participants [inaudible] from isolation and  
12 strengthening support networks. GMHC is grateful for  
13 the opportunity to support Introductions 1200, 1201,  
14 1203 and 1204, all of which address critical issues  
15 our TGNCNB clients face. A significant portion are  
16 immigrants who fled their home countries due to anti-  
17 trans violence. We provide them with essential  
18 resources including housing referrals, legal  
19 referrals and immigration support. Continued access  
20 to gender-affirming care is critical, because it  
21 keeps TGNCNB clients in the medical system. When  
22 unable to access legal care, they access other  
23 sources that increase their risk for HIV through  
24 shared needles. I personally recall a client who was  
25

1 diagnosed with HRV, and we linked her to treatment  
2 which was her first opportunity--

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [interposing] Could  
5 wrap it up.

6 ZEPHYR MERKUR: To access legal hormones.  
7 Lastly, as a member of New York City's Trans and  
8 Queer Advocacy Coalition, GMHC strongly supports the  
9 coalition ask of the Council to increase the trans  
10 equity initiative to \$10 million in total funding  
11 with new funds to support trans-led community-based  
12 organizations. Thank you again for the opportunity.

13 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Victoria?

14 DOCTOR VICTORIA NGO: Hello. My name's  
15 Doctor Victoria Ngo. I use she/her pronouns. I am a  
16 Resident Physician here in New York City and a member  
17 of my union, the Committee of Interns and Residents  
18 or CIR. Thank you to the committee for holding this  
19 hearing and to the Council Members who sponsored  
20 these critical bills and resolutions. I'm testifying  
21 today in favor of the bills and the resolution  
22 protecting access to gender-affirming care. Before I  
23 came to New York, I started my medical training in  
24 Virginia, and today I'm thinking of the patients that  
25 I met there. I remember my patients who traveled

1  
2 hours to see us for gender-affirming care, and my  
3 patients who reached out in fear when our state  
4 policies were changing in 2022, and my patients who  
5 tried to end their lives when their dysphoria became  
6 too much. But I also remember celebrating with my  
7 patients when they started the medications they  
8 needed, and I remember getting to watch my patients  
9 grow into themselves. I ended up coming here to New  
10 York to finish my training because I wanted to keep  
11 celebrating and caring for my patients in their whole  
12 self. Patients of all gender identities deserve  
13 well-trained physicians to care for them, and I knew  
14 I would get strong training in the City, and I have.  
15 Since coming here, I've taken for granted that this  
16 an environment where I'm able to do life-saving care  
17 for patients. I get to celebrate normal milestones  
18 with my patients like when they get to graduate  
19 college or get a new job instead of brainstorming  
20 ways to cope with their dysphoria because there's  
21 nothing else we could do. In New York, we follow  
22 global guidelines and local values because we know  
23 our gender diversity makes us better, and we can't  
24 let that go. I urge my City Council members to  
25 protect access to gender-affirming care so that I can



1 keep doing my job, and I hope the council will  
2 ultimately and quickly pass these bills and  
3 resolutions. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Queen?

5 QUEEN JEAN: [inaudible] use both. Okay.  
6 I push it. Oh, there it is. Hello. Good afternoon,  
7 esteemed Council. My name is Queen Jean. My pronouns  
8 are she and her. I'm the Founder and the Executive  
9 Director of Black Trans Liberation here in New York  
10 City, and I just want to say a few things. One is  
11 that there is a ongoing crisis as we all are aware of  
12 in this-- I was sitting here-- violence against  
13 transgender people, against New Yorkers. And the  
14 City has been able to put together the Trans Equity  
15 Fund, and this Trans Equity Fund is intended to  
16 support trans community. Currently, in this moment,  
17 the Trans Equity Fund is supporting 62 percent cis-  
18 led organizations. That means non-trans-led  
19 organizations. That means the trans people there do  
20 not have executive power. So, that is a crisis and a  
21 problem. We are-- I am hoping and demanding today  
22 that the budget be increased from the \$3.4 million to  
23 at least \$10 million or more, \$10 million or more  
24 because we need that funding to actually take care of  
25

1  
2 our people. Our community, they come to us as trans  
3 people. They come to us as trans leaders, as trans  
4 hubs, as sanctuary safe spaces in order to get  
5 salvation, in order to get the resources and the care  
6 that we are providing. And a lot of us are providing  
7 that out of our ownselves [sic], our own resources.  
8 So it is imperative that this fund be increased. It  
9 is imperative that it is prioritizing moving forward  
10 trans-led organizations. It is Black History Month.  
11 We wouldn't be giving Black money, right, to non-  
12 Black organizations. So, I think that we just need  
13 to be very clear and be intentional in the way that  
14 we're supporting our people, and also too, in  
15 addition to that is to really reimagine the  
16 processes. There's a lot of, you know, barriers,  
17 excuse me, that a lot of the organizations have to  
18 hop around in order to receive those funds. So, we  
19 need for those funds to be able to achieve in a very  
20 clear and transparent way moving forward. And I also  
21 just want to say that it is-- at the end of the day,  
22 it is trans people that will come and fight for our  
23 community. This entire room here is here because we  
24 are tired of being wait to be told no. We are tired  
25 of being sidelined. We're tired of having to

1  
2 audition for empathy. We're tired of having to prove  
3 our existence. If there is money here for our city,  
4 we should be able to take that money and to provide  
5 for New Yorkers. Shelter systems is not a solution.

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [interposing] Please--

7 QUEEN JEAN: [interposing] It is a  
8 temporary fix. And lastly, I'll just add-- I know  
9 that we're at time. But we are not wallpaper, and  
10 trans people cannot be wallpaper and be rolled over  
11 again and again and again.

12 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

13 QUEEN JEAN: And if you're looking for  
14 where that \$10 million can come from, you can  
15 dismantle the ICE Squad. You can dismantle a lot of  
16 the NYPD SRG Units.

17 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Right.

18 QUEEN JEAN: This year, literally, \$206  
19 million went into paying because of all of the abuse  
20 and the terror and the inappropriate behavior,  
21 misconduct of the NYPD towards innocent New Yorkers.

22 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Right.

23 QUEEN JEAN: so, that \$10 million needs  
24 to happen, I believe, retroactively and immediately.

25 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

QUEEN JEAN: I thank you all.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Submit that in public testimony. I really appreciate the diversity of this panel. There's a physician. All you all, I thank you all for your testimony today. If you have additional testimony, please submit it to the Sergeant at Arms or [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) as well as the budget ask. Thank you so much.

QUEEN JEAN: Thank you. And also I just - I know people were testifying for more than two minutes before this.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: No.

QUEEN JEAN: Okay, alright.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. This panel is dismissed. The next panel is Dahlia Abrams, Aspen, Soren, Jaylen Blake [sp?], and Julia Davidson [sp?]. Dahlia, you may begin.

DAHLIA ABRAMS: LGBTQ youth make about 40 percent of homeless youth, a disproportionate number considering their size and the general population. My name is Dahlia Abrams and I'm a part of that 40 percent. From 2018 to 2022, 48 anti-transgender laws were enacted in the US alone, increasing suicide attempts among LGBTQ youth as much as 72 percent. I

1  
2 am also part of that percentage. In New York City  
3 alone, 41 percent of LGBTQ youth seriously considered  
4 suicide in 2022 with 12 attempting it. Fifty percent  
5 of queer and homeless youth are turned away from  
6 shelters due to their sexual orientation or gender or  
7 gender identity. The numbers are real and they are  
8 rapidly increasing. I live at a shelter, and my  
9 staff can barely give us sustainable meals with all  
10 of our dietary needs. As someone who has been turned  
11 away by shelters for simply being different, I know  
12 how painful it is to be rejected for something as  
13 basic as who you love and how you identify. It feels  
14 like you're being ignored even after telling people  
15 who you are countless times. It is time we bring  
16 more awareness to the LGBTQ youth homelessness crisis  
17 in New York City. But homelessness and mental health  
18 struggles aren't isolated issues. They are deeply  
19 rooted in systemic inequalities such as lack of  
20 affordable housing. We need the New York City  
21 government to increase funding for homelessness  
22 prevention programs and on policies that expand  
23 opportunities for homelessness youth in education,  
24 healthcare, and housing. We can no longer let this  
25 issue persist without action in anything. The real

1  
2 problem isn't these youth. It is the support and  
3 understanding-- the lack of support and understanding  
4 that we face. Please let us work together to fix  
5 this.

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.  
7 Aspen?

8 ASPEN: Good afternoon. My name is Aspen  
9 and I'm 16 years old. I live in Flatlands, Brooklyn  
10 in Council Member Farah Louis' district. My parents  
11 are both proud civil servants. I'm testifying today  
12 to ask you to protect trans New Yorkers. I know this  
13 city has my back and the proposed bills will solidify  
14 that. I came out as trans four years ago and I've  
15 been on testosterone for a year and a half. I'm  
16 grateful to receive my care at an adolescent clinic  
17 in New York City Health + Hospitals system,  
18 especially considering that two private hospitals in  
19 our city are currently trying to limit this care for  
20 kids like me. Gender-affirming care has allowed me  
21 to be more comfortable being myself. I filed for a  
22 legal name change last year and I applied for a new  
23 passport before the inauguration with my new name and  
24 gender on it. I received my new passport this week,  
25 and it says female. The document I received back

1 from the State Department states that information was  
2 changed on my application to "correct" my information  
3 to show my biological sex at birth. This passport  
4 does not match my other documents and will make  
5 travel significantly more difficult and stressful for  
6 me and my family. In a time where the federal  
7 government is openly attacking trans people, I want  
8 to know that the City of New York is fighting for me,  
9 my friends and my community. I want to be able to  
10 worry about normal 16-year-old things like the SAT  
11 I'm taking next week, and not worry about whether or  
12 not my doctor's going to be arrested for doing his  
13 job or whether I'll get stopped at the border when  
14 I'm trying to go tour colleges in Canada. In the city  
15 that the Stonewall uprising happened and a city that  
16 has continuously fought for equality and justice for  
17 all, I urge the City Council to pass these  
18 resolutions to protect care for trans kids and  
19 adults.  
20

21 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Aspen. I'm  
22 sorry you went through that experience. I'd like to  
23 talk to you more. Sorien? Did I say that correctly?

24 SOREN RECK: Soren, yeah.

25 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Soren.

2 SOREN RECK: It's okay. Thank you,  
3 Committee. My name is Soren Reck. I'm a 24-year-old  
4 resident of Astoria Queens in District 22 and a  
5 trans, masculine, non-binary person who relies on  
6 access to gender-affirming care. I'm here to speak in  
7 support of increased funding for transgender non-  
8 conforming and non-binary New Yorkers. It's no  
9 secret, obviously, that the rights and liberties of  
10 trans people everywhere are under attack under the  
11 current federal administration with many other state  
12 legislatures like Texas and Iowa now feeling  
13 emboldened to follow suit and escalate. In these  
14 terrifying times, it's more important now than ever  
15 to ensure that trans individuals can feel safe and  
16 supported in New York City. I know firsthand how  
17 overwhelming and complicated it is to navigate the  
18 legal paperwork to change your name and gender marker  
19 on various documents, and I myself have had access to  
20 my own gender-affirming care being delayed and denied  
21 through different insurance and different pharmacies.  
22 But I'm one of the lucky ones who's been able to  
23 overcome these barriers thanks to support from my  
24 family friends and the amazing trans and queer  
25 community of New York City. These services are life-



1  
2 changing and life-saving. For those with less access  
3 to support and resources, I can't imagine how  
4 difficult it must be to try to advocate for yourself  
5 as a transgender person in the current political  
6 climate. So, this is why I want to implore the  
7 committee to vote in support of funding public  
8 outreach regarding legal services for trans people,  
9 preventing interference with providing gender-  
10 affirming care and develop plans both to specifically  
11 support young transgender migrants and the health and  
12 wellbeing of all trans gender non-conforming, non-  
13 binary, and intersex New Yorkers. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Jaylen

15 [sic]?

16 JACLYN BLAKE: Hi, I'm Jaclyn Blake.

17 Sorry, I'm losing my voice right now. I use she/her  
18 pronouns. I live in the Bronx in Dinowitz's district.  
19 I am a cisgender heterosexual woman, ally to the  
20 trans community. During this time I echo a lot of  
21 the sentiments for increased budget for trans-led  
22 organizations, as well as bring attention to  
23 incarcerated trans and non-binary New Yorkers. Under  
24 this administration people have suffered loss of  
25

1 dignity under this current Commissioner. So, I thank  
2 you for allowing me to participate and speak today.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for being  
5 here. Julia?

6 JULIA DAVIDSON: Hello, Chairperson Louis  
7 and members of the Committee. My name is Julia  
8 Davidson. My pronouns are she/her and I am a cis  
9 woman. I was a high school teacher for seven years,  
10 and now I am in my second year of Law School at  
11 Fordham Law. I live in Council Member Hanif's  
12 district. Thank you for this hearing and your hard  
13 work on these bills. I am a member of Advocates for  
14 Trans Law Students, a group of volunteers who help  
15 trans and non-binary people fill out their name and  
16 gender marker change petitions in civil court. This  
17 is the first step in many bureaucratic hurdles.  
18 While we have been doing this for almost three years,  
19 since the election we have helped 350 people. We are  
20 a small team now hosting multiple events per week.  
21 The tone of these events have shifted. Once  
22 celebratory events where we could help people fill  
23 out paperwork, we now spend hours talking about worst  
24 case scenarios. There are so many hurdles to  
25 transitioning, whether it is changing identity

1 documents, accessing gender-affirming care, accessing  
2 affirming therapists, finding support at work or at  
3 school, all of these steps require access to  
4 resources, money, and often require taking time off  
5 work. Now with the outright vicious and relentless  
6 attacks coming from the federal government and those  
7 that support it, trans and non-binary people need our  
8 open and loud support more than ever. When I offered  
9 to meet people who wanted to testify today, a few  
10 trans people told me that they were too nervous to go  
11 on public record. In order for our democracy to work,  
12 all people need to feel safe enough to come to a  
13 public hearing and share their experience without  
14 fear of retribution. I hope City Council passes  
15 these bills and resolutions to support our trans,  
16 non-binary, and gender non-conforming community  
17 members, especially Council Members Hanif's bill. I  
18 hope that cis people across the city will stand up  
19 loudly and declare that they will not tolerate this  
20 kind of hatred and abuse coming from our government,  
21 and I hope that cis women like myself will stop  
22 allowing transphobic rhetoric to spread under the  
23 guise of so-called protecting women. Thank you for  
24 your time and attention.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.

3 Do you have questions? Thank you all for being here.

4 This panel's dismissed. The next panel, Tiffany Jade

5 Munroe, Kimberleigh Joy Smith, Katherine, Jasmina and

6 Mason. Tiffany, you may begin.

7 TIFFANY JADE MUNROE: Is this on?

8 Awesome. Dear Chair Louis and the Committee on Women

9 and Gender Equity, thank you for holding this

10 critical hearing on women and gender equity. Today, I

11 testify before you about a crucial issue, ensuring

12 that gender-affirming care is protected, accessible,

13 and covered in the same manner as reproductive health

14 services. This is at the heart of Intro 1201-2025,

15 the Affirm Act, guaranteeing transgender New Yorkers

16 equal access to healthcare without fear of

17 discrimination or criminalization. My name is

18 Tiffany Jade Munroe and I am the Trans Justice

19 Coordinator for Caribbean Equality Project. We are a

20 Caribbean LGBTQ+ immigrant rights organization. CEP

21 works daily with transgender and gender non-

22 conforming migrants and asylum-seekers witnessing

23 firsthand the barriers they face when seeking gender-

24 affirming care. These challenges range from systemic

25 discrimination in healthcare settings to insurance

1 denials and the constant threat of harassment and  
2 violence. The Affirm Act is critical because it  
3 removes legal and institutional roadblocks that  
4 prevent TGNCNB individuals from receiving essential  
5 medical care. By expressively including all forms of  
6 gender-affirming care under these legal protections,  
7 this bill ensures that individuals who experience  
8 interference can seek legal recourse and hold  
9 perpetrators financially accountable. This provision  
10 is a game-changer in reaffirming a person's right to  
11 healthcare and deterring those who seek to obstruct  
12 it for the LGBTQ+ immigrant community we serve  
13 through our health navigation programs. These  
14 protections are life-saving and life-changing. I call  
15 on the City Council to pass the Affirm Act to  
16 strengthen a healthcare system rooted in diversity,  
17 equity and inclusion, all New York values. We also  
18 stand in solidarity with trans-led and several BIPOC  
19 organizations to call for an investment to increase  
20 the Trans Equity initiative funding to \$10 million.  
21 And I will say it is time to protect trans healthcare  
22 and trans youth and defend our dignity and rights.  
23 This City Council must put an end to harassment now  
24 by strengthening legal protections--  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [interposing] Thank  
3 you.

4 TIFFANY JADE MUNROE: and access to  
5 gender-affirming care across New York City. Thank  
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.  
8 Kimberleigh?

9 KIMBERLEIGH JOY SMITH: Good afternoon,  
10 Chair Louis and committee members. My name is  
11 Kimberleigh Smith. I use she/her pronouns, and I am  
12 the Executive Vice President for Policy and Advocacy  
13 at Callen Lorne Community Health Center. Callen  
14 Lorne provides quality healthcare to over 22,000  
15 LGBTQ+ New Yorkers, including more than 8,000  
16 transgender, gender non-conforming, gender non-  
17 binary, and intersex patients. Many of our patients  
18 face systemic barriers to healthcare, housing, and  
19 economic stability. Today, I want to address the  
20 urgent need to protect trans healthcare access. Our  
21 patients are experiencing fear and anxiety to do  
22 escalating attacks on their rights. Recent Executive  
23 Order that were referenced earlier while not binding  
24 law threatened gender-affirming care and bodily  
25 autonomy. The EO around protecting children from

1 chemical and surgical mutilation threatens changes to  
2 Medicare and Medicaid conditions of participation  
3 which could bar providers from federal programs if  
4 they offer gender-affirming care at any age-- for any  
5 age. Such actions would devastate healthcare  
6 institutions like Callen Lorne, serving marginalized  
7 community, worsening health disparities, and  
8 increasing suicide and violence risks. Despite these  
9 threats, Callen Loren remains steadfast in its  
10 commitment. We remain open and have not changed any  
11 of our services. To safeguard trans healthcare in  
12 New York, we urge the City Council to increase the  
13 existing Trans Equity initiative to \$10 million  
14 prioritizing BIPOC and trans-led organizations. We  
15 also support the package of bills that was recently  
16 reduced and urge the City Council to fund a new City  
17 Council initiative to ensure ongoing access to  
18 gender-affirming care at community health centers in  
19 New York City. We urge you to support statewide  
20 efforts to establish a \$50 million contingency fund  
21 to replace potential Medicaid cuts for gender-  
22 affirming care, and we urge you to support legal  
23 protections for gender-affirming care through state  
24 law to shield providers and patients. Additionally,  
25

2 we want to support the proposal to consider renaming  
3 this committee and I will submit lengthier testimony  
4 if you have any other questions. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you,  
6 Kimberleigh. We'll hear from Katherine. Jasmina?

7 JASMINA SALIMOVA: Good afternoon to the  
8 Committee on Women and Gender Equity. My name is  
9 Jasmina Salimova, and I'm here on behalf of Quadira  
10 Coles who is the Director of Policy and Advocacy at  
11 Girls for Gender Equity. GGE is an intergenerational  
12 organization based in Brooklyn, New York founded in  
13 2001 on the principle of advancing equity in sports  
14 for girls and gender-expansive youth. Since our  
15 founding, we have expanded our mission to challenge  
16 structural forces including racism, sexism, gender-  
17 based violence, transphobia and homophobia which  
18 construct of freedom, full expression and rights of  
19 all young people. We do this work through direct  
20 service policy advocacy and cultural change. We are  
21 here today to urge this committee and the full City  
22 Council to reaffirm your commitments protecting,  
23 supporting and expanding access for transgender and  
24 gender non-conforming people, especially youth in New  
25 York City. At a time when trans rights are on the



1  
2 relentless attack across the country and from the  
3 highest level of government, it's important that our  
4 city remains committed to ensuring that all young  
5 people regardless of their gender identity are able  
6 to exist, express themselves fully and thrive.  
7 Protections for trans and gender non-conforming youth  
8 begins in schools. The Department of Education has  
9 issued guidelines to support and gender-expansive  
10 students to ensure that every student has the  
11 opportunity to learn, grow and thrive in a safe  
12 environment. Additionally, there are legal  
13 protections to prevent discrimination in employment,  
14 housing, and other essential services. However,  
15 despite the local work done to ensure protections and  
16 create equitable opportunity, fertile [sic] efforts  
17 threaten to erase the existence of trans people and  
18 roll back the existing safety nets putting young  
19 trans and gender non-conforming people at risk of  
20 harm. We are already seeing its implements play out  
21 in our local schools where policies threaten trans  
22 youth, particularly in sports-- seeks to exclude the-  
23 - I'm sorry-- seeks to exclude them under the guise  
24 of fairness. These efforts do not protect anyone.  
25 Instead, they reinforce harmful stereotypes fuel

1 discrimination and further isolate trans youth, many  
2 of whom are already navigating hostile environments.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You could wrap.

5 JASMINA SALIMOVA: alright. We have a  
6 list of asks that we'll be following up, but our main  
7 one is asking for the Trans Equity Fund to be  
8 increased to \$10 million. Thank you for your time.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You got it all done.  
10 Mason?

11 MASON CRAWFORD: good afternoon and thank  
12 you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is  
13 Mason Crawford. I use he/him pronouns, and I'm a Harm  
14 Reduction Coordinator at Safe Horizon Street Work  
15 Project, and I have submitted my full written  
16 testimony today. Safe Horizon is the nation's  
17 largest nonprofit victim service organization,  
18 helping 250,000 New Yorkers each year who've  
19 experienced violence or abuse, and I'm honored to  
20 testify on behalf of the Street Work Project which  
21 has been a steadfast advocate and service provider  
22 for transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary  
23 New Yorkers for decades. At Street Work Project we  
24 provide a safe, inclusive and affirming environment  
25 where TGNCNB individuals can access essential

1 services free from judgement and discrimination. Our  
2 Drop-in Centers and shelters are built on the  
3 principles of harm reduction, trauma-informed care  
4 and unconditional affirmation of identity. Our one-  
5 stop shop model is designed to remove barriers from  
6 TGNCNB individuals often faced with navigating  
7 traditional service systems. We ensure that multiple  
8 services are available in one location, reducing the  
9 need for clients to move through multiple agencies  
10 that may not understand or respect their identities.  
11 Street Work has also launched a Harm Reduction Peer  
12 Internship, a cash stipend program that empowers  
13 young people to engage in critical community  
14 outreach, educating the community on Narcan,  
15 facilitating syringe exchange, and offering safer use  
16 kits. This initiative is specifically designed for  
17 young people with lived experience including past or  
18 current substance use, sex work, and involvement with  
19 legal systems. Beyond providing direct service, we  
20 cultivate in joy and community through affinity  
21 groups where affinity groups and cultures of  
22 celebrations offer one of our most cherished events  
23 in our annual Kiki [sic] ball where clients can  
24 freely express themselves in a space to honor their  
25

1 history, artistry and resilience. Street work  
2 project is committed to standing in solidarity with  
3 TGNCNB New Yorkers now and forever. We urge the  
4 Council to invest in affirming housing solutions,  
5 expand access to gender-affirming care, strengthen  
6 legal protections, and support community-based  
7 initiatives that uplift TGNC individuals. Safe  
8 Horizon supports the package of legislation on  
9 today's agenda. We need our city leadership to step  
10 and stand against violent, hateful, transphobic  
11 rhetoric and policy-making coming out Washington.  
12 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Thank you  
15 to this panel for being here today. You're  
16 dismissed. We're going to call on the next panel.  
17 Allyssa Lamb-- excuse me if I butcher your name--  
18 Joyati Ray-Chaudhuri, Debi Ray-Chaudhuri-- okay--  
19 Michael, and Kristine. And we'll start with Allyssa.  
20 Thank you.

21 ALLYSSA LAMB: Hello? Hello, Chairperson  
22 Louis and members of the Committee. My name is  
23 Allyssa Lamb. My pronouns are she/her and I live in  
24 District 38. I have a trans son who's a junior in  
25 high school. He's 16. I came here today because I

1  
2 am terrified for his future and for the future of all  
3 the LGBTQ+ youth and adults who are right now in  
4 danger of having their human rights taken away. So I  
5 support all the bills and resolutions today, and I  
6 just wanted to speak a little about why. Since he  
7 transitioned at age 11, or began transitioning, my  
8 son has become a happy, thriving human being. He  
9 plays in the school jazz band. He goes out for  
10 falafel with his friends. He loves cats and he loves  
11 cat videos. He wants to be a musician when he grows  
12 up. He would not have had such a smooth and easy  
13 transition if not for the laws and protections that  
14 exist in New York City right now, because of the way  
15 the NYC DOE and his teachers made it no big deal to  
16 change his names and pronouns, the way he had access  
17 to the medical care he needed with no judgement, and  
18 the way the City made it easy to change his legal  
19 documents without a hitch. He was able to become the  
20 person he always knew he was. I guess the bill that  
21 I find most urgent today is the one sponsored by  
22 Council Member Hanif regarding gender-affirming care,  
23 because I witnessed what happened just last month  
24 when hospitals and clinics in New York stopped-- some  
25 of them-- stopped providing healthcare to transgender

1 youth even for a brief period. Some of them have not  
2 fully resumed it. Families were thrown into despair,  
3 and kids had to be told that the care they need in  
4 order to be happy and healthy was not going to be  
5 provided for them. It would be devastating for my  
6 son. It did not happen to us yet, but we're waiting  
7 for the day when our clinic calls to tell us that he  
8 can no longer receive care because of the Executive  
9 Order. We've strongly considered leaving the country  
10 if that happens. I thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for  
13 sharing. Joy? Joyati? Can you pronounce it?

14 JOYATI RAY-CHAUDHURI: Joyati. Hello,  
15 Chairperson Louis and members of the Committee. My  
16 name is Joyati Ray-Chaudhuri. My pronouns are  
17 she/her. I've lived in the north Bronx for many  
18 years. I'm here because I'm a mother of a young trans  
19 woman who grew up and went to school in New York  
20 City. I'm here to express my support for the  
21 resolutions and bills before the committee today.  
22 Sorry. I understand that they will protect and  
23 support our trans New Yorkers, especially our trans  
24 kids. My daughter came out to me as trans about 10  
25 years ago. That was an extremely scary and lonely

1  
2 time for her and for me. So scary for her that she  
3 did not even know if her own mother would be  
4 supportive, and scary for me, because I did not know  
5 how to protect her and how to find the support she  
6 needed. I thank God that we lived in New York City  
7 and I was able to find a group of supportive families  
8 and trans kids that we met with regularly. Those  
9 parents helped me find the invaluable resources I  
10 needed to help my daughter. She attended a high  
11 school where she was able to be her authentic self.  
12 She found friends and I found a community that  
13 understood our challenges. It was a long road, and I  
14 was so grateful that we were able to find a hospital  
15 in New York City that provided her with the care she  
16 needed to make her physical and emotional transition  
17 to her authentic self. Today, she's in graduate  
18 school and making her way in this world. I think I  
19 can safely say that she has found her way and that  
20 she will be a successful, happy, contributing member  
21 of our society. If New York City was not the safe,  
22 supportive place that it was then, I'm not sure that  
23 she would be the person that she is today. Trans  
24 kids are kids like any other kids. They need our  
25 protection and support to grow up and thrive. New

1  
2 York City was a safe and supportive city for my  
3 daughter to grow up in. I want New York City to  
4 remain a safe and supportive city for other trans  
5 kids and their families.

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for being a  
7 brave mom. Debi?

8 UNIDENTIFIED: I'm-- oh, you're next?  
9 Oh, sorry.

10 DEBI RAY-CHAUDHURI: Thank you to the  
11 City Council for this opportunity to speak and be  
12 heard. My name is Debi Ray-Chaudhuri. I'm an artist,  
13 musician, mother, and a life-long lesbian. I'm also  
14 Joyati's sister, so her daughter is my niece. I've  
15 lived in New York City since 1990. Before I moved to  
16 New York I lived in another city with a long history  
17 of LGBTQ activism. That city was Berlin, West Germany  
18 because the wall hadn't come down yet, so West  
19 Germany. Along with LGBTQ activism, Berlin has a  
20 history of fascism and counter-fascism. Writers and  
21 thinkers, artists and musicians are all drawn to that  
22 city much as we are to New York. I am compelled to  
23 speak out because I see the attacks on trans people  
24 and immigrants as the re-emergence of fascism in the  
25 US. Bills like the Affirm Act show the federal



1 government and the world that we are a sanctuary city  
2 that supports all people who make up this vibrant  
3 community. Particularly, we support the most  
4 vulnerable people in our community. Trump's  
5 unconstitutional Executive Orders are characterized  
6 by a bare desire to harm. A man who has never served  
7 in any military role seeks to erase the existence of  
8 transgender service people. He singles out  
9 transgender youth for his vitriolic attacks  
10 endangering youth who often suffer rejection at the  
11 hands of what should be sources of support, family,  
12 peer groups, healthcare providers, and teachers.  
13 This cruel attack against transgender people opens  
14 the flood gates of hate. The confidential nature of  
15 the doctor's relationship with her patient is  
16 summarily violated as well as the ability of parents  
17 to take care of their children without undue  
18 government interference.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You could wrap it.

21 DEBI RAY-CHAUDHURI: This is nonsense.

22 To which we say not today, not now, not ever. Thank  
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Michael?  
25

2 MICHAEL JARVELA: Thank you. Sorry for  
3 stepping-- alright, thanks committee for having me  
4 today. My name is Michael Jarvela. I'm a dad,  
5 cisgender dad, heterosexual. I'm still married to my  
6 wife Carrie Keenan [sp?]. We've lived here for 35  
7 years. I'm the parent of two kids. My 19-year-old is  
8 trans. My 17-year-old is just a cisgender girl.  
9 They're both living thriving happy lives, and I am  
10 definite support of all of the proposals and  
11 resolutions today, mostly because of gender-affirming  
12 care. Our journey when it started as parents, we  
13 needed advice, and we needed good advice, and thank  
14 God we lived in New York because we got it. New York  
15 had the doctors we needed. I can't even say enough  
16 good things about all of the doctors that we've had  
17 through the years. We got support. WE had support  
18 groups. And after been going through this journey for  
19 more than a decade and seeing a child that was  
20 insistent, consistent and persistent, the doctors  
21 were incredibly careful. They were very cautious.  
22 And the parents, we were all scared. Speaking just  
23 for myself and my wife, we were terrified, and thank  
24 God we got the help we needed. So, what I'm very  
25 concerned about is that we're not being quite loud

1  
2 enough about holding the hospitals accountable--  
3 world-class hospitals. NYU Langone is a world class  
4 hospital that is discriminating which is a bit  
5 shocking to me, and doing something that's illegal.  
6 So, I know the doctors that we encountered had a  
7 commitment to providing healthcare based on medical  
8 necessity, better than political pressure. I'm a  
9 little bit shocked that somehow we're allowing  
10 hospitals to do the exact opposite. Thank you for  
11 having me.

12 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Michael.  
13 Kristine? Turn on your mic.

14 KRISTINE DICOLANDREA: Good afternoon.  
15 There we go. My legal name is Kristine Dicolandrea,  
16 but you can call me Dico. I use they/them pronouns,  
17 and I support all of the bills on the docket today.  
18 And don't mind these crutches. I'm fine. That's just  
19 what I get for playing rugby 20 years ago like every  
20 other gay kid. I mean, you can't see me standing,  
21 but I'm five foot three and weight 100 pounds, but it  
22 was totally worth it, because that college rugby team  
23 was the first place I felt safe to come out. You  
24 see, I grew up in a blue-collar, conservative,  
25 Catholic family in Ridgewood, Queens, and when I was

1 in middle school I remember asking my dad what it  
2 meant to be gay, and he said it was disgusting. When  
3 I started going out with a girl in college, I didn't  
4 tell my parents about her. In fact, I didn't come out  
5 for two years. I waited until the night before I  
6 graduated from Yale University, because as the first  
7 in my family to go to a four-year college, I thought  
8 that was the moment they would be proudest of me.  
9 And still, I remember my dad yelling at my mom on  
10 that phone call and telling her it was her fault for  
11 not wearing enough dresses around me. Speaking of  
12 dresses, when I started teaching 18 years ago in New  
13 York City public schools, I didn't know what to wear.  
14 All the men wore ties and all the women wore blouses.  
15 So where did that leave me? And then when I cut my  
16 hair, my assistant principal demanded to know who all  
17 the gay teachers were in faculty meeting. When queer  
18 students were being outed forcibly by administrators  
19 to their parents and they came to me for help, my  
20 principal told me that if I started a gay/straight  
21 alliance I would be "out by June." When I put on my  
22 first tie in the classroom, my dad saw a Facebook  
23 picture and said it was the ugliest picture of me  
24 he'd ever seen. But you know who didn't flinch? My  
25

1 students. When I started wearing suits to work and  
2 told them it wasn't Ms. Dicolandrea anymore, it was  
3 just Dico, they didn't blink. Kids in New York City  
4 stood up for me 20 years ago when I came out as  
5 trans, and now I'm standing up for them. One last  
6 thing, to all of the queer kids here today who are  
7 speaking, thank you for being here, for sharing your  
8 stories. We see you. We hear you, and we will fight  
9 for you. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: and we see you, too.  
12 I want to thank all the parents, guardians, the  
13 aunties, everyone that's on this panel for your  
14 strength and your commitment to your children. Thank  
15 you so much.

16 KRISTINE DICOLANDREA: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: This panel is now  
18 dismissed. The next panel-- next panel: Diana  
19 Adams, Ethan Lin, Julian Castranovo, Vladimir  
20 Martinez, and Poonam. Diana Adams, Ethan Lin, Julian  
21 Castranovo, Vladimir Martinez, and Poonam. We'll  
22 start with Diana Adams.

23 DIANA ADAMS: On? Okay. Thank you so  
24 much to the committee and good afternoon.

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Yeah, that's you,  
3 yep.

4 DIANA ADAMS: My name is Diana Adams. I  
5 use they/them pronouns and I am the Executive  
6 Director of the Chosen Family Law Center, an  
7 organization that provides one of the most expansive  
8 trans legal services programs in the city, including  
9 trans affirming medical advance directives in  
10 healthcare proxies to prevent discrimination in  
11 medical environments. And I'm here as a New York City  
12 lawyer for 20 years and as a non-binary transgender  
13 constituent in Council Member Hanif's district. I'm  
14 here to urge you to pass this entire raft of bills,  
15 because they're critically important. I'm very  
16 grateful to committee council which have listened to  
17 advocates like us. I've been in communication with  
18 them over the past month providing resources and  
19 input on trans safety and sanctuary bills, and I'm  
20 available for further questions today or in the  
21 future. And many well-intentioned trans sanctuary  
22 and safety bills are vague and performative, and  
23 that's also important because it's important to make  
24 a statement that you're standing up and will be  
25 keeping people safe in your city, but these bills are

1 specific. These bills are specific in terms of  
2 funding and the remedies and the departments that are  
3 directed to provide support, and that's critically  
4 important, because that allows advocates like us to  
5 know which departments to go to make sure that those  
6 departments are providing that support. This gives  
7 remedies. I want to thank all of you for the care and  
8 the detail that went into this, and celebrate that  
9 these would be the most protective and supportive  
10 municipal trans laws in the United States and the  
11 world. And I want to celebrate that today because  
12 I'm hopeful that the Council will pass these bills.  
13 And I can attest that our clients are terrified.  
14 Clients in New York City are having their passports  
15 seized when they send them in to get a gender change,  
16 and those that sent them in before Executive Orders.  
17 Now they've been seized indefinitely which is  
18 menacing and terrifying for trans people. In addition  
19 to the fears about not being able to access needed  
20 medical care. So there's a climate of terror, and  
21 these bills would stand up for New Yorkers in a way  
22 that New Yorkers deserve. We have the highest  
23 population of LGBTQ people in the country and we're a  
24  
25

1 beacon, and we deserve these bills to stay a  
2 welcoming beacon for our communities.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Now we'll  
5 hear from Ethan.

6 ETHAN LIN: Oh, sorry, hi. Good morning  
7 City Council. I'm Ethan Lin, he/him, attorney with  
8 the LGBTQ Law and Policy Unit at the Legal Aid  
9 Society. The federal administration threatens to  
10 revoke federal funding for providers offering gender-  
11 affirming care to individuals under 19. We urge the  
12 Council to pass 3183, the bill aiming to address  
13 health disparity between TGNCNBI and cisgender New  
14 Yorkers with amendments requiring an urgent funding  
15 analysis to ensure contingency funding is available  
16 should Medicaid coverage be revoked and to ensure  
17 dedicated funding to gender-affirming healthcare for  
18 TGNCNBI youth in ACS custody. Regarding correctional  
19 facilities, the federal administration threatens to  
20 strip protections for TGNCNBI people under the Prison  
21 Rape Elimination Act. Now more than ever, New York  
22 City must act to protect the rights of TGNCNBI people  
23 in New York City jails by aligning the Department of  
24 Corrections policies with New York City and New York  
25 State's Human Rights Laws. Currently, New York



1 City's jail's failure to properly house many TGNCNBI  
2 individuals in gender-aligned facilities has led to  
3 an alarming rate of violence and sexual assault. We  
4 urge the council to pass Intro 6252024 requiring the  
5 Department of Corrections to house TGNCNBI people  
6 according to their gender identity or where they feel  
7 safest. This bill establishes clear, enforceable  
8 guidelines prohibiting placement based on anatomy or  
9 other discriminatory factors. Regarding workplace  
10 discrimination, due to the federal administration,  
11 EEOC cannot be relied upon to enforce anti-  
12 discrimination laws protecting TGNCNBI people.  
13 Meanwhile, the CCHR has been in crisis and unable to  
14 mediate in timely manner. We urge the Council to  
15 expand public education efforts to ensure workers  
16 understand their rights under New York Law, and  
17 strengthen enforcement mechanisms. We support Intro  
18 1200 with modifications to strengthen efficacy such  
19 as requiring clear timelines in outreach methods.  
20 Finally, knowing your rights is not enough if you  
21 can't get resolution. We urge the City Council to  
22 increase funding for New York City Commission on  
23 Human Rights to hire more mediators, to reduce  
24

1 backlogs in discrimination case processing. Thank  
2 you for your time.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Julian?

5 JULIAN CASTRANOVO: Alright, thank you.  
6 Good morning. My name is Julian Castranovo. I use  
7 they/them pronouns, and I'm the supervising attorney  
8 of the LGBTQ HIV Unit at Brooklyn Legal Services.  
9 Our small unit of seven lingual workers provides  
10 free, holistic, civil legal representation to  
11 hundreds of low-income, transgender and non-binary  
12 New Yorkers a year. Our unit is a generalist  
13 practice, meaning we often represent clients in  
14 several different civil legal proceedings at once.  
15 We file discrimination cases, defend against  
16 evictions, sue for repairs, kill [sic] wrongful  
17 denials of gender-affirming care and public benefits,  
18 and we help clients obtain reasonable accommodations,  
19 name changes, and affirming identity documents.  
20 While our model is incredibly effective, we are  
21 unfortunately one of only a few legal services  
22 provides in the city that provide holistic, direct  
23 civil legal services to trans folks. Our unit has  
24 been overwhelmed with requests from trans folks for  
25 Know Your Rights information and legal services. We

1  
2 are watching many organizations within the city  
3 comply in advance with transphobic and hateful  
4 Executive Orders, even when their compliance makes  
5 them liable for discrimination under the City and  
6 State Human Rights Laws. We are finding that even  
7 when we counsel our clients on their rights, and they  
8 then assert those rights, they often are coming back  
9 to us, letting us know that the entities didn't care  
10 about their assertion of their rights, leaving us to  
11 have to file discrimination cases on their behalf.  
12 Thus, it is no longer enough to have rights, know  
13 them and assert them. People must be given the  
14 enforcement mechanisms to force these institutions to  
15 respect their rights. Unfortunately, enforcing  
16 rights is difficult. It can be next to impossible to  
17 bring a discrimination case without an attorney, as  
18 the process is complicated and often times especially  
19 traumatic when you're navigating it on your own. At  
20 the same time, access to an attorney, especially  
21 attorneys who have specialized knowledge on trans  
22 discrimination is limited as we are one of the few  
23 organizations funded to bring these types of cases.  
24 Funding under this administration is at grave risk.  
25 Thus, as the City Council continues to pass needed

1  
2 legislation enshrining people's right to self-  
3 determination, we urge you to also focus on pathways  
4 for people to enforce these rights. One such pathway  
5 is the Commission on Human Rights. We similarly have  
6 found that we have had extremely long delays. We  
7 have one case that has been pending. It's a trans  
8 discrimination since 2020. Multiple attorneys have  
9 signed to the matter. It cannot be found despite all  
10 of our advocacy. So we hope that the City Council  
11 will also support funding and increased resources to  
12 the City Commission on Human Rights that allows for  
13 more humane processing of these often times really  
14 traumatic complaints.

15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Vladimir?

16 VLADIMIR MARTINEZ: Good afternoon.

17 Thank you, Chair Louis, Council Member Hanif, and  
18 colleagues in the advocacy space for the opportunity  
19 to testify today. More than ever in the recent past,  
20 this is an important conversation that New York City  
21 can and should lead the nation on. My name is  
22 Vladimir Martinez. My pronouns are he/him, and I'm  
23 the Director of Policy and Government Affairs at the  
24 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community  
25 Center, or the The Center, located on West 13<sup>th</sup>

1 Street. New York City's LGBT community formed the  
2 center in 1983 in response to the AIDS epidemic  
3 ensuring a place for LGBTQ+ people to access  
4 information, care and support that they were not  
5 receiving elsewhere. Now, we are the largest LGBT  
6 multiservice organization on the east coast. In  
7 2024, we served almost 700 TGNCNB community members  
8 across our social support services. I'm submitting  
9 our full testimony for inclusion as part of the  
10 hearing record where we outline more about our  
11 services, respond to today's bill package in detail  
12 and made recommendations about the City's course of  
13 action. But I want to focus my brief remarks today  
14 to call on the City Council to do a few important and  
15 timely things. First, we call on the City Council to  
16 invest in TGNC leaders and services. The Center  
17 joins all the calls that have been made today for the  
18 expansion of the Council's Trans Equity initiative  
19 this year. We call on the Council to increase that  
20 initiative to at least \$10 million and to prioritize  
21 new initiative spending on trans-led grassroots  
22 organizations that are serving New Yorkers and that  
23 are leading the way on achieving justice for trans  
24 people in New York City. The Council should work  
25

1 with our coalition and with trans community leaders  
2 to review and analyze the current beneficiaries of  
3 the Trans Equity funding and to promote equity in  
4 that context. Number two, the New York City Council-  
5 - oh, well, that was faster than I wanted it to be.  
6 But the last thing I will say is we are calling on  
7 the City Council to just use its bully pulpit in this  
8 moment to express public solidarity for TGNC people.  
9 that is one of the important ways that the City  
10 Council can support trans people by making real the  
11 lives, the tribulations, and the dreams of trans New  
12 Yorkers for their neighbors. I'll submit the rest  
13 for the record. Thank you.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: We appreciate that.  
16 Thank you all for being here and for testifying. We  
17 appreciate you. Last we're going to hear from  
18 Poonam.

19 POONAM: Yeah, Poonam.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Poonam, okay.

21 POONAM: Poonam [inaudible]. I come to  
22 you as a New Yorker, as a lesbian, as a disabled  
23 person, as someone who has watched our country for  
24 the last 60-- well, I'm 63, so let's say 55 years,  
25 okay? Corruption follows money. That's the history

1 of our country. Corruption follows-- we are jumping-  
2 - every person in this country in this city deserves  
3 fair and honest care. But take a look at medical  
4 care. Remember OxyContin? Remember lobotomies?  
5 There are people who are very concerned that the  
6 direction of transgender care is not where it should  
7 be. There is a lot of money being made and a lot of  
8 money that is going without enough knowledge. In  
9 England, they have turned back. In Scotland, they  
10 have turned back. The Tavistock [sic] Clinic has  
11 closed, the Tavistock. The Stonewall has been sued,  
12 etcetera. There is reason for us to go slow. A  
13 woman named Jamie Reid [sp?] was a whistleblower down  
14 in one Sothern state I can't think of right now. I  
15 did not come prepared to speak, but this is a place  
16 of safety and other voices need to be heard. I love  
17 everyone. Everyone deserves rightness, but let's  
18 keep in mind history and money corruption.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Thank you  
21 all for being here. This panel is dismissed. The  
22 final panel: Sam Skallar, Alaina Daniels, Ro Pena,  
23 Sharon Leslie Brown, Raul Rivera. We'll begin with  
24 Sam.

1  
2 SAM SKALLAR: Good afternoon, Chair Louis  
3 and members of the committee. Thank you for the  
4 opportunity to speak today. My name is Sam Skallar.  
5 I use she/they pronouns, and I'm here on behalf of  
6 the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault in  
7 strong support of the measures before you. Attacks  
8 on gender-affirming care and trans rights increase  
9 the risk of sexual violence making it critical for  
10 New York City to stand firm in protecting Trans and  
11 gender-expansive communities. The Alliance works to  
12 prevent sexual violence through education, advocacy  
13 and policy change. We've seen firsthand how  
14 transphobia leads to harm, knowing that one in two  
15 transgender or gender non-conforming person will  
16 experience sexual violence in their lifetime. As the  
17 federal government erases data on gender-based  
18 violence, the full scope of this harm is even harder  
19 to measure at this moment. To fully support trans  
20 youth and adults, we must invest in community-led  
21 programs. To make this happen this budget season, we  
22 have been requesting Project DOT, our youth  
23 engagement programming, needing assistance and an  
24 increase from \$100,000 to \$125,000 to expand our  
25 support for gender-expansive LGBTQ+ community. The



1 second is the Sexual Assault Initiative requires an  
2 increase from \$2.075 million to \$2.5 million to meet  
3 the rising needs of survivors of this really volatile  
4 time. Also, our Outsmart New York City program needs  
5 \$300,000 to expand sexual violence prevention in  
6 nightlife spaces, particularly in LGBTQ+ spaces. And  
7 lastly, we echo all of the other testimony for an  
8 increase in Trans Equity Fund to \$10 million with  
9 specific provision that this money goes to trans-led  
10 organizations more than cis-led organizations. The  
11 recent murder of Sam Norquist [sp?], a Black trans  
12 man in New York, who was brutally assaulted before  
13 being killed is a devastating reminder of the chain  
14 of violence that begins with transphobia, escalates  
15 to sexual violence, and too often ends in murder.  
16 When trans adults are murdered it sends a terrifying  
17 message to the trans youth that we work with.

18  
19 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [interposing] You can  
20 wrap it.

21 SAM SKALLER: By centering and protecting  
22 trans people in our policies, I urge the Council to  
23 support these legislative measures and take a clear,  
24 unwavering stance in defense of all trans and gender  
25 non-conforming New Yorkers. Thank you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. Alania?  
3 Oh, Alaina Daniels.

4 ALAINA DANIELS: Alaina, thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: My apologies.

6 ALAINA DANIELS: Nope, you're good. Good  
7 afternoon Chair Louis and members of the Committee on  
8 Women and Gender Equity. My name is Alaina Daniels  
9 and I'm a proud neurodivergent lesbian, non-binary,  
10 trans woman. I'm also the Co-founder and Executive  
11 Director of Transformative Schools with Ro Pena. TFS  
12 is a school for building trans power. We do this by  
13 cultivating a network of trans people through our  
14 work developing trans people, teaching trans kids,  
15 researching with trans communities, and organizing  
16 for trans rights. For a year we've been organizing a  
17 partnership with Act Up to demand that City Education  
18 Council Number Two rescinds the hateful resolution to  
19 48. Since December when the parents of some of our  
20 students first came to us saying that trans youth  
21 were losing healthcare at New York City institutions,  
22 we've been organizing around this issue and we're the  
23 ones who brought the parents to the reporters who  
24 broke the story. Earlier this month, we partnered  
25 with Act Up and Gender Liberation Movement to run the

1  
2 Rise Up for Trans Youth Rally where 7,000 people  
3 gathered in Union Square, and seven of our students,  
4 three of our parents, and two of our teachers were  
5 speakers. We're so excited about the energy for  
6 trans kids and trans people and all of the legal and  
7 policy efforts on our behalf, like this hearing.  
8 However, this also brings me to the problem. We're  
9 currently in a situation where we've got a bunch of  
10 cis electeds [sic], cis advocates, cis-led  
11 organizations, and cis people with other positions of  
12 power making decisions that impact trans lives. That  
13 has to change. last week at Comptroller Lander's  
14 Trans Roundtable, the trans executive directors of  
15 Advocates for Trans Equality, Black Trans Liberation  
16 Kitchen, Glitz [sic], New Pride Agenda, New York  
17 Transgender Advocacy Group, T-Flag NYC, Trans Latinx,  
18 and Transformative Schools came together to say-- and  
19 supported by Ali Forney-- came together to say we  
20 already did the policy work. It's the Policy  
21 Memorandum and the Pride and Policy Report. We  
22 already did the roundtables and photo-ops. We've  
23 already applied for funding. We warned the city and  
24 the cis-led orgs that these attacks on trans people,  
25 especially those who are multi-marginalized, we're

1  
2 coming, and we're tired and more at risk than ever  
3 before. We believe that trans people know more about  
4 transphobia and how to end it than cis people,  
5 because we live it every day. And so I want to  
6 reiterate that we have one and only one focus for  
7 today, ensuring that trans-led programs receive  
8 enough funding to sustain and grow our work caring  
9 for our communities, because currently out of a New  
10 York City budget of \$111 billion, only \$3.2 million  
11 goes to the Trans Equity Fund, and of that \$3.2  
12 million, 62 percent of it currently goes to cis-led  
13 organizations. After years of asking and years of  
14 promises, in fiscal year 25 none of the trans-led  
15 orgs were added to the Trans Equity Fund--

16 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [interposing] Alright.  
17 If you could wrap it.

18 ALAINA DANIELS: and instead two  
19 cisgender orgs were added. And so trans people need  
20 to be leading this process. And so to end with the  
21 three demands, to please increase the Trans Equity  
22 initiative to \$10 million at least for 2026.

23 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.

24 ALAINA DANIELS: Thank you.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You can submit the  
3 rest. Thank you. Ro Pena?

4 RO PENA: Hello, members of the  
5 Committee. My name is Ro Pena. I'm a non-binary  
6 educator and Co-founder and Director of Programming  
7 at Transformative Schools along with Alaina where  
8 every day we facilitate a free trans-centered  
9 afterschool program for youth who are seeking safety  
10 and community with other youth just like themselves.  
11 However, we can't do this work-- we can't do this  
12 work without a roof over our heads and the necessary  
13 funding to support our educators among so many other  
14 financial needs. I'm here today to address the  
15 allocation of funding for organizations that support  
16 our larger transgender community. Trans  
17 organizations have a profound insight into the  
18 barriers that trans people encounter, from healthcare  
19 access to discrimination in employment and education.  
20 When we invest in trans organizations we empower  
21 those who have lived trans experiences and are  
22 committed to fostering change for their larger  
23 community. While most LGB organizations have valuable  
24 contributions, they often lack the same level of  
25 understanding and care. By investing in us and

1 directing funding towards trans-led initiatives, we  
2 ensure that the voices of trans individuals are  
3 prioritized, and we move towards dismantling the  
4 systemic barriers that have marginalized transgender  
5 individuals for far too long. Sure, this is about  
6 financial support, but it is also about recognizing  
7 the importance of representation and inclusivity in  
8 the services provided by trans-led organizations. We  
9 need Trans Equity Fund to be increased to at least  
10 \$10 million. This is a critical opportunity for this  
11 council to make meaningful action and demonstrate a  
12 commitment to equity and conclusion for transgender  
13 people. TFS passionately believes wholeheartedly in  
14 the urgent need for trans liberation. It is not just  
15 a matter of support, it is a call to action. It is--  
16 we advocate for the direct distribution of resources  
17 and funding to trans-led organizations. Our  
18 organizations lifelines offering hope in the face of  
19 adversity. We urge this committee to consider the  
20 profound impact that funding trans-led organizations  
21 can have on our city. Together we can create a more  
22 inclusive and equitable community where we-- where  
23 every individual can thrive. I will submit my full  
24 testimony for the record. Thank you.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Sam, Ro,  
3 Alaina. Thank you so much for being here. You are  
4 dismissed. Thank you. We appreciate your time. Now  
5 we'll hear from Sharon Leslie Brown.

6 SHARON LESLIE BROWN: Hello. This is  
7 Sharon Leslie Brown from Rose [sic] of Sharon  
8 Enterprises. Before I start, remember Israel.  
9 Release the hostages. Let Yahweh's people go.  
10 Defend Israel. Okay, already the ACS has stopped  
11 homosexual couples from foster care, and I believe  
12 this is a good decision. I believe that they should  
13 end the funding of LGBTQIA+ any different kind of  
14 services that they would have. They have to have  
15 regular services like every other individual. Many  
16 LGBTQIA+ have been sexually abused and were not born  
17 that way. And in good faith, I can't, and in good  
18 conscience, I can't and we can't support homosexual  
19 legislation in bills and whatever in that vein.  
20 There is no transphobia. We are not afraid of the  
21 LGBTQIA+ community. We are letting them know this is  
22 not transphobia. We are not afraid of you. The  
23 Bible says a man shall not lie with a man as with  
24 womankind. We have a basis for our belief. It is  
25 not anti-LGBTQIA in the classic sense. It is

1 biblically-based. No pro-LGBTQIA bills should be  
2 passed, once again. We are a Jewish Christian  
3 nation, Judeo Christian as we're commonly called, or  
4 Christian. It's all the same, Jewish Christian,  
5 Judeo Christian, Christian. And it's immoral, and  
6 not moral. It's amoral for homosexuality. But again,  
7 we are not afraid and we're not trying to be hateful.  
8 We're saying in our belief this is what God has said  
9 in the Bible. This is why we are telling you no. We  
10 are not coming up to you and bothering you and  
11 harming you. We're speaking to you in free speech  
12 and telling you what the Bible says. So we're not  
13 trying to harm you and offend you. We're trying to  
14 tell you the truth. We must enshrine in law there's  
15 only two sexes and there is only two genders. We  
16 have male and female, woman and man. Marriage has to  
17 also be enshrined in law and whatever we can do that  
18 is between a man and a woman. No fictitious law is  
19 going to change that. That's what it is in the  
20 Bible. That's what it always will be. They will be  
21 against society if they do it. It doesn't matter if  
22 they try to become the majority and democratically do  
23 it--  
24



CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [interposing] Thank you, Sharon.

SHARON LESLIE BROWN: The Bible still stands.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.

SHARON LESLIE BROWN: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Alright, you're dismissed.

SHARON LESLIE BROWN: Okay.

RAUL RIVERA: My name--

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: So, Raul, I didn't call your name yet. How are you? So we're going to use decorum and respect like always. It's me and you. It's me and you, okay? Raul? Raul? Go ahead. You can start. Yes, I will. You can start.

RAUL RIVERA: Yes, if forgot. I'm a rookie. My name is Raul Rivera. I'm the son of Juanita Figeroa. I want to congratulate the 30+ women in this City Council for letting real men off the hook. The women in this City Council do not represent women. This oppressive City Council is attacking real women, and the fact that the word mother was removed from the language in the City Council is a disgrace to Shirley Chisolm, Rosa Parks

1 and all mothers, and all real mothers. Rosa Parks  
2 was a real woman, a real freedom fighter, a civil  
3 rights leader. Our civil rights leaders are rolling  
4 over in their graves. To think this oppressive  
5 majority women City Council is not protecting real  
6 women. Speaker Adams will never come close to any of  
7 our civil rights leaders, let alone Rosa parks, as  
8 much as she may try. And this is not a personal  
9 attack. This is our freedom of speech, you know?  
10 And we say what we say with love. People might not  
11 understand that. And for the record-- and for the  
12 record, your colleague and Chair to the  
13 Transportation Committee, Brooks-Powers, is blocking  
14 people of color from receiving justice. You know  
15 we've been trying to get meetings with her, and she's  
16 been blocking us. She's coming up with nonsense.  
17 She's met with us in the past. I wouldn't even be  
18 here if she'd give us our meeting. We have to come  
19 to other meetings and be vocal about this. It's  
20 pretty shameful. And she's a person of color. As a  
21 native New Yorker, I personally invite Musk and the  
22 DOGE team to investigate every single NGO in this  
23 city. Finally, thank you to President Trump who  
24  
25

1 declared there are only two genders. Long live the  
2 real mother. Thank you.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Raul.  
5 Kate? Kate Tiskus [sp?]? And if there's anyone else  
6 in the chamber that didn't get an opportunity to  
7 testify that would like to do so, please take the  
8 time to do that now. Whenever you're ready, Kate.

9 KATE TISKUS: Chair Louis, thank you very  
10 much for the opportunity to speak. My name is Kate  
11 Tiskus. I work closely with folks who receive funding  
12 under Trans Equity as a community organizer and as a  
13 registered lobbyist, and I wanted to talk a little  
14 bit about what the last month or so of my life has  
15 been like, because I'm sure that, you know, it's been  
16 wild for you all, but it's been wild for me as well.  
17 And the speed at which the TGNC community was  
18 successfully targeted, even here in New York, is  
19 stunning. We have organizations that have to look  
20 for clandestine places to do intake because folks are  
21 so afraid to come out to formerly known community  
22 places because they're worried about ICE. We have  
23 parents who are worried about registering their  
24 children as having questions about gender or as trans  
25 because they're afraid that that will compromise

1 their children's rights. We have organizations that  
2 have received weird emails and direct threats from  
3 DOGE. Like, everyone is flat out. It's here. It's  
4 now. It's in New York, and that's so stunning  
5 because New York is a special place that has really  
6 done its best to protect everyone, especially queer  
7 people. And one thing that I really want to support  
8 is all of the bills that are put forward today.  
9 They're specific. They're actionable. But the  
10 reason I wanted to talk a little bit about what the  
11 last month has been like was to remind you of the  
12 component of community organizations, because things  
13 are changing quickly, and they're the folks who have  
14 close ties to people in the community who need to  
15 access services as events develop, as laws change, as  
16 conditions worsen. They'll be able to adapt quickly,  
17 and so I really want to emphasize the \$10 million ask  
18 for Trans Equity, prioritizing trans-led  
19 organizations, because they're the ones who will be  
20 able to be nimble enough to meet the rapidly  
21 escalating disaster facing TGNC New Yorkers today.  
22 Thank you for your time.  
23  
24  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.  
3 Audacia and Julia? Julie Daunis and Audacia Ray?  
4 You may begin.

5 AUDACIA RAY: Good afternoon. My name  
6 Audacia Ray. I use they/them pronouns, and I'm the  
7 Interim Executive Director of the New York City Anti-  
8 Violence Project. And I'm here to express support for  
9 all the bills that have been introduced, 1200, 1201,  
10 1203, 1204, as well as the resolutions, and to  
11 emphasize that the Trans Equity Fund should get at  
12 least \$10 million and especially support trans-led  
13 orgs. But I also wanted to share that AVP as an  
14 organization that serves LGBTQ survivors of violence  
15 has been seeing a really major uptick in demand from  
16 our community for services and support for BIPOC,  
17 trans, and non-binary people, as well immigrant  
18 survivors, and so that's becoming an increasing need  
19 that we're seeing. So I wanted to pass it on to you  
20 all, and also to say that this room is full of very  
21 brilliant queer and trans people who are leaders on  
22 these issues and who are already doing the work. So,  
23 to any extent that the city can keep funneling money  
24 towards trans-led groups, that's really what we want  
25 to see. The solutions exist. We have them. And I

1  
2 really would like to encourage that the Council keep  
3 being in dialogue with this community about what  
4 solutions are and how to support them. In the past,  
5 AVP has been critical of bills that require creation  
6 of education mechanisms and planning [inaudible]  
7 agendas, and that's because we know what we need.  
8 The Sylvia and Marsha [sp?] Plan, that has been out  
9 for a couple years, though a lot of folks in this  
10 room collaborated on, is an example of that. There's  
11 also a resource that I can share that AVP and the  
12 Center for Urban Pedagogy designed a couple of years  
13 ago. We have hard copies of it here, actually. Andy  
14 Bowen [sp?] who's now with the City helped design  
15 this. It is a info sheet about how folks can access  
16 services from the city itself and what folks need to  
17 do to figure out who the liaison is and make that  
18 happen for themselves.

19 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.

20 AUDACIA RAY: Sure thing.

21 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Julia?

22 JULIA DAUNIS: So, thank you for this  
23 hearing today and for all the people here, the  
24 individuals and experts who've spoken so eloquently  
25 about this really important issue, or all of these

1 really important issues. I'm not an expert at all,  
2 and I am a cisgender woman and both of my children  
3 are cisgender. I am a mother and think lots of  
4 people can be. So I don't want to take up any time.  
5 I just want to-- because it's not voice to say, but I  
6 want to add my voice in support as a New Yorker and  
7 thank people for not preemptively complying like the  
8 New York hospitals did. I was shocked. I was  
9 disappointed. I believe it's our job to support  
10 everyone, and I think a lot about Fanny Lou Hamer  
11 [sic] saying nobody's free until everybody's free,  
12 and I really think that as New Yorkers, it's sad that  
13 we're one of the few places in this country that  
14 people identify as a safe place, and I think we need  
15 to be in that fight, and I thank you for having this  
16 hearing again, and especially my current and previous  
17 Council Members from 35 and 36, and I thank everyone  
18 who has the power and the knowledge and the expertise  
19 for being in this fight, and I'm here to support you.  
20 And I wanted to just add that I don't need to lead,  
21 you know, but I'm here to be in it with everyone.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Being here is part of  
24 your leadership. We appreciate you. Thank you both  
25 for being here. We appreciate you. This panel is

1 dismissed. We're now going to transition to online  
2 public testimony.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Because I have to  
5 leave, I just wanted to thank everybody for joining  
6 us this afternoon, for your testimony, and I just  
7 wanted to put out there that today's hearing was not  
8 about-- was not a debate about whether trans people  
9 exist. Trans people exist in our city and the  
10 discussion today was what we can do to make our city  
11 more inclusive and safer for trans people. So I hope  
12 no one walks away from this hearing feeling that  
13 there were other intentions. Trans people exist, and  
14 we want to make sure that our community-- and when  
15 trans people are safe, our entire community is safe.  
16 And with that, I look forward to reviewing all the  
17 testimonies that are going to be submitted so that we  
18 can put in the appropriate amendments. And with  
19 that, thank you so much.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council  
21 Member.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: On Zoom, Amelia  
23 Prochaska, you'll be unmuted.

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.  
25



1  
2 AMELIA PROCHASKA: Good afternoon. My  
3 name is Amelia Prochaska. I use she/her pronouns.  
4 I'm a training and facilitation specialist with Right  
5 to Be, formerly Holla Back [sic]. I want to thank  
6 you for the opportunity to testify, all the important  
7 legislation in this urgent issue. Representing both  
8 my community as a New Yorker and my organization's  
9 work. We were founded in Brooklyn in 2005 and we  
10 address all forms of hate and harassment, including  
11 the hate and harassment in the trans community. Our  
12 work focuses on turning the care that we have for  
13 each other into simple, creative and effective  
14 action. We train hundreds of people every day, and  
15 today, we would like to offer our support of the  
16 transgender non-conforming and non-binary community  
17 as they face increased hate and discrimination. We  
18 have three supports available for the community  
19 specifically. We're currently providing free and  
20 virtual bystander intervention training to address  
21 anti-LGBTQIA+ hate at an increased pace, with over 10  
22 free sessions available for all New Yorkers for free  
23 online, scheduled up until the end of April. We know  
24 that reporting hate to the police may not always be  
25 safe for trans folks, especially Black trans women,

1 and through our Hate and Help Tracker on our website-  
2 - it's a secure anonymous story-sharing platform.  
3 We've collected stories of harassment from  
4 individuals since 2005. We have 32,000+ stories, and  
5 it provides room for solidarity. We also have a  
6 unified network of mission aligned peer  
7 organizations, our Ally Solidarity Network, and we're  
8 always happy to refer community members. We trust  
9 that our city will lead the response nationwide the  
10 current attacks on trans rights. Specifically, I say  
11 the name of Sam Norquist, a New Yorker who was  
12 brutally murdered and for whom we show up and do this  
13 work. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us any  
14 of you, all City Council Members, and all citizens  
15 who are here today. Thank you for the opportunity to  
16 testify, for your commitment to making New York City  
17 a great place for all New Yorkers and a place where  
18 we all have the right to be.

19  
20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Natalia Fiorenzo?

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 NATALIA FIORENZO: Hi, can you hear me?

24 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Yes, we can hear you.

25 You can begin.

2 NATALIA FIORENZO: Okay, great. Good  
3 afternoon. My name is Natalie Fiorenzo. I use  
4 she/her pronouns and I am Senior Corrections  
5 Specialists at New York County Defender Services in  
6 Manhattan, as well as a member of the TGNCNBI  
7 Taskforce created by the City Council. I'm grateful  
8 for this committee, that you recognize the need for  
9 this hearing today and the legislation that's been  
10 proposed. I know the fact that you've moved so  
11 quickly-- it's only February 28<sup>th</sup>-- to shore up  
12 protections for our city's most vulnerable citizens.  
13 The widespread hate and aggression towards  
14 transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and  
15 intersex individuals affects those on Rikers Island  
16 10-fold. As we know, the Department of Correction is  
17 embroiled in numerous lawsuits and monitorships  
18 outlining their inability to keep those in their  
19 custody safe. I have shared in front of this council  
20 before that 100 percent of the transgender women that  
21 I have personally worked with who are placed in a  
22 male facility are sexually assaulted, physically  
23 assaulted or verbally assaulted, and most typically  
24 they experience a brutal combination of all three.  
25 In line with this committee's clear dedication to the

1 safety and personhood of transgender, non-binary and  
2 queer-identifying individuals as the federal  
3 government escalates its attacks on this community, I  
4 urge you all to sign onto and open the floor to Intro  
5 625. Intro 625 is a powerfully, thoughtfully drafted  
6 bill that would ensure that transgender, gender non-  
7 conforming, non-binary and intersex people are housed  
8 as safely as possible while in the custody of  
9 Department of Correction. DOC's own reporting shows  
10 that they deny over 50 percent of gender-aligned  
11 housing requests. President Trump's recent Executive  
12 Order strips transgender people in federal prison of  
13 their dignity and safety, forcing transgender women  
14 to be transferred into men's facilities where they're  
15 at a heightened risk of violence and abuse. This  
16 cruel directive sends a chilling message nationwide,  
17 that trans people are unworthy of protection and that  
18 their very existence is something to be punished. We  
19 as New Yorkers must reject this precedent--

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
22 you. Your time's expire.

23 NATALIA FIORENZO: that in our city every  
24 person deserves to be treated with dignity--

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [interposing] Thank  
3 you so much. You can submit the rest on public  
4 testimony.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: George Dania?

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

7 GEORGE DANIA: Hello, can you hear me?

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yep.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Yes, you can begin.

10 GEORGE DANIA: Hello, my name is Doctor  
11 George Dania. I use they/them pronouns and I'm a  
12 Resident Physician in Psychiatry working in the New  
13 York City public hospital system. I'm also a proud  
14 member and delegate for CIR, the resident union.  
15 Thank you to the Committee of Women and Gender Equity  
16 and Council Member Louis. I'm here testifying in  
17 support of the resolutions meant to protect gender-  
18 affirming care for New York City's patients. I came  
19 to this city for my residency program for many  
20 reasons, but one of them was because New York is  
21 known as the beacon of gender-affirming care, and I  
22 wanted to work somewhere that made this essential  
23 care available to my patients. So when Trump was  
24 elected and a close friend who is trans told me that  
25 he thought he was-- told me he was considering

1 leaving the country, I told him that we were in New  
2 York City. I thought we should be fine here, because  
3 this city is a haven for queer and trans people. But  
4 NYU's recent decision to halt gender-affirming care  
5 for youth defied what I thought I knew about my city.  
6 Right now, it feels like my friend was right. So it  
7 is very personal to me when I implore the City  
8 Council to pass these resolutions protecting gender-  
9 affirming care, helping to ensure that New York can  
10 continue to be the city with-- excuse me-- the city  
11 we thought it was. Study after study show that  
12 gender-affirming care not only improves the wellbeing  
13 of trans youth, but saves lives. We know that trans  
14 youth who are able to receive this treatment have  
15 decreased depression, anxiety and lower odds of  
16 suicidality. This is a core part of the standard of  
17 care. I just came out a stint of working in an in-  
18 patient psychiatric unit where a lot of my patients  
19 were trans. When I'm with my patients I'm providing  
20 the best care possible. Aspects of my work almost  
21 feel disingenuous when I know they might not be able  
22 to continue to have access to the treatments they  
23 rely on. What I want as a physician is to be part of  
24 system that could help my patients in all the ways  
25

1 they need. We're already working inside of a profit-  
2 driven medical system in the U.S. The last thing  
3 that hospital workers want or their patients need is  
4 to navigate--

5  
6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
7 you. Your time's expired.

8 GEORGE DANIA: [inaudible] barrier to  
9 effective holistic care.

10 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Erika Nunez-Cespedes?

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

13 ERIKA NUNEZ-CESPEDES: Thank you to the  
14 committee for hosting this hearing today. My name is  
15 Erika Nunez-Cespedes. My pronouns are she/her, and  
16 I'm the Director of [inaudible] and Design at PPGNY,  
17 Planned Parenthood of Greater New York. I serve on  
18 our cross-departmental LBGTQ+ workgroup. The federal  
19 administration's recent anti-trans orders also  
20 directly impact my own family and community and I'm  
21 painfully aware that these actions are the first in a  
22 long-term plan to pull back on care access and rights  
23 for queer people and marginalized communities. PPGNY  
24 is a trusted provider of sexual and reproductive  
25 healthcare and education programs, and we proudly

1 provide gender-affirming healthcare at our health  
2 centers in New York City. In 2024 we conducted over  
3 1,600 patient visits for gender-affirming hormone  
4 therapy, GAHT care, and provided care to over 4,800  
5 TGNC individuals. 2025 has brought an increased  
6 demand for GAHT care, and this includes people who  
7 have relocated to New York State to access that care.  
8 We recognize that for the TGNC community access to  
9 resources has historically been out of reach, steeped  
10 in stigma and discrimination. Trans people have been  
11 forced to live on the margins with limited access to  
12 compassionate, affordable, and comprehensive  
13 healthcare. Recent attacks on gender-affirming care  
14 nationwide have forced many in the community to go  
15 without care, and it is imperative New York remains a  
16 beacon for TGNC people seeking care and that our  
17 healthcare facilities comply with city and state laws  
18 which protect access to gender-affirming care and  
19 require non-discriminatory access to care regardless  
20 of the federal political winds. PPGNY supports  
21 measures by the New York City Council that help  
22 ensure that TGNC communities can attain the resources  
23 they depend on. While we support Intro 3093 which  
24 would safeguard access to facilities providing SRH  
25



1 and gender-affirming care, we caution against  
2 creating criminal provisions within this law, because  
3 of potential unintended consequences. We recognize  
4 the importance of safeguarding access to SRH care as  
5 anti-abortion and anti-GHAT care protestors become  
6 more emboldened under the Trump/Vance Administration.  
7 However--

8  
9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your time  
10 is expired.

11 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. You can  
12 submit the rest of your testimony at  
13 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Andy Izenon?

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Andy?

17 ANDY IZENSON: Hi, thank you so much.  
18 Thank you for unmuting me. Good afternoon Chair  
19 Louis and members of the Committee and thank you for  
20 having me to testify, and thank you to the Council  
21 Members that proposed these bills, Council Members  
22 Cabán, Hanif, Ossé, Bottcher, Hudson, and Schulman.  
23 I'm the Senior Legal Director at the Chosen Family  
24 Law Center. I work with LGBTQ+ clients all over New  
25 York State. I'm also a law professor at the LGBTQ+

1  
2 Advocacy Clinic at Harvard Law School, and in that  
3 position I spent the last year researching shield,  
4 sanctuary, and other protective laws that at the  
5 state and municipal level that are being tossed all  
6 over the country. And I want to say, I've never seen  
7 a package as comprehensive and likely to be effective  
8 as the package on the table today. I'm also on the  
9 Board of Directors for the Accountability Journalism  
10 Institute, and so I can say we are in an environment  
11 of violent propaganda and disinformation meant to  
12 tear our communities apart and prevent us from  
13 connecting with each other, coming together, and  
14 rising up. The clients that we work with who are  
15 trans are not only trans. Equity for trans people  
16 means immigrant justice, reproductive justice,  
17 economic justice and every other destruction of  
18 violent oppression on every level. The anti-trans  
19 legislation that's being passed across the country at  
20 the state and federal level is being written and  
21 promulgated by the Heritage Foundation and they  
22 understand the eradication of trans people to be  
23 inextricable from the restriction of reproductive  
24 freedom and the genocidal anti-immigrant measures  
25 that they're passing. So expressing that New York

1  
2 cares about New Yorkers no matter how longstanding or  
3 new, no matter what their New York residency means to  
4 them is what this package of bills is for. A  
5 previous speaker said this is not homophobia, we are  
6 not afraid, and I don't think that's true. I think  
7 what we're seeing is the last gasp of a dying mindset  
8 of hate trying desperately to keep itself alive and  
9 in New York City that is not a place where it can  
10 take root. So, I want to urge the Council to pass--

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank  
12 you. Your time's expired.

13 ANDY IZENSON: I greatly appreciate the  
14 time. Thank you so much.

15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. I want to  
16 thank everybody for coming out today and I want to  
17 thank everyone who testified both in person and via  
18 Zoom. We appreciate you, your advocacy, and we see  
19 you. With that said, seeing that no one else is here  
20 to testify-- if you do want to provide testimony,  
21 please submit it at [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Have  
22 a blessed weekend. This hearing is now adjourned.

23 [gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

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COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUITY

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 15, 2025