

Testimony of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to the New York City Council Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction regarding NYC: ATWORK Employment Program for New Yorkers with Disabilities

Thursday, October 23, 2025

Good morning, Chair Lee and members of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addictions. My name is Abby Mayerhoff, and I serve as the Director of Programs for NYC: ATWORK at the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD). Joining me are Emily Sweet, General Counsel at MOPD and Sara Rawshanara, Chief of Staff at MOPD.

We appreciate this opportunity to testify about the work our office is doing to connect New Yorkers with disabilities to meaningful employment and to partner with employers across sectors to build a more inclusive workforce. I also want to thank the City Council for passing Local Law 11 of 2023, which codified the NYC: ATWORK program.

About the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

For more than fifty years, the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) has served as the City's liaison to the disability community, advancing equitable access to City programs, services, and opportunities.

We collaborate closely with City agencies, the private sector, and community organizations to promote equity, accessibility, and inclusion. MOPD also represents New York City on state, national, and international platforms to advance accessibility and inclusion in policymaking and practice. Within that mission, NYC: ATWORK serves as MOPD's signature workforce development program.

About NYC: ATWORK

Launched in 2017, NYC: ATWORK bridges both sides of the employment equation: connecting qualified jobseekers with disabilities to employers seeking diverse, capable talent. It was one of the first programs of its kind, and MOPDs across the country have looked to it as a model.

We built this model because we saw a gap. Many employers wanted to hire inclusively but didn't know how and many jobseekers with disabilities needed access, opportunity, and person-centered support to compete in a system that wasn't designed with them in mind. NYC: ATWORK was created to address both sides of that challenge: empowering jobseekers while helping employers build confidence and competence in disability inclusion in the workplace.

To understand why this work remains so essential, it helps to look at the broader landscape.

According to American Community Service (ACS) data, New York City is home to nearly one million residents with a disability.

Just 40 percent of New Yorkers with disabilities of working age are employed, compared to 73 percent of the city's overall working-age population.

And for those who are in the labor force, the unemployment rate is nearly double, 13 percent for people with disabilities compared to 7 percent citywide.

More than half of working-age New Yorkers with disabilities are not in the labor force, while only about one-fifth of the city overall is not.

The large number of people with disabilities who are not in the labor force is attributable to many factors including: inaccessible workplaces, limited access to reliable and accessible transportation, attitudinal barriers among employers, and the potential loss of benefits when earning income. Others face gaps in education and training opportunities or have been discouraged by years of navigating a workforce system not designed with their needs in mind.

These inequities persist not because of a lack of skill or motivation, but because of structural barriers, inaccessible hiring practices, and limited awareness of available supports.

NYC: ATWORK Services

NYC: ATWORK responds to these challenges by providing a continuum of individualized services to both jobseekers and employers.

Our approach addresses both sides of the employment equation. For jobseekers, we offer career advisement, resume and interview preparation, guidance on disclosure and reasonable accommodations, retention services, and support for those applying to City government through the 55-a Program, which allows qualified people with disabilities to be hired into competitive civil service positions without having to take an exam. We've also expanded our services to include benefits counseling, digital literacy support, and specialized assistance for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing jobseekers.

Each job seeker who comes to us is different. Some have advanced degrees, some are returning to work after long absences, and others are entering the workforce for the first time. Our goal is to meet them where they are, help them develop confidence, and ensure they have the tools and support needed to succeed.

On the employer side, we provide recruitment support, pre-screened candidate referrals, and personalized hiring events. We also offer technical assistance, retention assistance, and Disability Awareness and Etiquette trainings to help organizations build inclusive workplaces.

Employer engagement isn't just about filling jobs, it's about creating an inclusive workplace culture. We've worked with partners across government, healthcare, and the arts to train HR teams, supervisors, and managers on disability etiquette, reasonable accommodations, and strategies for retaining talent.

Our Career Services staff is currently embedded at the Workforce1 Career Center in Downtown Brooklyn, where we engage with 60 to 100 jobseekers each week, both virtually and in person. The partnership with Small Business Services (SBS) and Workforce1 has expanded our reach, strengthened coordination with the City's workforce system, and created more accessible pathways to employment.

We're also helping the Workforce1 staff become more confident and capable engaging jobseekers with disabilities through training, technical assistance, and on-site collaboration ensuring accessibility is built into the City's workforce ecosystem, not added on later.

This model has produced measurable results.

Update from 2022

Our office testified before this Committee in 2022 that the pilot phase of NYC: ATWORK had already successfully connected nearly 600 New Yorkers with disabilities to employment. We have advised other municipalities on how to replicate the model. Further, the program, which was launched as a public-private partnership, is now entirely funded by the City.

In March 2022, Mayor Adams' *Blueprint for Economic Recovery* tasked MOPD and the Office of Talent and Workforce Development with developing a comprehensive plan to increase the accessibility of career training and employment opportunities. That plan, released in July 2023, called for scaling NYC: ATWORK by embedding our services into the NYC Department of Small Business Services' Workforce1 Career Centers¹, beginning with the "hub" center in Downtown Brooklyn.

¹ The NYC Department of Small Business Services offers free services at its network of Workforce1 Career Centers to prepare and help New Yorkers to find jobs. Job seekers can prep for their next interview, update their résumé, and connect with employers, or find the right training they need to succeed at these centers.

Despite the success of the model and strong interagency support, the team remains small. **The team is six people** and resources have not yet matched the growing demand.

When I became director in spring 2024, half of our team was new to MOPD. We reorganized to meet the changing needs of both employers and jobseekers, and reintroduced in-person direct services for the first time since 2020, all while integrating into a new workforce system.

The transition brought challenges, but our team has acclimated successfully and continues to deliver results that far exceed what our size might suggest.

Since fiscal year 2024, NYC: ATWORK has connected more than 120 New Yorkers with disabilities to employment and co-hosted ten hiring events across sectors such as healthcare, government, and the arts.

These include collaborations with partners like the Workforce1 Healthcare Career Center and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), a citywide diversity job fair with a dozen City agencies, and a career exploration event with The Frick Collection, which directly resulted in hires and new partnerships.

Each of these events not only connects jobseekers to opportunities but also changes employer mindsets about what inclusive hiring can look like.

Through closer coordination with DCAS and our partners, we've improved communication and clarity around the 55-a onboarding process and expanded outreach to City agencies. However, approval timelines outside our control still create delays.

Together with SBS and their Workforce1 Career Centers, NYC Talent, DCAS, and other City partners, we are on track to meet the City's goal of connecting 2,500 New Yorkers with disabilities to employment opportunities by July 2026.

While we're proud of this progress, sustaining and expanding it requires addressing several ongoing challenges.

Our six-person team performs the work that would typically require a much larger staff, balancing direct services, outreach, employer engagement, and technical assistance.

Although the 55-a process has improved, administrative hurdles and lengthy approvals can still discourage both jobseekers and hiring managers. And as our visibility grows, we receive more invitations to community and job fairs, which is a positive sign of our success, but it often stretches staff capacity.

In addition, many jobseekers require digital literacy training or mental-health support as they rebuild confidence to reenter the workforce. These are not small needs; they are the realities of creating an inclusive economy.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, NYC: ATWORK is focused on building on this strong foundation.

Building on our success at the Brooklyn Workforce1 Center, we would like to have a presence at additional Workforce1 Centers; strengthen digital literacy and benefits counseling, particularly for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing jobseekers; and continue partnering with DCAS to modernize and expand the 55-a Program so that City government remains a leader in inclusive hiring.

We also aim to increase sector-based employer engagement, provide ongoing technical assistance and training, and work with agencies and community-based organizations to embed accessibility into every stage of workforce development.

NYC: ATWORK demonstrates that when people with disabilities have equitable access to opportunity, they don't just find jobs, they build careers, strengthen communities, and contribute to New York City's economy.

With continued partnership, collaboration, and investment, we can scale what works and make inclusive hiring the standard across our city. Before turning to the legislative items on today's agenda, I'll now pass it to my colleague Emily Sweet.

Good morning, Chair Lee and members of the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addictions. My name is Emily Sweet, and I serve as the General Counsel at the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

Introduction 163

Turning to today's legislation, Introduction 163 would require the mayor or mayor's designee to establish accessibility guidelines for print documents. MOPD supports this bill, which would further inclusion for people with disabilities, but we suggest some minor changes. Specifically, we recommend the bill specify that it applies to print documents, whether they are disseminated in hard copy or electronically with the intent that they be printed. We also recommend that the effective date be 180 days after the bill is enacted to give City agencies sufficient time to comply.

Introduction 1004

This bill would require MOPD to publish a list of wheelchair repair providers in New York City. MOPD supports the **goal** of this bill, which is to make information about available options for wheelchair repair more readily available. However, we do not know at this time what compliance with the bill would entail. We are currently in discussions with the State Department of Health to determine what sorts of lists of wheelchair repair providers they can

pull, including from past Medicaid claims. With gratitude to the committee for this effort to address an issue related to wheelchair repair in New York City, we respectfully request that consideration of this bill be paused while we continue our conversations with the State.

Thank you for allowing us to testify before you today and we will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.



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Testimony in Support of Greater Investments in NYC:ATWORK, Ints 0163, 1004, 1307 and Res. 0323 and 0338

October 24, 2025

To the Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction:

My name is Molly Senack, and I am the Education and Employment Community Organizer for the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY).

to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 37.4% of disabled people between the ages of 16 and 64 were employed in the United States. According to the same report, employees with a disability were almost twice as likely to only work part-time as people without a disability (31% vs 17%), and less likely to work in traditionally higher paid managerial or professional positions than people without disabilities (37.9% compared to 44.1% respectively). Meanwhile, the American Community Survey reported that even when people with disabilities did work fulltime, their median salary was more than \$9,000 lower than the median salary for people without disabilities (\$48,937 vs \$58,113); and among working-age people between the ages of 16 and 64, poverty was more than twice as prevalent in the disabled community as in the non-disabled community (24.2% vs 9.9%). For people with disabilities seeking gainful employment, there exists a gap in hiring, a gap in advancement, and a gap in wage parity.

Over the course of the last few years, significant efforts have been made in NYC to address these gaps, and to increase the hiring and workplace retention rates of people with disabilities. In 2023, Mayor Adams announced the expansion of NYC: ATWORK, a program supporting career advancement for the 29% of New Yorkers who, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have at least one disability. However, this critical program remains understaffed and underfunded, severely limiting the scope of what it can achieve. NYC: ATWORK works with both employers and employees developing partnerships, conducting trainings, guiding applicants through the job seeking process, addressing accommodation issues, providing benefits counseling, doing outreach to expand program participation, and offering other employment resources and support. This is all work done by the program's current staff of only 6 people.

Despite running a successful program (NYC: ATWORK estimates that since 2023, 80% of program participants were connected with full-time employment), limited capacity means that long waitlists are common, and that only so many people can be helped. Nearly 2 million people in NYC have a disability. Since 2023, NYC: ATWORK has been able to help approximately 120 of them. If this program is going to reach its potential to significantly narrow employment gaps in NYC for people with disabilities, greater investments are needed. Increased funding means this program would be able to: have a physical presence in every borough, making it easier for

NYers to utilize these services; hire more staff, increasing the number of people who can participate in the program; expand outreach efforts to reach not only more potential consumers, but potential employers to develop partnerships with; update the NYC: ATWORK website to make it more navigable for users curious about the program; and be prepared to address the emerging barriers to employment that people with disability are beginning to face, including AI-based hiring discrimination, rapidly changing benefits policies, and funding cuts that could impact the overall availability of open job positions.

Therefore, CIDNY strongly supports an increased financial investment in NYC: ATWORK in the FY27 budget and asks that this funding be baselined, so that this program can continue to expand.

The Council is also considering several other bills designed to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities in NYC. **CIDNY strongly supports the passage of:**

- **Int 0163**, which will establish accessibility guidelines for print materials,
- **Int 1004**, which will require the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities to create a website that provides information on wheelchair repair providers and services that help people find wheelchair repair providers,
- **Int 1307**, which establishes a film, television, and theater accessibility fund to promote the employment of persons with disabilities, ensuring that more people with disabilities have access to creative careers and countering the exclusion from artistic pursuits people with disabilities have historically faced, as well as increasing the representation of disability in the media- a critical factor for the general destigmatization of disability,
- **Res 0323**, which calls on the MTA and NYCTA to adopt federally-recommended measures to ensure that access-a-ride serves New Yorkers on-time, and
- **Res 0338**, which calls on the New York City Department of Education and the New York State Education Department to meet their obligations under state and federal law to provide impartial due process hearings in a timely manner as they relate to resolving complaints filed by families of the thousands of students with disabilities who did not receive their mandated services.

We thank the Council for their time and continued effort to ensure that people with disabilities have access to gainful employment, to an equitable education, to art, and to an overall improved quality of life in NYC.

Sincerely,

Molly Senack (She/Her)
Education and Employment Community Organizer
Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York
Email: msenack@cidny.org Phone: (917)-415-3154

Good morning, council and Committee members. My name is **Lawrence Carter-Long**. I'm here today **speaking in support of Intro 1307** as a lifelong disability advocate and Director of Engagement for **ReelAbilities International** — the New York-based nonprofit behind the city's annual disability film festival and a year-round advocacy organization for authentic disability representation in media and culture.

For nearly twenty years, we've seen how access changes what gets made, who gets hired, and ultimately whose stories get told. We appreciate the opportunity to share the insights we've gained with you today.

It's still the wild west out there. People and production companies are at different places on their journeys. One thing I know for certain, from working on policy in NYC and at the federal level — **if it isn't the law, isn't in the budget, or if you don't have qualified disabled staff in leadership positions – inclusion doesn't happen.** Let's review the numbers:

- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, disabled people make up **over 28.7 percent of the population** — but **less than 1 percent of the entertainment workforce.** (Inevitable Foundation "Greenlight Disability Report," 2024)
- A recent survey of more than **1,300 top-grossing films**, only **2.3 percent of speaking characters** had a disability.
- And just **40 percent of disabled adults** surveyed by Easterseals earlier this year said they'd seen any disabled person on-screen in the past three months — the lowest figure in four years.

This isn't just inequity — it's **lost opportunity**. According to a Valuable 500 White Paper published in 2024, the global disability community commands **13 trillion dollars in spending power**, and a 2025 UCLA study shows that films with authentic disability representation earn up to **32 million dollars more** on all-important make or break opening weekends than those without.

In other words, **inclusion pays**.

With Intro 1307 NYC can help close that gap — by turning accommodations from an afterthought into a creative baseline, replacing obstacles with opportunity and excuses with equity.

As we told Able News earlier this year, how this fund is implemented is as important as what it strives to do. To truly matter, inclusion can't be a side project; it must be woven into **every frame, every script, every stage.** NYC has a **unique opportunity with Intro 1307 to do that.** As a nonprofit with its roots proudly embedded in NYC, ReelAbilities is more than ready and publicly committed to helping this Council, MOPD, MOME, and all stakeholders make the number of participants in NYC's entertainment landscape more reflective of reality.

I'll leave you with this: Because we often have to navigate a world not built with us in mind, disabled people are masters at **innovation, improvisation, and imagination without support.** Now, **imagine what can be done when we support and harness this expertise.**

If implemented correctly, Intro 1307 can apply these valuable skills and talents to build a new creative bedrock both in front of and behind the camera for disabled NYers and a model for other cities everywhere. Together we can create a more equitable NYC that not only screens the best in inclusive programming, but also creates an infrastructure to make those projects here.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Director of Engagement. ReelAbilities International
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Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction

Hon. Linda Lee, Chair

Hearing: Oversight - Int 1307-2025

October 23, 2025

Thank you, Chair Lee and esteemed members of this Committee, for the opportunity to testify. At Roundabout Theatre Company, we are grateful for everything City Council has done to promote equitable arts access for all New Yorkers, and to stimulate the recovery of the performing arts sector, which improves mental health, wellbeing, and quality of life for millions of New Yorkers each year in all five boroughs.

We write today in support of Rep. Marte's bill to create a film, television, and theater accessibility fund administered by the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) in collaboration with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development. As a workforce development leader in the arts, Roundabout believes that this legislation would allow us to deepen our partnership with the City, and to connect more New Yorkers with disabilities to meaningful, well-paid careers in the performing arts and entertainment sector.

Roundabout is one of New York City's flagship nonprofit theatre companies. We operate five theatres on and off-Broadway, and serve over 400,000 people each year through a robust portfolio of artistic and educational programs. Since 2017, Roundabout has partnered with MOME to deliver the Theatrical Workforce Development Program (TWDP), a unique vocational fellowship that connects up to 60 young New Yorkers each year to careers in technical theatre. Beginning with MOME's six-week "Made in NY" Stagecraft Bootcamp, fellows are immersed in a paid, three-year fellowship, comprised of a rigorous curriculum of progressive skills development along with job placements at over 50 employment partners, including dozens of local venues, nonprofits, and small businesses.

Our partnership with MOME has helped our network of over 120 TWDP alumni achieve remarkable success: they earn an average of \$37.75/hr.—and up to \$150/hr. for overtime and holidays—as they work on Broadway shows, touring productions, and nonprofits around the country. Seventy-three percent of fellows and alumni are active in the field, 12% are union members, and 41% are on track to join them within 3-5 years. Last season, we expanded this program with the launch of the TWDP: Administrative Fellowship, which placed five fellows in administrative roles within our company.

Thanks to MOME's banner investment in Bootcamp and continued thought partnership, TWDP has been nimble in responding to industry employment trends and fellows' emerging needs. Anecdotally¹, TWDP already serves fellows with disabilities. We are actively working to 1)

¹ based on fellows' self-identification and/or personal disclosures to TWDP program staff

formalize data collection to adequately assess TWDP's ongoing impact on this community, and 2) adapt our curriculum to improve access for people with disabilities to careers within the entertainment sector. This year, we will begin a five-year pilot as a subgrantee of the Disability Innovation Fund through the U.S. Department of Education. This new program aims to increase opportunities and capacity for young adults with disabilities to find competitive integrated employment in creative careers. TWDP will support at least three fellows each year who are neurodivergent and/or have physical disabilities through access support services, assistive technology, interpretation, professional development for staff on disability inclusion, and more.

Roundabout will also participate in the Kennedy Center and George Washington University's Community of Practice to report on the efficacy of the grant and offer insight into what tools, training, and resources employers need to develop the capacity of people with disabilities for competitive integrated employment. Our participation in this program builds on our ongoing work to improve our capacity to serve people with disabilities across all our education and workforce development programs, including our participation in an observation mentorship program with the Arts for All Abilities Consortium through which we regularly gather with peer companies to share best practices for disability inclusion in the arts education sector.

The proposed legislation would allow us to build on efforts like these, and to leverage Roundabout's position within the field to promote disability justice across the nonprofit and commercial theatre industry. As an organization that has benefitted tremendously from our partnership with MOME, we know that our peers across the field would also benefit from increased collaboration with City government as we establish best practices for disability inclusion in the arts and entertainment sector.

Theatre is one of our city's greatest cultural traditions, and it belongs to all of us. With the City's continued partnership, we can strengthen our arts workforce by making it more inclusive, and use the performing arts to promote belonging and opportunity for all New Yorkers onstage and off. We deeply appreciate the City's ongoing support, and your consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Mercanti', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sarah Mercanti
Director of Government Relations
Roundabout Theatre Company

Testimony of the New York Shakespeare Festival dba The Public Theater

**Before the New York City Council Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction
Regarding Intro 1307 – Accessibility in Entertainment
October 23, 2025**

Chair Bottcher and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of Intro 1307, the Accessibility in Entertainment bill. The Public Theater is proud to join advocates across New York City in advancing a more inclusive and accessible cultural landscape.

Founded by Joe Papp, The Public operates on the belief that theater is an essential cultural force, and that art and culture belong to everyone. That belief guides every aspect of our work: on stage, in parks and community centers, and behind the scenes. Accessibility and inclusion are not special initiatives at The Public; they are integral to our mission.

In recent years, we have made deliberate and sustained efforts to ensure that our programs, facilities, and employment practices reflect that commitment. Our 2023 production of Ryan J. Haddad's *Dark Disabled Stories* was a landmark example of disability-led storytelling, created by and centering a disabled artist. The production deepened our understanding of accessibility not only as an artistic practice, but as an institutional responsibility.

Building on that foundation, The Public continues to explore new ways to employ and support artists and cultural workers with disabilities. This includes our work on a forthcoming musical that will engage disabled creatives across disciplines, an opportunity that underscores both the potential and the challenges of sustaining disability inclusion in production.

Our commitment to accessibility also extends to our physical spaces. The Public has made significant capital investments to ensure that our facilities welcome artists, audiences, and staff with disabilities. The recent renovation of the Delacorte Theater in Central Park prioritized accessibility, from ADA-compliant ramps and seating to thoughtful backstage accommodations for performers with mobility needs. Likewise, the construction of our new rehearsal studios in the Public Theater building was designed to go beyond ADA compliance, centering the needs of people with disabilities in both design and function.

However, additional investment is required to ensure that our government-owned home at 425 Lafayette Street, a historic structure not originally designed with accessibility in mind, can fully accommodate audiences and cultural workers with disabilities. Legislative and financial support for this work are essential if New York's cultural institutions are to truly meet the standards of equity and inclusion we collectively aspire to.

For all of these reasons, The Public Theater strongly supports Intro 1307. By establishing a dedicated Accessibility in Entertainment Fund, the City would provide critical resources and incentives for film, television, and theater productions to hire, accommodate, and collaborate with people with disabilities.

The bill's emphasis on grants, data collection, and best-practice sharing will help ensure that accessibility becomes a systemic and sustainable part of the creative process across the industry.

When accessibility is prioritized, the entire artistic ecosystem benefits. Productions become stronger, stories more truthful, and communities more connected.

On behalf of The Public Theater, we thank the Council for your leadership on this issue and for recognizing that accessibility is foundational to artistic excellence and civic life. We urge you to pass Intro 1307 and look forward to working with you to create a truly inclusive entertainment landscape for all New Yorkers.



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Founded in 1979
by Ike Schambelan

October 25, 2025

The New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY. 10007

ATTN: Christopher Marte, Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction

Dear Council Member Marte:

My name is Nicholas Viselli, and I am the Artistic Director of Theater Breaking Through Barriers here in New York City. I am writing to you to voice our organization's strong support for Entertainment Intro Bill 1307, with the hope that the council will carefully review and pass this important piece of legislation, which will benefit thousands of disabled New Yorkers, and our entire New York Community at-large.

Theater Breaking Through Barriers is New York City's only Off-Broadway theater expressly dedicated to celebrating and advancing the work of professional artists with disabilities. We began in 1979 as Theater by the Blind, officially moved to an Actors' Equity Off-Broadway contract in 2004, expanded our mission in 2008 to include artists of all abilities and disabilities, and then changing our name to Theater Breaking Through Barriers (maintaining our TBTB acronym). We are currently celebrating our 46th season.

It has always been TBTB's over-arching goal to normalize disability in our society by creating art that spotlights the talent of our artists, rather than focusing on their disabilities. We deliberately choose to operate as a mainstream arts organization because we believe the only way we can change the hard-wired misperceptions surrounding disability in our world is to create art that speaks to and for the whole of humanity, rather than for a specialized group. We know from our decades of experience, that when non-disabled, mainstream audiences come to experience our work, they are able to empathize with the characters our artists create and connect on a human level. When this occurs, disability virtually disappears and the negative stigmas surrounding disability diminish into basic human differences.

Unfortunately, our world today deals with snap judgments and absolutes. We are often forced into groups and judged by appearances. In this climate, hard-wired discriminations surrounding disability thrive and the society finds it easy to turn its back on basic accommodations and a level playing field.

The entertainment field has always been notoriously discriminatory towards people with disabilities, making an incredibly difficult profession virtually impossible. While there has certainly been progress in the past decade, it has truly been a game of inches. Disabled artists are now finally being considered for disabled roles after decades of non-disabled artists playing disabled parts, and winning awards for their efforts. But the industry remains discriminatory and work opportunities for our artists remains embarrassingly small.

We believe that Int 1307-2025 will not only create more opportunities for artists within our community to demonstrate their talents, but it will incentivize the entertainment industry to look beyond the disability and see the gifts each artist brings to the table. This piece of legislation is a strong step forward to a level playing field and it will open many doors in the quest to normalize disability by reducing it to a single human characteristic.

On behalf of all our us at TBTB, we sincerely hope the New York City Council will carefully evaluate the landmark importance of this bill, and we sincerely hope you will ratify and pass it into law. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Nicholas Viselli,
Artistic Director, TBTB

Accessibility in Entertainment Intro Bill 1307

Testimony

Anita Hollander

As a professional performer & advocate for over 40 years, I KNOW that New York City has a population of talented, award-winning artists with disabilities, only minimally tapped by the Theatre, Film & TV industry, due to the misconception that we are too expensive to hire. While that truly is a MIS-conception, it continues to be a stumbling block to our employment, even though we actually BENEFIT those who DO hire us.

THEATRE, both on and off Broadway, has reaped REWARDS by hiring such disabled performers as award-winners Ali Stroker, Gregg Mozgala & Katy Sullivan, while Russell Harvard, John McGinty, Tony Lopez, Lauren Ridloff, Madison Ferris & Alexandria Wailes have ALL brought attention and audiences to the theatre, helping it to THRIVE, as it is this very season.

FILM & TV have also benefitted greatly at the box office and awards seasons by hiring such huge talents as Oscar winners Troy Kotsur & Marlee Matlin, as well as Peter Dinklage, Daniel Durant, Tracker's Eric Graise, Stranger Things' Gaten Matarazzo, MacGyver's Meredith Eaton, NCIS' Kurt Yaeger (an amputee who does his own stunts!), not to mention early pioneer Geri Jewell, and so many more. yet the employment rate of Performers with Disabilities still remains less than 2% of actors employed in the entertainment industry, remarkably low when you consider we are the largest minority, 1 out of every 4 Americans.

New York can benefit by tapping this pool of talent, as it increases the audience (since people like to see themselves reflected authentically on stage and screen), thus attracting more sponsors, producers & media attention, all of which amounts to PROFITS. And this is made possible when those in the position of hiring are aided by professional access coordinators and funding. It has been shown that directors & writers who work with disabled artists once are most likely to work with them more often.

THIS BILL REMOVES THE ROADBLOCKS & EXCUSES of accessibility costs. In June, the Council neglected to budget for an ASL interpreter for a council-related disability-based event, which is a PERFECT EXAMPLE of WHY we need this bill. It will not only provide financial support for interpreters, physical access, transportation, & more, but it will also provide EDUCATION & TRAINING to REPRESENT & REFLECT ONE FOURTH OF OUR COUNTRY'S POPULATION and combat RESISTANCE, REJECTION & MISREPRESENTATION of DISABILITY.

It's time for NEW YORK to reap the BENEFITS of hiring talented ARTISTS WITH DISABILITIES. PLEASE SUPPORT THIS BILL!

From: [Anna Pakman](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Int 1307-2025 Testimony Addendum
Date: Thursday, October 23, 2025 4:20:47 PM

Dear Councilmembers,

Thank you for your time and allowing me to speak in support of Int 1307-2025 today. One thing that I neglected to mention in my oral testimony is that the media and entertainment business has been the recipient of billions of dollars in local, state, and federal subsidies funded by taxpayers through tax credits, COVID recovery grants, and arts council funding. In spite of this fact, as you heard today, the industry continues to willfully leave the disability community behind. The only way to change this is with a dedicated fund like Int 1307-2025 that makes accessibility and inclusion a funded priority.

Thank you,
Anna Pakman

Ashley Eakin
Testimony - Normalize Access Needs

Hello, my name is Ashley Eakin. I am a disabled writer/director who is a member of the Directors Guild and the Writer's Guild. In 2022 I was part of a group who founded the DGA Disability Diversity Committee and we got officially approved in 2024 by the DGA national board.

It's very exciting but also long overdue because disabled creatives have always been around, many just hiding in plain sight or masking. Something we are incredibly passionate about is incorporating a new crew position for productions called the "Production Accessibility Coordinator." Which this new bill could help fund.

I directed two episodes of a show on Apple TV called Best Foot Forward and when I got hired, this position already existed. I never heard of it before and was excited to learn and utilize this crew member. It was a below-the-line crew member who didn't have any stake in our jobs...aka, it wasn't a high-powered producer or studio exec who could determine one's job status and see them as a liability. It was a person who maintained complete confidentiality and would advocate for our accessibility needs.

Not only was it about access for the crew members, it was also a person we could ask questions to inquire about other disabled crew if we had any concerns or wanted to know more about their capability, etc. It almost serves as a middle man so people aren't whispering behind everyone's back to figure out a situation.

I always find that not only are disabled people fighting against basic hiring discrimination but in addition to that, we are also having to fight for access which is basically a point against us because the people in charge always equate our needs with more money. When you have someone like a PAC below-the-line advocating on your behalf, it takes away that stigma. I was so elated to be on a set that already incorporated this role. Not only did they make sure the set was accessible for wheelchair users, they helped create a low-stimulation room for those with Autism to utilize during breaks. They also assisted our lead actor with his prosthetics, among many other things. They were a safe space for people to do their jobs with their best abilities being maximized.

When we started our show we had about 6/7 openly-identified disabled people. By the end, we had over 20 who asked for access needs. It goes to show that people are hiding their needs due to fear. We want this role to be as common as an intimacy coordinator that was created years ago to protect actors. This should be no different. But how do we get studios/networks to buy-in to this idea? They incorporated intimacy coordinators because they didn't want to get sued. Therefore, we need there to be some type of tax incentive, grant program or benefit for this role being utilized on sets. The BIG dream would be to incorporate this role onto every set so accessibility is the standard not a privilege when it's given. Many production managers will say - the cost isn't an issue if it's addressed up front while the budget is being created. It's when it's tacked on at the end where the studios will vote against this. We hope you see the benefit in this position and how a grant program would relieve any stigma on disabled creatives. I appreciate you all considering the bill and thank you for your time.

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of Intro 1307.

My name is Avery Roberts. I'm a professional dancer, a wheelchair user, and a rare disease and disability advocate. I'm passionate about access and authentic disability representation in our entertainment industry.

Dance is where I feel free—it's a language beyond words. My wheelchair isn't a limitation; it's part of my art. But the entertainment world isn't built for artists like me—let alone people like me. Too often, accessibility in entertainment is treated as an afterthought...or worse, a burden or a box to check.

One of my most meaningful moments was becoming the first wheelchair user to dance on the stage at Radio City Music Hall. It was historic, but it also revealed how far we still have to go. The rehearsal space wasn't accessible. My 400-pound power chair had to be carried up multiple flights of stairs, and I had to be carried, too. It was unsafe for everyone involved. That shouldn't happen—not in a city that prides itself on being a leader in arts and inclusion.

Intro 1307 is an opportunity to change that. This bill would establish an accessibility fund so productions in film, television, and theater can hire the best talent—on camera, behind the camera, on stage, backstage, and in the writers' room—without worrying about the cost of accommodations.

Accessibility isn't special treatment—it's professional equity and opportunity for everyone. It's what allows artists to show up and do their best work. When we remove barriers, we expand what's possible—for our artists, our audiences, and our city.

Please pass Intro 1307 and make New York City's entertainment industry a model for inclusion, innovation, and authenticity—a place where every story, and every body, belongs.

Thank you.

Becky Curran

Motivational Speaker

P.O. Box 1

Weymouth, MA 02188

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Date: October 10, 2025

To: Members of the Committee New York City Council

Re: Written Testimony in Support of the Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to submit testimony in strong support of the proposed bill establishing a Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund, administered by the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME) in collaboration with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and the Mayor's Office of Talent and Workforce Development.

My name is Becky Curran, and I am an advocate, speaker, and professional with experience working behind the scenes in the entertainment industry. I was born with achondroplasia, the most common form of dwarfism, and I have personally experienced both the opportunities and barriers for people with disabilities in media.

From the 1950s through the 1990s, people with dwarfism grew up in a cultural landscape where public understanding of the condition was mostly limited to a few iconic films: *Snow White*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*. These portrayals, while often whimsical, did little to reflect the real lives and experiences of little people. Some of the most recognizable portrayals of little people include Munchkins, circus "freaks," and Oompa Loompas, roles that, while iconic, are often viewed negatively by the little people community due to the stereotypes they perpetuate. With the launch of *Jackass* on MTV in the late 1990s, the portrayal of little people in the media shifted from passive ridicule to active targeting. The show includes a cast member with dwarfism who is frequently used as a comedic device, reinforcing damaging stereotypes. These depictions suggest that little people are expected to perform or endure public intrusion, further normalizing the invasion of our personal space and undermining our dignity. Violent videos of so-called "dwarf tossing," a practice that led to live events still held in some bars and clubs across the world, have become a serious and persistent issue for the little people community. These events not only dehumanize participants but also reinforce the dangerous idea that people with dwarfism exist for entertainment.

These historical and contemporary portrayals illustrate the ongoing lack of authentic representation and the barriers that persist for people with disabilities in media. They reinforce harmful stereotypes and limit opportunities for meaningful participation in the industry, both on screen and behind the scenes.

The proposed Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund would provide a critical solution by creating pathways for people with disabilities to work in media in ways that are safe, equitable, and empowering. By providing grants to productions that hire and accommodate persons with disabilities, including the engagement of production access coordinators, this bill ensures that accessibility is not an afterthought but an integral part of the creative process.

Production access coordinators play a vital role in creating inclusive sets and work environments, ensuring that accommodations are planned, implemented, and respected. They also help educate teams, normalize accessibility practices, and prevent the types of exclusion and marginalization I have personally experienced throughout my career.

Moreover, the bill's provisions for data collection, public reporting, and transparency will allow the City to measure impact, track employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, and share best practices. By capturing this information, MOME can ensure accountability, identify areas for improvement, and highlight successful inclusive practices for the industry at large.

As a professional and advocate, I have seen how much talent, creativity, and perspective are lost when people with disabilities are excluded from media production. This fund is an essential step toward equity, authentic representation, and the dismantling of long-standing stereotypes. It will empower individuals like me to contribute fully, professionally, and safely to the industry.

I strongly urge the Committee and the Council to pass this bill and establish New York City as a national leader in accessible, inclusive media. By doing so, we will open doors for countless talented individuals, enrich storytelling, and ensure that the entertainment industry reflects the true diversity and creativity of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership on this important issue.

All the best,

Becky Curran

Motivational Speaker

P.O. Box 1

Weymouth, MA 02188

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

10.22.2025

To New York City Council,

Testimony in Support of INTRO 1307

As someone who has worked in television for over 15 years, I've witnessed firsthand the profound impact that storytelling has on fostering belonging and representation. When people see themselves authentically reflected on screen and within the creative process, it strengthens our collective sense of humanity.

While representation of actors with disabilities has increased in recent years, it still does not reflect the diversity of our global population—and representation behind the camera remains even more limited. Too often, productions hesitate to hire talented professionals with disabilities out of concern for the perceived cost of accommodations. In reality, most accommodations are minimal, yet these misconceptions continue to limit access and opportunity.

INTRO 1307 would empower productions to confidently include actors, crew members, and creative professionals with disabilities by helping offset accommodation costs. This initiative represents a critical step toward equity and inclusion in our industry—ensuring that all storytellers have the opportunity to contribute their voices, talents, and perspectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blaine Johnston', with a stylized, cursive script.

Blaine Johnston

Dear Councilmembers,

My name is Christine Bruno. I'm a proud disabled New Yorker, union actor, educator, and disability equity consultant for the entertainment industry. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of INTRO 1307, the Accessibility in Entertainment Fund.

I have lived more than half my life in NYC and spent more than the first third trying to *get* here to pursue my dream of becoming a working actor.

Deaf and Disabled creatives and audiences, like me and many of my colleagues here today, along with our nondisabled allies, have been fighting for decades to see ourselves, on stage and backstage, on screen and behind the camera -- not only accurately, but *authentically*.

For decades, we have met with resistance from decision makers at every turn, in every sector of the field, despite being America's largest minority at nearly 28%. The most common argument we hear for not hiring us is, the money is simply not there to provide the accommodations we may need to do our best work.

This bill makes a bold and enduring statement not only about who we are as a city, but who we ASPIRE to be. If we want to live up to Lin Manuel Miranda's vision of us as the Greatest City in the World, it is incumbent upon us to lead the way and provide a model for equity and inclusion across the country.

While we *are* seeing meaningful change in the right direction on our stages and screens, the numbers speak for themselves. Approximately 62 million Americans identify as having a disability. That's 1 in 4, making Deaf/Disabled people America's largest minority. That number includes nearly one million New Yorkers. Despite these impressive statistics, just 5% of all characters on television are disabled characters, but just 2% of those characters are *played* by disabled actors, even though disability intersects age, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identification and socio-economic status.

Enacting legislation that supports Deaf and Disabled creatives by eliminating financial barriers to funding and providing resources for productions to enable us to participate fully in the workforce is more than a groundbreaking achievement toward equity for disabled artists; it will strengthen the cultural health of the city by fully representing our diverse and rich cultural and creative landscape. To help us achieve that goal, I know my union, SAG-AFTRA, is working directly with the sponsor to make the bill even more attractive and to ensure critical protections for the communities it serves.

This bill could not have come at a more important moment. Disabled people's civil rights and our very lives are under attack. Artists have always been under attack from those who wish to control or silence our voices expressly BECAUSE we are truth tellers. Through our work, we illuminate the best and worst in ourselves and of humanity. We have a responsibility to our art, to ourselves, and most importantly, to one another to forge ahead unafraid.

Thank you to Councilman Marte for sponsoring this potentially life-changing bill and for the Council's time and consideration.

To close, I'll paraphrase one of my favorite lyrics from *Hamilton*:

New Yorkers – "We get the job done!"

To the New York City Council,

I am writing in support of Intro 1307 regarding accessibility in entertainment. My name is Erin Rosenfeld, and I am a Deaf/hard-of-hearing actor here in New York City. I made my Broadway debut in *Grey House*, and I'm also a recurring cast member on the children's TV program Ms Rachel's *Songs for Littles* on Netflix and YouTube. As a disabled performer myself, I have witnessed firsthand how crucial further support and accessibility is for disabled creatives in the entertainment industry.

I want to give a brief overview of some of the experiences I have had as a Deaf performer in hopes that I can shed light on some of the many challenges disabled people face in this industry. As a Deaf actor:

- I have watched as my hearing friends receive more than seven auditions per week, while I receive around seven auditions in a year.
- I received a callback for the lead role in a show, only for the callback to get rescinded when the theatre realized they didn't have the budget to provide ASL interpreters.
- I was the only Deaf person to attend an open call audition full of hearing actors. The casting team refused to watch me audition. Instead, they made faces and then put their heads down, refusing to watch me while I stood in front of them and tried to perform my audition in ASL (which is fruitless when the intended recipient is not looking at you).
- I was slated to be the lead in a regional theatre production that would have employed at least ten Deaf and hard-of-hearing professionals. We had the cast and creative team set, the rehearsal and performance dates were solidified, we knew which theatre we would be performing in...only for the entire production to fall through and be cancelled because the theatre couldn't secure enough funding for ASL interpreters for the duration of rehearsals and the run of performances.
- A revered Broadway director told me to my face that they would never cast an actor with a disability.

These are just a handful of my experiences in the past two years since I graduated college. I know that my disabled colleagues who have been professionals in the industry for longer than two years have undoubtedly experienced so many more instances of hardship and discrimination.

Two overarching themes emerge in the experiences I detailed above: a lack of funding and a lack of awareness. For the theatres where a lack of money was the barrier, they were eager to include disabled performers. They understood how vital disability representation in the arts is, as well as how beautiful and impactful it is. They realized that it deepens the story and provides even more creative possibilities and room to play. They wanted to hold a mirror to society, where 1 in 4 Americans are disabled and where the disability community is the only minority group that anyone can suddenly become a part of at any time. The one thing holding them back was a lack

of funding to provide accommodations. Passing this bill would solve this issue and remove the final barrier preventing our employment with these companies.

The other major category is an appalling lack of awareness. I think that because disabled representation is so scarce, people cannot imagine what it would look like. They do not have concrete examples to refer to, and the unknown can be daunting. And rather than ask questions or explore, it is easier to just write us off. This bill would help combat this in two ways: first, by encouraging the people in this category to give hiring disabled creatives a chance. And second, those aforementioned companies that have been eager to employ disabled professionals but have been stopped by a lack of funding would be able to do so, thus creating the examples that we can point to and say, “This is the magic that happens when you hire disabled creatives.” It would become less obscure and less daunting for those who fall in this second category.

Disability representation and inclusion is life changing. I would go as far as to say it’s life *saving*. I grew up without seeing anyone like myself – both in the real world and on stage and screen. It wasn’t until high school that I finally caught my first glimpse of Deaf representation onstage. It shifted my whole world. I do not know where I would be today if I hadn’t seen that.

We deserve to have a place in the narratives that we have been excluded from. We belong onstage, in the writers’ room, operating the cameras, and in the director’s chair. Passing this bill would open up a world of possibilities for people like me.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Erin Rosenfeld

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with you today.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of this bill to the larger Deaf/Disabled communities, the NY production landscape and NYC's position as a cultural capital of the world.

The hope is that legislation of this kind merely "starts" in NYC and goes on to create change in other cities across the country. **Even for people who don't reside in NYC, this could be a game changer for the industry! An accessibility bill of this kind brings jobs for EVERYONE...ie. not "only" the 1 in 4 people who identify as disabled.**

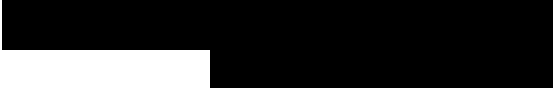
It means more production, more resources.

It means casting directors can cast authentically and productions can employ the best people for a job (both on camera and behind the camera/in writers rooms etc), regardless of the cost of accommodations.

It means that perhaps (finally), disabled people will see themselves more accurately reflected both onscreen and behind the camera by being given pathways to employment that preciously have been unavailable to them for decades.

Thank you.

HOLLY VALISKA GREGORY
Family Media Executive



Thurs Oct. 16, 2025

To Whom it May Concern,

I wanted to express my support for Intro 1307: groundbreaking program that would provide grants to productions hiring actors, crew members, and creative professionals with disabilities, helping to cover the costs of necessary accommodations. Additionally, it includes the engagement of production access coordinators and will also collect data on disability employment in the industry to provide guidance and resources on sets as needed.

As a seasoned children's media professional, I have heard again and again how important it is for people to SEE THEMSELVES on screens big and small. It's validating, it's inspiring and it's inclusive. It launches careers, it solidifies dreams, it matters.

Not only is it important that we have people of varying abilities represented, but It's essential that actors with varying abilities be part of productions - their point of view and their voices are crucial to making sure that we portray people of varying abilities on film and tv.

We must continue to figure out how people of varying abilities get into our screens. This bill could go a long way to helping productions make that happen. As a professional in the children's media industry I can attest to the fact that covering the cost for disability accommodations often prohibits smaller productions from pursuing actors with varying abilities. Let's get rid of that hurdle.

Thanks so much,
Holly Gregory

To whom it may concern.

My name is Jenna Bainbridge and I am a disabled actor, currently playing Nessarose in Wicked on Broadway. Intro 1307 is exactly the kind of bill that could transform the theatre and film industry, not just in New York, but nationwide.

When I made my Broadway debut in 2024, the producers of Suffs had to renovate the Music Box theatre to make it accessible for me to do my job. They had to build a dressing room, bathroom, and a ramp to the stage door. Simple things that any actor needs to do their job. When our show closed, the producers were also forced to take on the cost of removing all of those accessibility features (that could have helped future employees of that theatre). This is simply the way Broadway works. If you change a space for your show, you are forced to remove it upon leaving. Even when that change is making the space more accessible and inclusive. This comes at a tremendous cost that producers must face on both the front and back end of a show, when they are already working on shoestring budgets to try to produce new shows, and it deters producers from making accessible casting decisions. I know. This has been said to my face. I have been denied countless auditions and offers because Broadway theatres are simply not accessible, and producers feel it adds an unnecessary cost to make them accessible. A cost that they are not “required” to take on.

When I joined Wicked in 2025, I became the first wheelchair user to play Nessarose on stage. A role that is written as disabled had never, in the 22 year history of Wicked, been played authentically. And the reason for that exclusion was because the Gershwin Theatre is not accessible. It is still not accessible, even now that I have joined the cast. I have accommodated the space for myself because I was worried I wouldn't get the job if they felt it would cost them extra. Because the reality in theatre is that accessibility is not in the budget. And there is no incentive to theatre owners and producers to make them accessible. This has led to a tremendous underrepresentation of disabled people in theatre. Intro 1307 would make it possible for new shows to build access into their budgets from the start, and for existing shows to be able to retrofit their theatres to become accessible for new cast members. Without intro 1307, producers will continue to “save money” by excluding talented and worthy professionals with disabilities, because there is no incentive for them not to.

October 23rd, 2025

To the distinguished members of the Mental Health, Disability, and Addiction Committee -

I am writing to express my passionate support for the passing of bill 1307. As a Casting Director that currently works in film, television, commercials and theatre, I am writing with the perspective of nearly 20 years of experience as an industry professional in the NY market.

I began working with performers with disabilities in 2008 while producing the Disney/ABC Talent Showcase. At that time, not only was I exposed to the incredible talent in the disability community, but I also began my education on the struggles to be seen and the obstacles people face when there is a cost associated with accessibility.

Throughout the years I have found myself in situations where audition spaces and studios were not properly accessible. The largest barriers always come down to cost. As a Casting Director, it can be difficult to tell a producer whose job it is to save money that a performer is going to cost more. Productions do not have a line item set aside for even reasonable accommodations in their budgets. Advocates and performers with disabilities have been talking about the need for these budgets to include funds for accessibility for many years now. This bill would remove the anxiety for both casting and production and, most importantly, for the performer.

Over the years I have continued to support the community. I always make it a point to audition as many performers with disabilities as I can for any project I'm working on. I bring in performers for all roles and not only when the role is specifically written as disabled. I've had success in casting PWDs in major TV and film productions. Most recently I cast Marilee Talkington in a feature film role for Miramax and she did a fabulous job.

I truly believe that representation matters. It is very important that we do our best to reflect the diversity of not only New York City, but of the world we live in, through the art we create. I also believe it is our duty to create supportive and safe environments for the artist (so they can do their best work), and to provide opportunities to all qualified performers which of course includes performers with disabilities. Funding is an absolute necessity to be able to do this properly.

This bill would be a game changer. To know that there is money set aside to cover the costs of accessibility and to incentivize productions to employ people with disabilities throughout the production, without impacting the budget, would affect how producers approach the very idea of accessibility. Let's strive to create a more accessible and inclusive world through entertainment by leading the way in NY with passage of bill 1307.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Ort', written in a cursive style.

John Ort, CSA

Thank you for having me here today and including me in this very important hearing. My name is Katy Sullivan, I am a performer with a disability, I was born a bilateral above the knee amputee and knew that I wanted to be an actor from the first time that I saw the movie ANNIE. Growing up, I never saw anyone that looked like me on my screen. Actually I never saw anyone that looked like me on tv until I was on tv.

I've been a part of many tv series including DEXTER, and most recently the Emmy winning comedy HACKS. I originated the role of Ani in the Pulitzer Prize winning play Cost of Living, taking that role all the way to Broadway becoming the first actress who is an amputee to ever be on Broadway and the first to be nominated for a Tony Award. I was actually also awarded the Champion of Change award from the Mayor's office of New York City (so thank you very much for that).

Early on in my tv career, it was all about the 'leg reveal'. Doing an episode and standing up at the end and *gasp* she's also wearing prosthetic legs!! It wasn't until I was working on DEXTER when I was sent all the scripts at once and I was reading and waiting and looking for the 'leg reveal', the reason why my character was written with a disability, And it never came. She was just a town gossip, comic relief, person with a job and lived her life with a disability. Later when I was on set, I asked the show runner why he wrote her with a disability and he told me that he just wanted our town to look like the real world. Simple as that.

And he couldn't more correct. Individuals who live there lives with disabilities are the largest minority in our country, 20% of the population, and the least represented on our screens and stages. Moving forward with this fund can help push the needle toward true inclusion for our community without having to worry about missing out on opportunities based on any individual access needs. And seeing disabled bodies both in front of and behind the camera will only continue to normalize us being there, like we are in the real world.

The more opportunities that are created for those in the disabled community inside the entertainment industry will only help make the tapestry of our story telling more rich, authentic and compelling.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

To whom it may concern. My name is Laneah Beth Whiddon. I am a 21-year-old white woman who is disabled. I have special needs, which include a congenital condition that is close to muscular dystrophy. I am wheelchair bound and currently use a powerchair. I use a ventilator to help me breathe and deal with chronic pain in my day-to-day.

I am writing to voice my strong support for the New York City Council Bill Intro 1307. This bill aims to establish a fund to support the hiring and accommodations of individuals with disabilities in the arts. Specifically in the world of theater. This law could enable disability representation, as played by actual persons with disabilities, to become more mainstream. I don't know about you, but I would've killed for seeing myself on stage when I was younger.

Theater has been a part of my life since I was a small child. When I was younger, I saw shows at a small playhouse in Bowie, Maryland. I saw shows like *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Engine That Could*, and an adaptation of one of my favorite childhood book series, *Miss Bindergarten*. The latter is important to this topic because it features the character of Lenny the Lion, a young male lion who is a wheelchair user. While I'm sure this character wasn't played by an actual person with a disability in the performance, it was the early 2000s, after all; this was still an important piece of representation for me as a kid.

I saw my first Broadway show in 2010 as a part of a Make-A-Wish trip to New York City. It was Disney's *Mary Poppins*, and I loved it. I even got to meet some of the cast after the show, which was so fun! I later saw my second Broadway show (*Come From Away*) for my sweet 16th.

I kept seeing local shows through tickets from the Maryland Foundation for disabled and critically ill kids, Casey Cares. Through them, I saw shows like *Disney Live* (twice!) *Disney on Ice*, *The Music Man*, and two different versions of *The Wizard of Oz*. I also saw productions featuring kids from my church's youth group, such as *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* (in two different productions) or what I believe was a high school production of *Les Misérables*.

At a girls' youth camp, I was part of a choir where I learned the song "You Will Be Found" from the musical *Dear Evan Hansen*. I later used this song when I auditioned for my school's production of *Annie Jr.*, and I was selected to be part of the ensemble or chorus for the show. I was in the New York scene and the scene at the end. Rehearsals, though, were a fight. The school either didn't have a wheelchair lift or it was out of order. So in order to be included in rehearsals, my dad literally had to take me out of my chair, carry me up onto the stage, put me on a chair that was not my own, then he had to carry my, then manual, chair up onto the stage. The only reason this stopped was the fact that we threatened the school board with releasing a video of the whole process, and magically a temporary ramp was installed. This was not access or inclusion. I still dearly loved my time in the production. However maybe if Intro 1307 extends beyond the Broadway and West End scene into places like schools this doesn't have to be the norm.

Nowadays, we are seeing our first glances of disability representation. While it's extremely hard to research the history of disabled actors in the theater, I know that there is some such as those

who are deaf or use a cane or prosthetic . I will only be providing details the ones I know the best. Ali Stoker was one of the first actresses on Broadway in a wheelchair. She was in the revival of Oklahoma in 2018, and played a character not originally written as disabled. More recently in the last two years Jenna Bainbridge, who is another actress in a wheelchair, starred in the ensemble of Suffs and then in the last few months became the first person actually in a wheelchair to play the character of Nessrose, a wheelchair user, in Wicked. The recent musical How to Dance in Ohio featured autistic characters played by autistic actors.

Still this is not enough. Disability representation is still limited on the stage. Crippling up, the concept of an abled body actor playing a character written with a disability is still the norm. Stages and backstage while accessible to those who are ambulatory or can transfer themselves are not accessible to those who have power chairs or need additional accommodations such as changing tables, or a personal assistant or nurse. When I've been doing my research I've found only one actor in the theater industry in a power wheelchair. His name is Michael Patrick Thornton. And so I ask the question, why not now? Why not change the industry so more disabled performers can perform on Broadway? We are in 2025. It's been 35 years since the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed. It is time.

If this law is passed, and depending what I decide for my career, this law could make it easier for me to be a performer, if I choose. Even if I don't end up choosing this path I will always be an advocate for disability representation in the theater industry. And please, when you are deciding on this law, and figuring out our needs, include us in the conversation. Remember, Nothing About Us Without Us.

Thank

- INT - 1307 October 23rd, 2025

Establishing a film, television, and theater accessibility fund to promote the employment of persons with disabilities.

- Lisa Dennett

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

I am submitting testimony today in full support of INT1307, creating a much-needed City fund, with collaboration between several Mayor's Offices jurisdictions to promote hiring people with disabilities.

I am a performer. I currently do not have a disability. Could I convincingly play someone with a disability on stage or screen? Yes, I could. Should I? No. I have been asked to, more than once. Of course I want acting work, but it's time for roles created specifically as a character with a disability to be played by a performer with that disability.

The entertainment industry has finally woken up to the fact that there are many performers with disabilities. There is finally progress on the understanding that producers can and should hire a performer with a disability for roles with characters that have a disability outlined in a script. They are still learning that they can also hire a performer with a disability for nearly every role, whether or not the character specifically has a disability or not. Doesn't that more accurately reflect our city? People with disabilities are everywhere, as they should be. Doesn't it make sense they are accurately reflected in production?

The performing field, particularly acting, is already saturated. Too many actors, not enough work. Nothing new. However, performers with disabilities are often out of work for an additional reason, not due to their disability, but due to the ignorance of the field and expense of production. While producers may have started to wake up to hiring performers with disabilities, there is still a learning curve with regard to what that means. "Let's hire a performer with a disability!" is often followed by: "Oh, we need to pay for a sign language interpreter? They don't come with their own?" "The day scripts need to be in large print?" Braille? We have to install a safety ramp? A quiet place on set? Etc. etc.

All of this cost money. Even productions with multi-million-dollar budgets forget to add these expenses, or they realize the expense and keeps them from hiring the right person – the performer with a disability – for the job. This fund can help this issue enormously for all levels of the entertainment industry in NYC.

I speak of performers with disabilities because I am a performer, but this fund can also help provide needed jobs to directors with disabilities, stage managers, designers with disabilities, etc. NYC is an entertainment hub. This is our NYC workforce. It includes people with disabilities who would much rather work in their chosen field when they can, than rely on unemployment or government assistance.

From: [madison tevlin](#)
To: [Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addiction
Date: Monday, October 27, 2025 4:51:33 PM



Committee on Mental Health

Date & Time Oct 23, 2025 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Madison Tevlin 

To the Members of the New York City Council,

My name is Madison Tevlin, and I am writing in strong support of the proposed law to amend the Administrative Code of the City of New York to establish a Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund to promote the employment of persons with disabilities.

As someone who works in the entertainment industry and lives with Down syndrome, I know firsthand the power of representation, not only on screen and stage, but also behind the scenes. When people with disabilities are given the opportunity to participate fully in the creative process, it changes the stories we tell and how we see each other as a society.

Despite great progress, accessibility and inclusion in entertainment still lag behind. Too often, talented individuals with disabilities are excluded, not because of lack of ability, but because of systemic, physical, and financial barriers. This fund would be a step toward removing those barriers by supporting productions that prioritize accessibility and by empowering people with disabilities to thrive in their chosen fields.

New York City has long been a leader in culture and innovation. By passing this law, the City can also become a leader in inclusion, setting an example for other regions and industries to follow. The impact would reach far beyond employment, it would reshape narratives, challenge perceptions, and open doors for generations to come.

I wholeheartedly urge the Council to pass this legislation and help ensure that the arts in New York truly reflect the diversity and brilliance of all its people.

Thank you for your leadership and for recognizing that accessibility in the arts benefits everyone.

Thank you,

Madison Tevlin

Maggie Keenan-Bolger

Testimonial Letter to the New York City Council Committee on Accessibility in Entertainment- Intro 1307

10/18/2025

HON. CHRISTOPHER MARTE, FARAH N. LOUIS AND LINDA LEE

Thank you to Christopher Marte and the City Council for your support of accessibility in the arts across New York City. I'm writing to support the Accessibility In Entertainment, Intro 1307 bill—a groundbreaking program that would provide grants to productions hiring actors, crew members, and creative professionals with disabilities. My name is Maggie Keenan-Bolger, and I am the founder and artistic director of Honest Accomplice Theatre in Manhattan, as well as a disabled artist who has performed on and off-Broadway, in television, movies and beyond.

The mission of my company, Honest Accomplice Theatre is to create ensemble-based, theatre, media and opportunities for communities historically excluded from theatre and media spaces. Most recently, our work has focused heavily on disabled theatre creators. In fact, I am not able to be there today in person, because I am running a virtual workshop (one of three this month) for disabled theatre-makers across the country (From LA to Nebraska to NYC). In each workshop, we are examining the ableism inherent in the theatre-making process and brainstorming best practices for accessibility.

Honest Accomplice Theatre (HAT) has been around for nearly 10 years, and we have always made a point to include accessibility in our programming. However, as a small, non-profit organization, our ability to do so is always hindered by our budget. Most grants and funding organizations see things like ASL interpreters as 'frivolous' instead of essential. We have worked with many incredible deaf performers, but are unable to bring them on for long-term projects because the cost of hiring them and a qualified, reliable interpreter is simply too high. We also know that transportation is a barrier for many disabled artists, and while we can afford to subsidize bus or train fare, we know that those methods of transportation are not always reliable and can result in disabled participants (myself included) paying hefty Uber or taxi fares on the regular.

As a disabled theatre artist, programming that is able to provide me with accommodations like refunds for transportation (no matter what kind of transportation that may be), will often determine my ability to participate or not. Having an access coordinator would take an enormous burden off of me as I would no longer need to be the person constantly advocating for myself, while also trying to perform. Finally, knowing this funding was available would eliminate any company's ability to excuse all disabled performers from the outset because we are 'too expensive.'

As a theatre company, HAT would be able to fulfill our mission more adeptly, we'd be able to work with our disabled artists more fluently and hire more disabled performers. By having a more diverse cast and crew with a variety of ideas and perspectives, our art will become more relevant, more accessible to different audiences and more engaging.

As someone who is both a disabled artist and a company who works with disabled artists, this bill would revolutionize the work I'm able to do. It would also contribute to the progress that has been made over the years to break down the incredible barriers of ableism that exist within the arts, allowing some of the greatest artistic minds and bodies to finally enter the space.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maggie Keenan-Bolger". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maggie" being the most prominent.

Maggie Keenan-Bolger

Honest Accomplice Theatre

10/23/2025

Testimony in Support of Intro 1307

Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to testify today,

My name is Marisa Jean Giachetti, and I am a disabled performing artist, wheelchair user and neurodivergent individual, who calls theater home. I'm writing to voice my strong support for Intro 1307, which would "create a Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund administered by the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME)," to promote employment of disabled artists in New York City (The New York City Council, 2025).

Disabled artists face barriers that keep us from fully participating in the industry we love, not because we lack talent or drive, but because the systems and spaces around us were not built with us in mind. We are not burdens, but rather we are burdened by the barriers to access in the pursuit of our dreams. I've experienced these barriers firsthand, from inaccessible spaces and stages to productions unable to provide the proper accommodations.

Intro 1307 would change that. By funding productions that hire disabled artists and professionals, so that proper accommodations and guidance can be made, this bill would help make accessibility the norm, not the exception or afterthought. This bill would encourage more disabled artists to follow their dreams. I am lucky to be part of this diverse community of disabled artists who are persistent, as we are here and we want a seat at the table too.

As an artist living with disability, I want to see a world in the arts where disabled artists, with visible and indivisible disabilities, are valued, and seen and heard for their talent and creativity, not excluded because of access needs. This bill would move us closer to that world, one where stories on stage and screen reflect true diversity and authenticity, enriching the storytelling. Authentic representation and casting are important, and beyond that, supporting disabled artists properly is essential to making that happen.

I urge the Council to pass Intro 1307 and help open the doors of our arts and entertainment industries to all.

Thank you for your time and for supporting access and inclusion in the arts,

Marisa Jean Giachetti

"For over two decades, I've heard the same excuses about why hiring disabled people is supposedly such a challenge. Unsurprisingly, one of the reasons is often money. Well, here's your chance to take that excuse off the table and finally move closer to a world where the arts reflect our world as opposed to a world whose artistic gatekeepers keep sidelining the world's largest minority. We are here. Our stories are rich and hilarious and human. Enact this, and you'll make the world better."--Michael Patrick Thornton

Good morning, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Paul Behrhorst, and I'm the founder of ConsultAbility, a consulting organization that helps performing arts centers across the country create accessible and inclusive experiences for audiences, artists, and staff with disabilities. I also serve as the Accessibility Manager at the Perelman Performing Arts Center here in New York City.

Every day, I see the tremendous talent, creativity, and leadership that disabled artists and professionals bring to the performing arts—and I also see the barriers that keep them from being hired, retained, or fully supported. Too often, productions want to be inclusive but simply lack the resources or guidance to do so effectively.

Intro 1307 changes that. By providing grants to productions that hire disabled actors, crew, and creatives, and by funding the accommodations and production access coordinators needed to make inclusion sustainable, this bill doesn't just open doors—it keeps them open.

It also recognizes that data and accountability are essential. By tracking disability employment and building a shared knowledge base, the city can help the entertainment industry move beyond good intentions to measurable progress.

New York City has long been a cultural leader. Passing Intro 1307 ensures we also lead in accessibility and equity, making our stages and sets reflect the diversity of the city they represent.

Thank you for considering this vital step toward a more inclusive creative future.

TESTIMONY FOR INTRO 1307 – BY SOFIYA CHEYENNE

It gives me a sense of pride to know that I can share my testimony here and hope that these branches of government, of this amazing country we live in, the land of the FREE, will listen and take my advice when I say when people with disabilities are liberated of the decades of discrimination by having access to every major or minor industry, it pushes our society to be accountable to everyone. How can we lift each other up so we all sail free? ... "a rising tide lifts all boats."

My name is Sofiya Cheyenne, I am a mother of two beautiful children, I am a mixed-race indigenous woman, I am a producer, writer and actor, I am an advocate for the disabled community and I have a rare form of dwarfism called Spondyloepiphyseal Dysplasia.

I grew up in NYC, I know how inaccessible this city is, let alone other parts of the world. As an artist though, the commitment to love this city despite its access issues is because I know that good art is made here, good people live here. This bill would provide people like me the opportunities to roll into a studio set and know that there is a step stool or reacher there for me. This bill would provide people like me the ability to use the public restroom with dignity and comfort. This bill would provide people like me the opportunity to create their art, which would better expose our society to the disabled experience, bringing our humanity one step closer to seeing each other wholly.

The entertainment industry and those of us that are artists help shape our worlds culture and how we view each other. Pass this bill, and bring us along, we are just as important as anyone else.

Good morning New York City Councilmembers and attending citizens of NYC. My name is Sommer Carbuccia and I am here today to speak in support of **the NY City Council bill, Accessibility in Entertainment, Intro 1307**, sponsored by Councilmember *Christopher Marte*, with support from fellow members *Farah N. Louis* and *Linda Lee*. I wanted to start with an earnest thank you for your notice and support for our community.

I myself am a resident of Washington Heights and a constituent of the 10th District represented by Councilmember *Carmen De La Rosa*, who I point out is a fellow Dominican-American.

More pertinent to my testimony today, I am an actor and performer of both stage and screen; and as you can see through my choice of attire today, a leg amputee and thus a person with a disability. I lost my leg in a subway accident in 2014 while attending NYU Tisch, and while this has presented many challenges both personal and professional, I managed to push through, get my degree, and establish what I consider a very lucky career for myself in the industry I love.

Almost none of that work, however, has been in NYC.

It is no secret that the state of the entertainment industry recently has been both very difficult and in constant change. From the introduction of streamers in the early 2010s; to the advent of social media; production halts brought upon from the universally experienced global pandemic and our dual writers and actors strikes; to the flight of productions from their traditional hubs of New York and Los Angeles to other states and provinces, followed recently by the further move overseas, all in search of better tax incentives and cheaper costs.

While **Intro 1307** cannot fix those trends, what it does do is insure that the productions coming back to and starting in NYC can do their due diligence in hiring from a community (that being PWD's) that makes up around 20% of our city's population.

By providing grants to productions hiring actors, crew members, and creative professionals with disabilities, it would guarantee these very costly endeavors could budget for necessary accommodations for these workers, and allow them to engage with Production Access Coordinators; who I have found to be invaluable resources for maintaining accessible and productive work places not only for PWD's but for productions as a whole.

And there is hope on the horizon for Production in NYC. In early 2026 for example, we will see the grand opening of **Sunset Pier 96 Studios**, Manhattan's first purpose-built, Hollywood-grade studio complex. Ever. And with City Officials estimating this project will generate \$6 Billion dollars for our city's economy, **Intro 1307** would help to insure the disability community has the tools necessary to be a part of and evolve with what I see as a very promising future for the "Business-we-call-show" in NYC. Thank you Councilmembers for your time.

Sincerely,
Sommer Carbuccia

To Whom this may concern:

My name is Spencer J. Vigil, and I was at the committee hearing this morning.

I was really moved by the testimonies given in support of Intro 1307. Some background about myself. I'm a Trans DeafBlind Person of Color and I am also a musical theater writer. I received my Master's Degree from Berklee College of Music and became disabled the fall that followed my graduation

in 2023. As an emerging theater writer there are often a lot of barriers to entry in the industry in general. If you are Disabled, Trans, or POC it is even tougher to breakthrough. When I apply for fellowships or grant opportunities, I am often afraid to name my disability because often that means I need accessible accommodations that these programs do not have the funds or foundation to meet on a long term and sustainable basis. This limits my ability to network, meet producers, and I often do that work myself.

My work often includes hiring casts and crew members with disabilities and access needs. I often end up paying for our team's own access out of my own pocket.

For example:

I had a wonderful opportunity to present my musical at a festival this summer. I require ASL interpreters as well as another Deaf Actor. For All rehearsals and shows I ended up paying 2400 For our own access needs, a team of 5 ASL interpreters. I am still trying to pay this debt off.

Imagine if I could have reached out and noted bill Intro 1307 and have the cost of those Interpreters covered! Wow! Not having to pay for something that should be a given when producing NEW ORIGINAL work! Something New York desperately NEEDS!

Costs like the one noted above happen for me all the time, because I believe in the work I'm doing. But I want to imagine a world in which I can plan my show around access FIRST and not have to worry about living somewhere or paying for Interpreters because intro-1307

would cover the cost FOR ME. It would be such a relief and a breath of fresh air.

I also wanted to bring another point. As a writer I love to see shows and study how they are made, I love supporting new and upcoming work but often ASL interpreted performances both Off-Broadway and Broadway often conflict with one another which often makes me have to choose wisely what I see. It's very rare for these shows to have more than TWO Accessible shows for Deaf/Blind folks like myself. I miss a lot of great art because Accessibility is

often an afterthought. I feel if the intro 1307 bill passes would require theater organizations to thoughtfully plan their accessible performances to not conflict with other accessible shows.

Lastly, I'm not sure if this really has to do with 1307, but another issue I'm having- is I'm a person who also struggles with addiction. I'm seeking rehabilitation treatment, however I am constantly told that these programs do not legally have to provide ASL interpreters, which to me is baffling. Having to provide and

pay for my own ASL interpreters
for my own medical treatment
seems like such a barrier that
is unnecessary and frankly,
illegal. I would love any
information you may have about
this.

Best,

Spencer J. Vigil

He/They

Loud & With Feeling

Testimony of Suri Ellerton

Film and Television Producer, Glass Carousel Pictures (US) Same Name Productions (UK)

In Support of Int. 1307-2025 – Establishing a Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund

Submitted to the New York City Council

As a film and television producer with over two decades of experience and companies in both the United Kingdom and the United States, I have seen first-hand the difference that structural support can make for accessibility in our industry. In the UK, access needs are not treated as optional or extraordinary—they are an expected and supported part of production, thanks in part to public funding mechanisms and cultural policies that prioritize inclusion.

As a disabled person myself, before starting my own company, I often had to choose my jobs carefully because I knew it wasn't realistic to ask for the access I needed. Film is such an expensive and competitive industry that every dollar is counted carefully, and access is rarely factored in or supported.

Here in New York, I've often found myself having to make difficult decisions that weren't in the best interest of the project, nor in the spirit of accessibility, simply because the funds weren't there. The result is that access—whether for disabled crew, performers, or audiences—too often becomes a “nice-to-have” rather than an integral part of production planning.

Funding should never be the barrier to inclusion. The proposed Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund (Int. 1307-2025) is a vital step toward ensuring that every production, regardless of scale, can create an equitable working environment. It acknowledges that accessibility requires both expertise and resources, and that those investments enrich the creative process for everyone.

I strongly support this legislation and believe it will not only improve access for disabled professionals but also elevate New York's reputation as a forward-thinking global production hub.

Sincerely,

Suri Ellerton

Film and Television Producer

Testimony in Support of the Film, Television, and Theater Accessibility Fund Bill

My name is Tina Zaremba, and I am a neurodivergent artist and professional voice-over actor with over 20 years of experience, as well as a faculty member at the New York Film Academy. I'm writing in strong support of this bill Int. 1307 establishing an accessibility fund for film, television, and theater productions.

This initiative represents more than inclusion- truthfully it's innovation. By creating pathways for artists with disabilities and neurodivergent professionals to participate fully, we're not only expanding access, we're enriching the creative landscape with perspectives that have long been overlooked.

As someone who teaches and mentors the next generation of performers and creators, I see firsthand how many talented individuals are held back not by lack of ability, but by lack of opportunity and accommodations. This fund ensures that productions have the resources and accountability to change that.

Investing in accessibility is investing in the future of storytelling....one where every artist, regardless of ability, can contribute their voice and vision. I urge you to support this important bill.

Sincerely,

Tina Zaremba

www.tinazaremba.com

Voice-Over Actor | Faculty, New York Film Academy | Neurodivergent Artist

Representation is about much more than checking a box, it is about survival. Seeing people in films that were able to exist in their own skin in their own way. When authentic disabled stories reach the screen, I am reminded that my voice *matters*. We as disabled people are reminded that our voice *belongs*. We are the story. We are people. We are artists.

Disabled representation is extremely important to me. These stories CAN NOT continue to be made *about us*, but instead *by us*.

I wanted to take a moment to share my experience working on the film *Champions*, a project that has profoundly impacted my life and perspective.

For those who may not be familiar, *Champions* features a cast composed entirely of actors with disabilities.. some of whom had prior acting experience while others were new to the craft. Collaborating with this incredible group was truly one of the highlights of my career. Alongside our director, Bob Farrelly, I felt that the experience was nothing short of magical.

Working on this film led me to a significant shift in my perspective. Initially, I approached the project with some trepidation, but I quickly developed a deep appreciation for the talent, humanity, and spirit of my fellow cast members.

The performances of my costars were not only refreshing but also deeply honest. I learned so much from them; their talent and authenticity taught me more than I could ever impart. Together, we hope this film will inspire others to create more roles for actors with disabilities and to provide opportunities behind the camera as well. The hope is that the film will encourage individuals with disabilities to pursue their dreams.

As you know, Champion's budget had to account for the unique needs of the disability community, which can often make it challenging for filmmakers to consider additional line items for access coordinators or accommodations. This reality contributes to the unfortunate scarcity of both actors and crew members with disabilities in the industry. From my experience on *Champions*, it is clear that the film industry is missing out on a wealth of talent, creativity, and experience that would enrich our stories.

I firmly believe that working on a set should be accessible to all qualified individuals, regardless of the associated costs. The proposed bill aims to address this issue by facilitating more consistent hiring practices for people with disabilities, which could lead to a more inclusive and diverse film industry.

I am hopeful that together we can advocate for change and create a more inclusive environment in the industry.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/23/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rosalind Barkow

Address: 425 Lafayette St, NY, NY 10003

I represent: New York Shakespeare Festival dba The Public Theater

Address: (same as above)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307-2025 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-23-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danielle Pretfelder Danchick

Address: [REDACTED] Hoboken NJ 07030

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/23/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Elizabeth Hux

Address: 104 Bayard Street NY, NY 10003

I represent: Casting and CSA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROSALIE JOSEPH

Address: _____

I represent: MYSELF

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: OCT 23, 2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JAMES CARRY

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Abby Mayeroff

Address: Director of Programs, NYC ATWORK

I represent: NYC MOPD

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Emily Sweet

Address: General Canal

I represent: NYC MOPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sara Rawshangra

Address: Chief of Staff

I represent: NYC MOPD

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/23/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Paul Behrhorst

Address: [REDACTED] NY 10012

I represent: PAC NYC

Address: 6 WTC NY 10007

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 23/10/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Alice Skypud

Address: PO Box 2643 8235 E. 14 St

I represent: NY, NY 100

Address: Kinetic Light kineticlight.org

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/23/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marilee Talkington

Address: Me — Performer

I represent: Disabled Advocate

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Bruno

Address: _____

I represent: Me — Disabled Performer Advocate

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 06-23-2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: James Barniker

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10-23-25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Gregg Mozgala

Address: _____

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sommer Carbuccia

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1307 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/23/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LISA DENNETT

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn 11235

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

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

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 10/23/21

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christopher Leon Johnson

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: Self

Address: _____

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