

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairs De La Rosa and Gutierrez, and members of the City Council Committee on Civil Service & Labor and Committee on Technology.

My name is Katrina Porter, Deputy Commissioner of Human Capital at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS). Thank you for the opportunity to speak before the committee.

The Impact of Automation on the New York City Workforce

DCAS is always looking for ways to improve our service delivery to make city government work for all New Yorkers, and that includes automating processes. Primarily, in Human Capital, our automation efforts have been people-focused with decreasing processing times for exam candidates so that they can get their scores and test results faster, get on a list sooner, and be picked up for an agency job. Our automation efforts have also helped us to be more sustainable, by eliminating paper and utilizing electronic resources where possible. Additionally, we have implemented automation efforts to bring the civil service into the 21st century and make systems more accessible online to the public.

As we integrate automation where feasible, it is important to note that our services have always been human-centric – and it is our intention to have them remain as such. Within DCAS, and particularly in Human Capital, we are striving to nurture and champion the value each worker brings to the City of New York. To achieve this, we manage multiple programs that provide pathways to a sustainable and fulfilling career in public service. More than that, we administer our bridge exams including the recent addition of public safety titles to eliminate cumbersome requirements and provide opportunities to enter the City's workforce. And we also manage the City's Employee Self Service, the Help Desk, the Customer Experience Call Center, and the NYC Jobs page – all of which are employee-centered services. At DCAS, we are committed to recruiting and retaining top talent by helping them be more productive through the automation of processes, not to replace employees with automated tools.

DCAS does not have any plans to implement automation or AI tools that would replace employees.

Legislation

As we turn to the legislation, DCAS is here to comment on 1066. We appreciate and understand the Council's concerns regarding the impacts of artificial intelligence on the future of municipal work and the City's workforce.

We stand committed to providing municipal employees with a platform for sharing their experiences, and for disseminating that information with relevant government partners. The Administration believes a focused and coordinated evaluation in this space can have a positive impact on the workforce, but we recommend further dialogue between DCAS, OTI and the City Council on the topic.

Conclusion

Thank you again for allowing us space in this forum. We are here should you have any questions directed to DCAS but would defer to our colleagues at the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) regarding AI and its use across City agencies.

Cloud-First Policy

Last Updated 6.24.25

Written Testimony: NYC Council Technology Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of Tech:NYC in support of Intro 540, which proposes to require the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI) to undertake an overall evaluation of the city's cloud usage and capabilities and consider potential "Cloud First" policies. We commend the Council, and particularly the sponsor of the bill, Council Member Justin Brannan, for his leadership in advancing this crucial legislation. Ensuring that New York City government operates with the most efficient, effective, and secure technological infrastructure is central to fostering inclusive innovation and economic opportunity for all New Yorkers.

Cloud computing is no longer merely an option; it is a fundamental driver of modern productivity, resilience, and economic value across all sectors. [Independent quantitative research](#) from 2021 found that in that year alone, cloud services generated over \$382 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) for businesses in the U.S., with companies representing over 37 million jobs stating their business model would not be possible without cloud services. This immense value is driven by tangible benefits: the research showed that users of cloud reported an average of 50% savings in IT costs, while software developers could reduce new software development time by around 25%. Furthermore, 74% of surveyed cloud service users agreed their business model would not be possible without cloud services. Cloud services significantly enable collaboration and productivity, with 63% of U.S. businesses agreeing that online or cloud tools made it easier for workers to keep collaborating throughout COVID-19, and 10% claiming it would have been impossible to keep operating without them. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) specifically report enhanced competitiveness (85%), increased ability to scale (60%), and the capacity to offer new products (47%) due to cloud adoption. This generated revenue is reinvested, with 45% of businesses hiring more staff and 49% investing in workforce training. These figures underscore the profound and widespread benefits cloud services bring to the private sector.

The compelling case for cloud adoption extends directly to government operations, particularly for New York City. Cloud computing offers a clear path to making government more efficient and effective, and can generate significant budgetary savings. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a stark reminder of the criticality of digital readiness: while many court systems nationwide paused proceedings, our neighbors in New Jersey benefited from the investment into technological modernization via the cloud and were able pivot quickly to keep its court system fully operational, even though virtually all of its staff was working remotely. This demonstrates the resilience and efficiency that cloud provides.

Beyond operational continuity, cloud computing offers substantial fiscal advantages for local and municipal governments. It allows city agencies to pay only for the cloud capacity they need,



eliminating the need for costly physical hardware investments or on-premise data centers, and the associated regular upgrades and updates to legacy technologies. This translates into significant capital cost savings that are crucial given the budgetary pressures New York City currently faces, including the loss of federal funds, increased labor costs, and the unprecedented migrant crisis. Moreover, cloud environments provide state-of-the-art security and seamlessly incorporate advanced technologies like AI and machine learning into agency data use. With a robust and competitive cloud market, including major providers and local startups, now is an opportune time to accelerate New York City's commitment to cloud computing.

Many competing cities and states across the country, as well as the federal government during the Obama administration, have already implemented similar "Cloud First" policies as a common-sense tool for cost-effective operations. It is time for New York City to break the inertia and technology gap that too often limits innovation in municipal government and harness the power of the cloud that is already significantly benefitting other jurisdictions.

Expanding robust digital infrastructure and leveraging cloud services is not merely a matter of efficiency or savings; it is integral to our economic and civic strength. A more connected population supports a stronger pipeline of tech talent, enables more effective delivery of public services, and fosters greater opportunities for civic engagement. By embracing a "Cloud First" approach, New York City will be better positioned for long-term, inclusive growth, ensuring that all New Yorkers benefit from the tools and opportunities of the digital age.

We strongly urge the Council to move swiftly toward the passage of Intro 540. Tech:NYC looks forward to supporting its implementation and continuing to work in partnership with city leaders to ensure New York City remains at the forefront of technological advancement and a driver of opportunity.

Sincerely,

Alex Spyropoulos

Director of Government Relations

Tech:NYC

**Testimony of Pauline Toole, Commissioner
Department of Records and Information Services
Before the Civil Service and Labor Committee, New York City Council
June 26, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair De La Rosa, and members of the Committee on Civil Service and Labor. My name is Pauline Toole, and I am the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Records and Information Services, known as DORIS. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the proposed local law to require a publicly accessible portal for Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests.

This administration is committed to ensuring that government is open, accessible, and transparent so that residents of New York City can engage with City government in a meaningful way. Providing access to government records helps accomplish that goal.

The Charter gives DORIS three responsibilities related to the City's records. The Municipal Archives accessions, preserves and makes available City government's historical records, which are the unpublished records of government agencies and officials. The Municipal Library preserves and makes available the published records of City government. The Records Division sets records retention policies and works with agencies to modernize the management of their records—in all formats.

Introduction 1235

Intro 1235 would amend the Chapter 72 of the City Charter—the DORIS chapter—to require the agency, in consultation with the Office of Technology and Innovation, develop and maintain a publicly accessible online portal to intake and process requests made pursuant to Article 6 of the New York State Public Officers Law, commonly called FOIL. The proposal would require the portal to: include several data points in a machine readable format, permit full text searchability of all requests and responsive records, include an application programming interface, or API, issue automatic notifications of determinations provided to any person, list all records access and appeals officers at each agency, provide a variety of statistics, and post all responsive records. Further it would require all agencies to provide a link to the portal on their websites and enter any FOIL request received by agencies via other methods into the portal. It also requires consultation with the Office of Operations and public hearings on possible metrics, regular meetings with records access officers and the development of an implementation plan to be submitted to the mayor and speaker.

DORIS appreciates the Council's interest in providing access to public records via an online portal. In fact, the Department developed an open source Freedom of Information Law portal that launched in 2015 as a pilot and subsequently has become the primary point for public access to City agency records.

The genesis of the Open Records portal is a report issued by then-Public Advocate Bill de Blasio in 2013 rating City agencies' FOIL practices. The report revealed the many difficulties members of the public faced in accessing public records, waiting years or forever for acknowledgement of the request or the actual records.

Because the DORIS mission is providing information to the public and government officials, we teamed up with the Office of Technology and Innovation's predecessor agency to use open source code to develop a one-stop site to submit and respond to FOIL requests. Currently, 53 agencies use the portal to receive and post responses to FOIL requests. We will soon onboard the New York County District Attorney's office. More than 526,000 FOIL requests have been filed on the portal and 475,000 have been processed by agency staff.

Our existing portal meets many of the requirements set forth in subdivision b of section 3012 of the New York City Charter that would be created by the proposed local law. It offers a one-stop site for people to file requests for public records. It provides a unique identifier, and shows the date each request was submitted and acknowledged, and the expected response date. The portal publicly posts the agency's determination of a request and, when the request is denied entirely or in part, the exemptions cited under the Public Officers Law to deny the request.

Similarly, the portal already fulfills several of the requirements set forth in subdivision c of proposed Charter section 3012. It allows agencies to acknowledge receipt of a request within 5 business days, enter into dialogue with the requester, provide a summary response that includes the reason a request was denied, citing the relevant exemptions under State law, and upload records to which access has been granted. Prior to development of the portal, an individual might have sent a request to an agency and not ever know if it was received or being acted upon. The portal provides that information up front.

The Open Records portal allows the public to filter search results by agency, dates and the status of the request. The requests and responsive records could be filtered by additional categories, but this would require additional programming time.

The proposed local law requires access to data about utilization of the portal, disaggregated by agency. Please note that the number of requests received and closed is currently available. Additional statistics described in the proposed law could be made available, such as the average resolution time and the number of requests granted or denied, in whole or in part. This would require additional resources. The proposed requirement to post monthly statistical updates would be unnecessary because the data is available in real time.

It is important to note that many documents are covered by Personally Identifiable Information protections. For example, a person's school records from the Department of Education can be obtained by that person via FOIL. City agencies use Open Records to receive and respond to these

requests, but they do not post them to the public. As a result, the proposed requirements for all records to be made publicly available on the site with full text search capability would be problematic.

The DORIS application development team constantly makes improvements that help requesters find the right agency and improve the usability for agency end-users. The proposed local law includes requirements that are not currently deployed on Open Records and which would require additional resources to implement.

For instance, the portal does not currently track information on appeals to agency Appeals Officers. That information could be included but would require additional implementation resources.

The proposal also would require information related to Article 78 cases filed in civil court to challenge the denial of a FOIL request including whether a case was filed; the attorneys' fees assessed, if any; the dates of the judicial decision and any subsequent appeal and a machine -readable copy of the records released through this process. These requirements are not feasible for DORIS to implement, since the information is not tracked in a central location.

Another requirement that would necessitate substantial resources would be the development of an Application Programming Interface or API. This would require building a parallel application stack to meet the extensive reporting, full-text search, and application programming interface requirements. At a minimum, the additional personnel resources implicated by this requirement would include a solutions architect and a full-time developer to develop and maintain the new application stack. Duplicating the content will also substantially increase our cloud budget. And finally, there are many security ramifications of enabling an API, including access tokens, rate limiting, and the redaction of Personal Identifying Information, which would require additional expertise.

As written, the proposed local law would enshrine the existing online FOIL portal, Open Records, in local law and give DORIS responsibilities that the agency cannot presently fulfill.

Additionally, there are a few terminology changes that we suggest: first, using the term records access officers, instead of freedom of information law officers; and second, including the option for the portal to be cloud-based and not solely maintained on a website.

We commend the City Council for its focus on records access and would be happy to take any questions you may have.



Legislative Affairs
125 Broad Street, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10004
212-607-3300
www.nyclu.org

**Testimony of the New York Civil Liberties Union
Before the New York City Council Committee on Technology
In Support of Int. 1235-2025, and the “Creation of a centralized system for
processing freedom of information law requests”**

June 26, 2025

The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) is grateful for the opportunity to submit the following testimony regarding the City Council’s proposal to create a centralized system for processing Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests. The NYCLU, the New York State affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization that advances civil rights and civil liberties so that all New Yorkers can live with dignity, liberty, justice, and equality. Founded in 1951 as the state affiliate of the national ACLU, we deploy an expert mix of litigation, policy advocacy, field organizing, and strategic communications. Informed by the insights of our communities and coalitions and powered by 90,000 member-donors, we work across complex issues to create more justice and liberty for more people.

The NYCLU supports Int. 1235-2025, which will improve the City’s already capable OpenRecords portal by requiring City agencies to publish detailed data about not only the status of individual responses to FOIL requests, but also how responses are being handled, *and* the substance of the responses themselves. This expansion, coupled with the bill’s improved access and searchability provisions, would allow the public to monitor individual requests, search past responses, determine agency compliance with FOIL requests, and enshrine FOIL’s spirit of “release to one, release to all” in the City code where it belongs.

The NYCLU urges the Council to pass this bill.



CITIZENS UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Testimony before the City Council Committee on Technology
Intro. 1235-2025 (Brewer)
City Hall – June 26, 2025

Dear members of the Committee on Technology.

My name is Ben Weinberg, and I am the Director of Public Policy at Citizens Union. I am submitting this testimony to express Citizens Union's support for Intro 1235-2025, sponsored by Council Member Gale Brewer, which would create a centralized system for processing Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests.

New York City government offers some of the most advanced tools for data transparency. Countless New Yorkers rely on platforms like NYC Open Data to find information about their city, DCP maps to learn about land use in their neighborhoods, and OpenRecords to access public records.

However, technological systems are only as strong as the information they contain. In New York City, accessing public records through FOIL requests is often hindered by long delays and a lack of responsiveness. In many cases, even when records are released, they are not made publicly available as open data.

A recent analysis by Reinvent Albany found that 16% of FOIL requests remained open for more than a year, with some agencies averaging over 400 days to close a request. Several agencies regularly miss response deadlines listed on the OpenRecords portal for the majority of requests they receive.

Worsening the issue, several major agencies—including the Human Resources Administration, the Department of Homeless Services, and NYCHA—do not use the OpenRecords portal at all. Additionally, many FOIL requests are filed outside the portal, making it difficult to get an accurate picture of FOIL compliance across city government.

Intro 1235 would standardize and codify FOIL reporting citywide, giving policymakers a clearer view of how agencies are complying with transparency laws. Critically, it would codify and expand the OpenRecords portal, which currently exists only through administrative decisions.

The bill would require all agencies to report FOIL requests through the portal and include information about the status of each request. Furthermore, it would require agencies to publicly post the records they release 14 days after they provided them to the original requestor.

As the number of FOIL requests continues to grow and agencies struggle to keep up, it is essential to improve oversight and accountability so we can improve compliance with the law. This legislation would strengthen transparency in city government and make FOIL a more effective tool for the public.



Thank you to both Chairs and members of the Committees on Technology and Civil Service and Labor for holding this critical hearing.

My name is Cynthia Conti-Cook and I am the Director of Research & Policy at the Collaborative Research Center for Resilience, which the Surveillance Resistance Lab is now a project of.

Over the past year, we have been learning from and empowering union leaders in the public sector whose members are confronting automation and its impact on their working conditions. My comment focuses on Intro 1066.¹

Public sector workers are uniquely on the front-lines of protecting the communities they serve from technologies and policies that empower policing and corporate vendors. This ultimately threatens community well-being and diminishes democratic power. The importance of this role cannot be understated in this moment when the AI industry is combating any attempt to regulate its experimental development.

At the same time, data sharing across massive databases reveals people's relationships, money, and movements and facilitate masked officers to disappear people from our communities. It is in this context of data enabling severe disruption to our communities that we recognize the unique role and responsibility

¹ <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6874682&GUID=0B6A4E8B-4D49-437B-BB70-50B898D2BD7F&Options=&Search=>

of the workers who stand between sensitive government data and function and the forces that seek control over it.

We therefore recommend that the scope of the task force described in Intro 1066 be broadened in three ways:

First, the task force should not be limited to examining strictly “AI” tools but be prepared to evaluate any digital technologies that involve massive data collection, automation or use of large language models.

Second, the task force scope should go beyond impact on workers’ positions but should be more broadly scoped in order to include the impact of these technologies on the quality of the public service, municipal liability, the integrity of constitutional and statutory privacy protections, community access to government workers, public trust in government-provided information, health and safety impacts, and on any impact digital technologies and corporate tech vendors have on local democratic governance, including worker organizing and bargaining power.

Third, the task force scope should additionally recommend avenues for workers to have more power over deciding what tasks should be automated, how technologies are procured, how vendors should be evaluated, how to establish worker protections in contracts, and how to involve workers in contract monitoring with vendors.²

Establishing this task force could be critically important step towards learning from and protecting workers from automation, AI and machine learning systems. We already know that these technologies can impact data privacy, job loss, bias, discrimination, loss of relational freedom, lost wages, contingent work, health and safety impacts, and worker power. As the Labor Center based at the University of Berkeley outlines in their landscape report on tech and work policy³, workers may be subject to a long list of technologies that impacts their work and also their worker power. These technologies include electronic monitoring, algorithmic management, worker data collection, and automation. The report also outlines various state and local bills, including some from NYS and NYC, that address different aspects of the new set of power tools bosses and governments have at their disposal. These approaches include limiting the use of data and surveillance in workplaces, giving workers notice about and consent to reject how their data is used in the workplace, and limiting the tasks that may be automated. The task force

² IEEE recently released its standard for AI procurement for governments which could be used to guide these efforts. <https://spectrum.ieee.org/ieee-ai-3119-standards>

³ <https://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/tech-and-work-policy-guide/>

should draw from this report and the many avenues workers across the country are experimenting with to mitigate the harms AI introduces.

The scope should also be broad enough to capture concerns we have previously raised about the MyCity portal and how it empowers police and private tech vendors. By outsourcing city services to tech vendors who are disconnected from our communities and not invested in the vitality of the city's future democratic governance, the city threatens government workers' jobs but also all NYC communities.

In March 2024, we laid out how this dynamic has played out in our report on MyCity. We sounded the alarm on the city's over-reliance on tech vendors to build a data portal across multiple agencies. During this committee's hearing in the fall of 2024, we emphasized how vulnerable this expansion of data sharing will make communities to policing—leading to violations of city privacy rules and invasive digital stop and frisks targeting New Yorkers who may never learn about when these violations happen.

While government tech and agency staff may not have gone along with some of the aspects of MyCity, they have not been involved. NY Focus's March 2025 investigative report on MyCity revealed how much of this portal's construction has been outsourced—over \$100 million dollars have been invoiced by over forty tech contractors who do not have deep expertise in the agencies they are changing and are not invested in protecting New York City communities from new forms of surveillance.

Another particular concern about MyCity for workers that might not be included in the scope of 1066 as written includes the plan to track city worker spending data from digital wallets which this administration has indicated intent to pay government workers. Matthew Fraser has previously testified that digital wallets would help the government track how all government-provided money is spent, by benefits recipients and government workers.⁴ This proposed use of technology, for example, should also be within the scope of any worker-focused task force established by Intro 1066.

We already have been warned against automation replacing unionized city workers with deep expertise in the context of MyCity as well. During this committee's hearing on MyCity last fall, Jacob Fallman also testified—I encourage both committees to review his testimony in this context. He is a lawyer from the Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice in Michigan who warned us that

⁴ <https://surveillanceresistancelab.org/featured-work/mycity-inc-a-case-against-compstat-urbanism/> (FN2)

before Michigan’s infamously disastrous Michigan Integrated Data Automated System (MiDAS) program was introduced to automate fraud detection in unemployment benefits, that “Michigan laid off many of its union claims examiners—workers whose jobs had been to manually review claims.”

Thousands of cases flooded the appeals system. “Shockingly, an internal review later found that up to 93% of these cases were false accusations.” People were falsely charged with crimes, had wages and tax returns garnished, and the state had to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in the lawsuits that followed. This example illustrates why, for example in 1066, we recommend the scope of the task force is broadened to evaluate AI’s impact beyond workers’ positions in the agency.

The scope of 1066 should also include the impact of automation on workers’ communities. A recent report estimates that over 92 million low income people in the United States are subjected to decision-making by unreliable automated systems.⁵ The author of the report, Kevin de Liban, also testified at the MyCity hearing last fall to share the cautionary tales he has gathered about automation of social safety net services across the country and I refer the Council to his prior testimony.

Women and Black communities are uniquely impact by increased automation of public sector work. In a 2023 report jointly authored by In the Public Interest and Local Progress, the authors emphasized how important public sector jobs are to women and Black communities in particular. “The public sector is the third largest employer of women, regardless of race. In 2019, women made up fully 60 percent of all state and local public-sector workers.”⁶ Black women in particular are impacted by job displacement in government—“As of 2019, 48 percent of all Black women in the workforce were employed by state and local governments.” Losing these jobs would impact these families, households, and communities and their access to people who are conduits to safety net services and trusted navigators of local government from their neighborhoods.

While there are surely discreet contexts in which the extremely resource-heavy systems of automation and AI may be worthwhile, those circumstances must be carefully vetted by workers with deep roots in the communities they serve and decades of deep expertise in the specific functioning of the agencies they work with and the contexts and purposes for which technology is deployed.

⁵ <https://www.techtonicjustice.org/reports/inescapable-ai>

⁶ <https://inthepublicinterest.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/0723-ITPI-Procurement.pdf>

One way to intervene in the seizure of power that introducing AI into a workplace threatens is by establishing a worker board for co-governance of AI uses. Recently, union leaders from SEIU 668 in Pennsylvania led by President Steve Catanese bargained a side agreement with Governor Shapiro that both protects union jobs and explicitly acknowledges the unique role that public sector workers play in protecting the quality of government services for their communities.⁷

The agreement established co-governance over use of AI through the creation of a worker board to evaluate uses of AI, it defined a public worker as a person and genAI as a tool, it characterized the use of AI in government services as an experiment, emphasized the need for strong human-in-the-loop protections at every step, and ensured monitoring of disparate impacts related to bias and discrimination of protected classes.

We encourage the Committees to examine the SEIU-668 side agreement and consider using it as a floor to build off of and to broaden the scope and the tasks imagined in 1066.

Thank you for the invitation to testify and for calling this important hearing.

⁷ <https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/governor/documents/2025.3.21%20gov%20shapiro%20letter%20on%20ai%20and%20employees.pdf>

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SAMANTHA SANCHEZ, PROGRAM MANAGER, COMMON CAUSE NEW YORK

Submitted to the New York City Council Committee on Technology

Submitted on June 26, 2025

Good morning, Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Samantha Sanchez, and I serve as the Program Manager at Common Cause New York, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to strengthening open, accountable, and participatory government. Thank you, Chair Gutiérrez and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Common Cause/New York in strong support of Intro 1235 sponsored by Council Member Brewer, intro 540 sponsored by Council Member Brannan, and intro 1066 sponsored by Council Member Williams.

Support of Intro 1235

Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) is a cornerstone of open government. It enables journalists, advocates, and members of the public to access information about how decisions are made and how public resources are allocated. But FOIL is only as strong as its implementation- and in New York City, transparency and compliance remain inconsistent across agencies.

Intro 1235 addresses this problem directly by requiring city agencies to report and publish critical data on FOIL request processing. The bill codifies and enhances the City's OpenRecords portal, one of the most advanced municipal FOIL systems in the country and ensures public accountability through greater transparency.

Reinvent Albany's 2025 report, *NYC Government Flouting Freedom of Information Law*, revealed significant delays in agency responses, with 16% of FOIL requests from 2024 still unresolved after a year. The Department of Correction, for instance, had an average response time of 485 days. These systemic delays undermine public trust and reduce the effectiveness of FOIL as a tool for accountability.

Intro 1235 will improve this system in multiple ways:

- It mandates timely, public reporting of request statuses, determinations, response times, and appeals;
- It legally establishes "release to one, release to all" to make public records broadly accessible;
- It ensures agencies log all FOIL requests—including those received outside the OpenRecords portal—so there is a full accounting of citywide activity;
- It requires DORIS to develop performance guidelines and provide training and support to agency FOIL officers.

Together, these reforms will bring much-needed consistency, clarity, and public insight into how city agencies are fulfilling their legal responsibilities. They also align with the City's broader goals around digital transformation, open data, and civic engagement. Common Cause/NY urges the Committee to pass Intro 1235 without delay, and we thank Council Member Brewer for her leadership on this issue. This bill strengthens democratic accountability and affirms that public information belongs to the public.

Support of Intro 1066

We also support Intro 1066, sponsored by Council Member Williams, which creates an interagency task force to assess the impact of artificial intelligence on civil service positions. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into public systems, it is critical that New York City take a proactive and nuanced approach to understanding its implications for the government workforce.

We recommend that the task force explicitly consider whether artificial intelligence will *displace* civil service workers or augment and improve the effectiveness of their roles. The difference is critical: the deployment of AI tools must not come at the cost of undermining public employment or eroding institutional knowledge. With that in mind, Common Cause/NY encourages the council to explore creating an AI workforce pipeline, with the intention that civil service employees whose roles may be vulnerable to automation have access to targeted training and upskilling programs.

Additionally, we urge the Council to include representatives from organizations actively working toward responsible and ethical integration of AI in public systems, at the Council's discretion. These voices will be essential in ensuring that the deployment of AI tools aligns with democratic values and labor equity.

Support of Intro 540

While Common Cause/NY does not take a formal position on Intro 540, sponsored by Council Member Brannan, we commend the Council's initiative to provide oversight of the City's cloud-first policy. As cloud systems increasingly support citywide operations, transparency and rigorous standards should be met. We hope the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications includes a broad set of stakeholders and subject matter experts in its assessment, particularly regarding procurement barriers, security protocols, and the training needs of civil servants. This evaluation must also carefully consider the implications of vendor control, data, and long-term costs to the City.





**Submitted Testimony of Con Edison to the New York City Council Committee on Technology in
Support of Introduction 372, a Bill in Relation to Establishing Timelines for the Approval of
Permits and Expanding Real Time Tracking of Pending Permits
June 26, 2025**

Con Edison is pleased to submit testimony regarding Council Member Powers proposed Int 372, a bill in relation to establishing timelines for the approval of permits and expanding real time tracking of pending permits.

For more than 200 years Con Edison has delivered safe, reliable, and resilient energy to run New York City. Today, Con Edison plays a leading role in transitioning New York City to a clean energy future. Through our Clean Energy Commitment to meet City and State clean energy laws, we are investing in, building, and operating, reliable, resilient, and innovative energy infrastructure, the electrification of heating and transportation, as well as building a grid capable of delivering 100% clean energy to our customers by 2040.

Con Edison would like to thank the NYC Council Committee on Technology for holding this hearing and providing the public with an opportunity to testify on Int 372. Con Edison fully supports Int 372 and believes that the enactment of this legislation into law will result in more transparency and increased ability to coordinate complex, critical construction projects and most importantly more certainty on timeline deliverability of permits.

Con Edison applies for thousands of permits per year, and while Con Edison's internal data demonstrates that many permit applications have fairly quick turnaround times, unfortunately some of our most critical permit applications are beset by significant processing delays. This is particularly true when it comes to revocable consent permits, as well as approvals for other more specialized permits. In one recent example, it took over two years to obtain a revocable consent permit for critical infrastructure work.

Additionally, Con Edison also believes that it would be helpful to all concerned about this topic, if the NYC Council were to support efforts to improve NYC OMB processing times for staff hiring, particularly for DOT Office of Construction Mitigation and Coordination (which handles permit reviews and assists with issuing pre-stipulations on large scale projects).

We would once again like to thank the NYC Council Technology Committee for holding a hearing on this important matter, and we believe that the enactment of Int 372 into law will help facilitate the approval of important permit applications in a timelier manner.

INTERNAL

Testimony of Rose Lovaglio-Miller
Associate Director, DC 37
at the Committee on Civil Service
June 26, 2025

Good afternoon Chair de la Rosa and fellow Committee members. My name is Rose Lovaglio-Miller, Associate Director to Executive Director, Henry Garrido of District Council 37 (DC 37). I write this testimony to raise our concerns regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) being considered to be brought into the municipal workforce arena.

We are well aware that all jobs are, unfortunately, vulnerable to automation through AI. However, some jobs, including those that are performed by tens of thousands of Civil Servants and DC 37 members, are particularly susceptible to reductions in workforce due to automation.

For many reasons, AI has no place in the City's workplaces. The Civil Service System ensures that the city bureaucracy is staffed and operated by human beings, who were evaluated for merit and fitness by competitive examinations. AI, however, cannot be examined for merit and fitness in the same manner. The city will have to accept on blind trust that AI can perform the duties for which people were subject to examinations. Its use will only be detrimental to workers and the constituents of the City of New York. We object outright to the use of AI in any way which would result in a loss of our members' jobs. Our members should not be sacrificed for the ill-advised move towards unreliable automation.

AI will never have the capacity to perform at the same level as human beings. Our members are the backbone of the City's public benefits administration. They perform intake of clients, process their *handwritten* documents, and guide public benefit recipients through the byzantine process to receive benefits necessary for their survival. AI simply cannot perform these duties at the same level ***nor with the same compassion*** as a human being. AI cannot empathize with a client as a human being can. AI cannot comprehend the often-life-or-death nature of a client's case like our members can. AI can only regurgitate answers from the data set upon which it was trained. However, our members can synthesize their education, training, and experience to think creatively and solve problems.

DCAS recently requested the minimum qualification requirements (MQR) for Eligibility Specialists be reduced so that Human Resources Administration (HRA) could recruit more staff. This is the appropriate response to staffing shortages, not the wholesale eradication of positions in favor of unproven, unreliable AI applications. It is well-documented that AI regularly makes mistakes and fabricates information when responding to users' prompts. Mistakes made by AI, which will be compounded in a recursive loop, making a small error in recognition or analysis may create exponentially larger problems. AI has demonstrated itself as unreliable, and, as such, mistakes are inevitable; however, AI cannot be held accountable for these failures. Instead, our members will suffer disciplinary consequences for mistakes that are no fault of their own. Unfortunately, we are already experiencing this with the little automation currently in use.

Implementing AI applications discredits the work actually being done by real people, who need real jobs to be able to live their real lives. It is common for a single civil servant to support an entire family based on their city salary. The inevitable reduction in workforce attributable to automation will upend the lives of our members, their families, as well as the public. An exploratory committee to research the use and effect of AI on the City's operation is, in effect, an

exploratory committee to find a technocratic justification for austerity and a reduction in the city's workforce. For these reasons we cannot support the implementation of AI applications in the city workforce and ask the City Council to do the same.

Thank you.



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BUSINESS MANAGER/
SECRETARY TREASURER
Joseph Azzopardi

PRESIDENT
John Drew

June 26th, 2025

Committee on Civil Service & Labor

In Support of Maintaining Written and adding a Practical Examinations for Civil Service Painters

My name is Davon Lomax, I am the Political Director for District Council 9 Painters and Allied Trades. Representing over 11,000 hard working men and women in the finishing trades industry. I am here to express strong support for maintaining and expanding upon a comprehensive examination process—both written and practical—for civil service painters.

While education and experience are important for background information of a candidate, they do not fully qualify a candidate for the specific role of civil service painter without proper vetting and testing.

This dual-assessment system would play a vital role in ensuring that only the most qualified, knowledgeable, and skilled individuals are entrusted with maintaining and improving the lives of those in our public housing and shelter as well as the work spaces and infrastructure of the agencies serving our city.

First, the written examination is essential for assessing foundational knowledge.

Professional painters in civil service roles must understand more than just how to apply paint. They are expected to have a solid grasp of safety protocols, surface preparation techniques, environmental regulations, proper use and disposal of materials, and an understanding of lead and mold safe protocols, all of which are crucial for ensuring public safety and regulatory

NYC—PAINTERS,
GLAZIERS,
WALLCOVERERS
45 WEST 14TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011
TEL: 212-255-2950
FAX: 212-255-1151

STRUCTURAL STEEL
& BRIDGEPAINTERS
40 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10001
TEL: 212-447-0149
FAX: 212-545-8386

DRYWALL TAPERS
& POINTERS
45 WEST 14TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011
TEL: 212-242-8500
FAX: 212-242-2356

METAL POLISHERS
& SIGN & DISPLAY
36-18 33RD STREET
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY
11106
TEL: 718-361-1770
FAX: 718-361-1934

NASSAU—SUFFOLK
20 BROAD HOLLOW ROAD
STE. 3008
ROUTE 110
MELVILLE, NY 11747
TEL: 631-581-8900
FAX: 631-581-0189

WESTCHESTER—PUTNAM
595 WEST HARTSDALE AVENUE
WHITE PLAINS, NY 10607
TEL: 914-592-3696
FAX: 914-592-1232

HUDSON VALLEY
21 AIRPORT DRIVE
WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY
12590
TEL: 845-473-0564
FAX: 845-473-6550

ALBANY & NORTH
890 3RD STREET
ALBANY, NY 12206
TEL: 518-489-5791
FAX: 518-453-3588



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compliance. The written exam evaluates this core knowledge in a fair and standardized way,

Second, the practical examination ensures hands-on competency.

Painting in public buildings, schools, hospitals, and other city facilities is not a simple or uniform task. Different surfaces, materials, and tools require different techniques, and quality workmanship is essential to the longevity of the work and the safety of the structures involved. A practical exam provides an objective way to verify that candidates are capable of high-quality work—properly prepping surfaces, applying paint evenly, following safety standards, and demonstrating precision in their trade.

Third, a dual-exam process promotes professionalism and accountability.

By requiring both written and practical demonstrations of skill, the City reinforces the message that civil service jobs are earned through merit and fitness. This not only improves public confidence in our workforce but also boosts morale among employees who know their peers have met the same rigorous standards.

Finally, it supports equity and transparency in hiring.

The civil service system is founded on the principle of fair competition. Using standardized written and practical exams minimizes the influence of personal bias or favoritism in hiring. This levels the playing field and helps ensure that hiring is based on demonstrated ability, not connections or subjective judgment.

Maintaining both written and practical examinations for civil service painters is not just about testing for skills, it is about upholding standards, ensuring public trust, and preserving the integrity of our civil service system.

NYC—PAINTERS,
GLAZIERS,
WALLCOVERERS
45 WEST 14TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011
TEL: 212-255-2950
FAX: 212-255-1151

STRUCTURAL STEEL
& BRIDGEPAINTERS
40 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10001
TEL: 212-447-0149
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21 AIRPORT DRIVE
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12590
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FAX: 845-473-6550

ALBANY & NORTH
890 3RD STREET
ALBANY, NY 12206
TEL: 518-489-5791
FAX: 518-453-3588

The Real Estate Board of New York to The Committee on Technology: Oversight - Improving Accountability and Transparency through Technology

The Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY) is the City's leading real estate trade association representing commercial, residential, and institutional property owners, builders, managers, investors, brokers, salespeople, and other organizations and individuals active in New York City real estate. REBNY thanks the Committee on Technology for the opportunity to voice support regarding Int.0362-2024.

Bill-specific feedback is as follows:

Int. 0372-2024: Establishing timelines for the approval of permits and expanding real time tracking of pending permits.

Subject: A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to establishing timelines for the approval of permits and expanding real time tracking of pending permits.

Sponsors: Council Members Keith Powers, Lincoln Restler, Linda Lee, Lynn Schulman, and Farah Louis

This local law would require that city agencies that issue permits or licenses establish publicly available timelines for approving permits, tools for tracking the real-time status of permit applications, and would also require that the administration establish steps for accountability if timelines are not adequately met.

The current multi-agency permitting process remains one of the most significant challenges to delivering new housing and economic development projects across the five boroughs. Even for projects that are as-of-right under zoning, the process of securing permits from multiple City agencies—such as the Department of Buildings (DOB), Fire Department (FDNY), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of Transportation (DOT), Department of Sanitation (DSNY), Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), Public Design Commission (PDC), and Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)—can be unpredictable, duplicative, and time-consuming.

Each of these agencies has its own permitting authority, with different pathways for filing, review, and issuance. Some agencies have established review timeframes, but those deadlines are often insufficient to meet time-sensitive benchmarks such as financing closings. The resulting delays add uncertainty and increase project costs, all of which negatively impact housing supply, affordability, and economic opportunity.

The length of time between a project's conception and a tenant's move-in date is often driven less by construction timelines than by regulatory bottlenecks. These delays are further exacerbated by the discretionary environmental and land use processes, which are lengthy, complex, and costly. For developers, such delays play a major role in the "build or not build" decision calculus. Without predictable timelines and coordinated agency approvals, it becomes difficult—if not impossible—to secure necessary financing and move forward with construction.

Intro. 372 addresses these challenges head-on. By establishing transparent timelines and creating a centralized, real-time tracking system for permit status, these bills will enhance accountability across agencies and help applicants navigate the permitting process more efficiently. Importantly, the establishment of a comprehensive tracking database and the agency coordination it entails will also require thoughtful rulemaking and sufficient implementation time.

We do wish to flag what appears to be a likely typographical error in the legislation. The bill currently states that all systems must be operational by 2023. Given that we are now in 2025, we urge the Council and City Hall to ensure that operational timelines are realistic and account for the necessary agency coordination and resource planning required to make this reform successful.

We applaud the Council for taking meaningful steps toward streamlining the City's permitting process and urge the swift passage of this bill. Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide comments.

CONTACT:

Dev Awasthi

Vice President of Government Affairs

Real Estate Board of New York

dawasthi@rebny.com



Reinvent Albany Testimony to the NYC Council Committee on Technology

**Re: Intro 1235 Strengthens the NYC OpenRecords Website,
Improving How Agencies Respond to FOIL Requests**

June 26, 2025

Good morning Chairs Gutiérrez and De La Rosa, Councilmember Brewer, and other members of the Committees on Technology and Civil Services & Labor. Thank you for holding this hearing today. I am Rachael Fauss, the Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany. We advocate for transparent and accountable New York government. We were instrumental in drafting and passing New York City's 2012 Open Data Law and subsequent amendments, and were actively involved in the creation of the highly successful [OpenRecords](#) portal.

We strongly support [Intro 1235](#) – which is sponsored by Councilmember Gale Brewer with the support of 23 additional councilmembers. We believe this bill will dramatically improve agency responses to Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests. Intro 1235 is supported by 13 transparency, civil liberties, environmental, and government watchdog and journalism groups, who submitted a [memo of support](#) yesterday.

The City Council has historically been a great champion of improving agency compliance with the state's Freedom of Information Law and we are glad to see you continuing this civic tradition. At the request of then-Borough President Brewer, the Council [introduced legislation in 2014](#) that was similar to this bill, however, the [OpenRecords](#) portal was ultimately created administratively.

We appreciate the Department of Records' (DORIS) outstanding work building, maintaining and improving the OpenRecords portal. DORIS has done wonders with the authority it has and has improved processing and tracking FOIL requests. Unfortunately, despite DORIS's best efforts with the portal, many agencies struggle to provide the public with timely and complete responses to FOIL requests and some agencies appear to actively resist disclosing public records. (Importantly, the OpenRecords portal allows the public to much more easily track basic information about FOIL requests and see which agencies are leaders and laggards.)

Reinvent Albany’s report, [NYC Government Flouting Freedom of Information Law \(April 2025\)](#), looked at FOIL request data from OpenRecords. Since the portal was created, more than half a million FOIL requests have been submitted through OpenRecords.

Unfortunately, expert FOIL staff at NYC agencies estimate the OpenRecords portal is currently only logging about half of all FOIL requests – and this 50% of requests is what our report is based on. A summary of the report’s findings is below.

- 16% of requests submitted via OpenRecords in 2024 were still open a year later.
- A number of agencies have horrendous response times.
 - The Department of Corrections takes an average of *485 days* to respond.¹
 - The Office of the Mayor takes an average of *283 days* to respond.
- Many agencies do not publish records released via FOIL, even though “release to one, release to all” was the intent when OpenRecords was launched in 2014.

Based on the OpenRecords portal, below are some of the agencies that currently have the biggest backlog of FOIL requests. Please note that agencies began using the portal in different years (Office of the Mayor in 2016, NYPD in 2018, and Department of Correction in 2020).

Reinvent Albany Analysis: NYC FOIL requests still open, by agency and year of original submission

Requests listed each year remain open as of 6/12/2025

Agency	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% and number of requests still open, all years (including 2025)
Office of the Mayor	33	3	23	57	66	56	101	384	427	12% (1,268)
FDNY				19	269	591	601	3,013	6,827	14% (15,375)
NYPD			103	143	1,308	2,385	3,738	6,467	9,230	19% (35,419)
Department of Correction					100	122	119	354	314	30% (1,291)
Department of Education	12	21	70	247	216	361	349	577	680	68% (4,425)

Agencies selected represent those with a higher number of open requests. See “New York City Government Flouting Freedom of Information Law” for more information: <https://reinventalbany.org/2025/04/report-new-york-city-government-flouting-freedom-of-information-law/>

Table: Reinvent Albany • Source: OpenRecords • Created with Datawrapper

Intro 1235 will better allow the public and City Council to hold agencies accountable for delays and their failure to comply with FOIL – New York’s fundamental transparency law. Importantly, Intro 1235 is the next logical step in transparency beyond the city’s Open Data Law, because it mandates publishing public records online 14 calendar days after they are sent to the person making a FOIL request. This gives journalists a head start on stories they are working on.

¹ “Respond” means to provide or deny some or all of the requested records. “Acknowledge” means the agency informs the requestor it got the records request.

We note that “release to one, release to all” is already used by a number of other government bodies – including the [Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#), [LA Metro](#), and the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), among others.

The bill both codifies *and* expands the OpenRecords portal per the chart below.

Reinvent Albany Comparison <i>Current OpenRecords Portal vs. Intro 1235 Requirements</i>		
Feature	Current OpenRecords Portal	Intro 1235 Requirements
Requires use by all NYC agencies	No	Yes
Publishes key dates: receipt, acknowledgement, responses, extensions, determinations, appeals, Article 78 proceedings	Partial ; no dates on appeals, Article 78 proceedings	Yes
Publishing of public records released via FOIL	Optional ; not required	Yes ; public records published 14 days after sent to requestor
Searchability of requests and published records	Partial ; requests are searchable, but limited to the data fields provided. There is no way to search published records.	Yes ; required for requests and full text search for published records
Automated Programming Interface (API) access	No	Yes
Provides data on fees paid by public for records; attorneys’ fees paid by agencies for improper denials	No	Yes
Directory listing names and contact information of FOIL officers and appeals officers at each agency	No	Yes
Monthly statistics by agency about number of requests received, outstanding, and average resolution times	No ; Reports section of portal only shows open and closed requests by agency over lifetime of portal.	Yes
Performance reporting via Mayor’s Management Report	No	Yes
Twice yearly communications from Department of Records and Information Services to agency FOIL staff about best practices and updates to portal	No	Yes

We urge the Council to pass the bill, and the Mayor to sign it. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I welcome any questions you may have.



**Testimony of SHRM
To the New York City Council Committee on Civil Service and Labor
Monday, June 30, 2025**

Chairwoman De La Rosa and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on City Council legislation Int 1066-2024 that would create a task force to review the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on civil service employees and provide the Council with the opportunity to make recommendations to the Council President or Mayor about its findings.

Given the significant increase over the last several years of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and AI's impact on the nation's workforce, SHRM is pleased to support this legislation to provide policymakers, city hiring managers, and others a better understanding of the implications of AI on the city's civil workforce. In addition, SHRM recommends the committee incorporate language to ensure that the task force representative from the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services have an expertise in human resources and understand the talent needs of the city.

[SHRM](#) believes this legislation will lay the groundwork for identifying actionable solutions that ensure all individuals can thrive in New York City's rapidly growing and evolving economy. SHRM stands ready to lend our expertise to address the skills gaps between NYC workers and employers and to shape a workforce prepared for what's next.

As the leading experts on all things work, our organizations and members have a unique insight into the evolving workplace and how to maximize human potential. With nearly 340,000 members in 180 countries—including nearly 14,700 in New York State—SHRM touches the lives of more than 362 million workers and their families globally.

New York City, like the rest of the nation, is undergoing significant economic transformation, driven by advances in technology, artificial intelligence, and automation. SHRM researchⁱ indicates that more than 19 million current jobs (12.6%) face significant risk of displacement because of automation, including AI. These forces are reshaping the nature of work, and, in turn, the skills employees need to succeed, support their families, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Specifically, SHRM's research found that blue-collar, service, and administrative support roles are likely to be disproportionately affected. Other sectors that face elevated risk levels of automation-driven workforce disruptions include finance, insurance, and manufacturing.

When coupled with Human Intelligence (HI), however, AI can provide HR professionals and business leaders with the toolsⁱⁱ to:

- **Reskill and Upskill Workforces:** By identifying high-risk roles and providing targeted training, businesses can future proof their employees.
- **Leverage Data-Informed Decision-Making:** AI can enhance talent management while human intelligence ensures nuanced, ethical implementation.
- **Strengthen Employee Engagement:** Integrating AI thoughtfully into work environments enhances operational efficiency without compromising the human touch.



At SHRM, we are eager to serve as a partner in this important effort and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our research on automation, AI, and workforce transformation (2024 Talent Trends Reportⁱⁱⁱ; 7 Trends That Will Shape HR in 2025^{iv}; Beneath The Surface: A Unified Approach To Realizing The Value Of Untapped Talent^v; The SHRM Blueprint for All Things Work, Worker, and Workplace^{vi}). In addition, our AI In the Workforce^{vii} may be useful to you as you navigate the many complex issues relating to automation and the expansion of AI in workplaces. Our insights—rooted in the real-time experiences of HR professionals—can help inform practical strategies for closing skills gaps and preparing New York City’s workforce for the future.

It is critical that New York City prepares now for an increasingly automated workplace. Our members have unparalleled insights into the gaps between the supply of available skilled workers and the demand in open positions, which may be useful to you and your colleagues as you deliberate solutions to these challenges and related issues.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share SHRM’s perspective on this legislation and for the work you do on behalf of your constituents and New York City businesses. We welcome future opportunities to collaborate on policies that impact workers and workplaces.

ⁱ <https://www.shrm.org/about/press-room/new-shrm-research-warns-19-million-jobs-are-at-risk-of-displacement>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/topics/artificial-intelligence-in-the-workplace>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/research/2024-talent-trends-report>

^{iv} <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/hr-quarterly/7-trends-that-will-shape-hr-in-2025>

^v <https://www.shrm.org/content/dam/en/shrm/research/untapped-talent-report.pdf>

^{vi} <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/research/leading-future-of-work-insights-on-workforce-evolution>

^{vii} <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/topics/artificial-intelligence-in-the-workplace>



40 Rector Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10006
www.StopSpying.org | (212) 518-7573

**STATEMENT OF
SARAH ROTH, LEGAL INTERN
SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT PROJECT (“S.T.O.P.”)
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE AND LABOR (JOINTLY WITH
THE COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY),
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
FOR A HEARING CONCERNING INT. 1235 – UPDATING FOIL FOR THE 21ST
CENTURY
PRESENTED
June 26, 2025**

Good morning Chair Gutierrez, Chair De La Rosa, and members of the New York City Council Committee on Technology and the Committee on Civil Service and Labor. The Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (“S.T.O.P.”) is a New York-based civil rights and anti-surveillance group that advocates and litigates against discriminatory surveillance. Thank you for organizing this important hearing. We urge the Council to modernize the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) process by creating a centralized system to receive, track, and publicly post responses to FOIL requests.

I. FOIL Falls Short of Its Promise

When New York enacted FOIL in 1974, it promised broad and timely access to agency records.¹ But today, FOIL is more symbolic than functional. Requesters face excessive delays, lack of transparency, and denials and excessive redactions based on vague or overbroad exemptions.² Waiting months for a response is common, and some City agencies average over a calendar year before responding to a request.³ Even when records are released, many agencies fail to publish them on OpenRecords, undermining the principle of “release to one, release to all.”⁴

II. Inadequate Management of FOIL Requests

Delays stem not only from agency foot-dragging but from systemic dysfunction. FOIL departments are under-resourced and technologically outdated.⁵ Many agencies still treat FOIL as a paper-based process. Most don’t log or track basic request data.⁶ As a result, watchdogs and oversight bodies can’t assess agency performance or help agencies improve their processes.⁷ And without a centralized document repository, requesters may duplicate efforts, wasting time on already-filed requests.

III. A Digital FOIL System Can Transform Transparency

¹ Gould v. New York City Police Dep’t, 89 N.Y.2d 267, 274 (1996); N.Y. PUB. OFF. LAW § 89(3).

² See *Failures of FOIL: New York’s Open Records System Needs Reform*, SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT PROJECT (2025), <https://www.stopspying.org/foil-failures>.

³ *Id.*; New York City Police Department, MUCKROCK, <https://www.muckrock.com/agency/new-york-city-17/new-york-city-police-department-272/>.

⁴ *Listening to FOIL 2024: Lessons from Six NYS Agencies*, REINVENT ALBANY 4 (Mar. 2024), <https://reinventalbany.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Listening-to-FOIL-2024-Report-March-2024.pdf>.

⁵ See *Failures of FOIL: New York’s Open Records System Needs Reform*, SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT PROJECT (2025), <https://www.stopspying.org/foil-failures>.

⁶ *Groups Urge Legislature and Governor to Strengthen NYS FOIL for Sunshine Week*, REINVENT ALBANY (Mar. 12, 2024), <https://reinventalbany.org/2024/03/groups-urge-legislature-and-governor-to-strengthen-nys-foil-for-sunshine-week/>; see also Mark Scheer, *Calling for change to NY’s “broken” public records request system*, NIAGARA GAZETTE (Mar. 12, 2024), https://www.niagara-gazette.com/news/local_news/calling-for-change-to-nys-broken-public-records-request-system/article_106a06f4-e078-11ee-89a1-87a1b600903d.html.

⁷ *Failures of FOIL: New York’s Open Records System Needs Reform*, SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT PROJECT (2025), <https://www.stopspying.org/foil-failures>.

Thanks to already-implemented and readily available technological developments, it is now easier and more affordable than ever to create a system where agencies can process, track, and publish records and records requests efficiently.⁸ Today, nearly all agencies accept electronic FOIL requests. And New York City's OpenRecords portal is arguably the most advanced FOIL platform in the country. Yet, despite the existence of these digital tools, which drastically grow our government's capacity for transparency, our city agencies have not taken advantage of them.⁹

IV. Intro 1235: A Blueprint for Digital Transparency

Intro 1235 will finally bring FOIL into the 21st century. It codifies and expands the OpenRecords portal, creating a centralized system that reduces delay, increases accountability, and enables citywide oversight.¹⁰ This will give New Yorkers, oversight bodies, and journalists comprehensive access to both public records and the data behind how those records are processed. For the first time ever, COOG and oversight bodies will be able to thoroughly assess patterns of FOIL noncompliance, such as excessive and unreasonable delays and denials.

V. Recommendations

S.T.O.P. supports Intro 1235 as written. We have one minor recommended amendment – providing a brief delay between providing a requestor with a responsive record before publishing it on the portal. This delay will allow journalists to request a record for their reporting without fear that its publication will undermine their ability to break news.

Overall, Intro 1235 is one of the most significant things the Council can do to improve government transparency. We urge the Council to pass the bill and the Mayor to sign it.

VI. Comment on Intro 540 & Intro 1066

While I have the committees' time, I'd like to briefly address some of our concerns and recommendations regarding Intro 540 and Intro 1066. Firstly, the cloud-first policy for city technology systems, proposed in Intro 540, poses some cyber security risks. The council should consult with privacy experts before passing the legislation as is. Secondly, the AI task force proposed in Intro 1066 gives outsized power to the mayor. We recommend that the mayoral appointments to the task force are reduced or revoked, and more seats are made available for technology experts and labor representatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

⁸ See *Id.*

⁹ See *Id.*

¹⁰ Council of the City of N.Y. Int. No. 1235, 2025 Leg. (2025), <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7297922&GUID=45A761F3-58A9-46AC-AAF6-C397ABD9BB65&G=2FD004F1-D85B-4588-A648-0A736C77D6E3&Options&Search>; See *Failures of FOIL: New York's Open Records System Needs Reform*, SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT PROJECT (2025), <https://www.stopspying.org/foil-failures>.



TESTIMONY

The Council of the City of New York
Committee on Technology and Committee on Civil Service and Labor

An Oversight Hearing on the Impact of Automation on the New York
City Workforce

Proposed Int. No. 1235-2025

June 26, 2025

The Legal Aid Society
Criminal Defense Practice
49 Thomas Street
New York, NY 10013

By: Laura Moraff
Digital Forensics Unit
Staff Attorney
(929) 536-1637
LMoraff@legal-aid.org

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Good morning. I am Laura Moraff, a staff attorney at The Legal Aid Society's Digital Forensics Unit, which is a specialized unit that works on electronic surveillance and digital evidence issues in all five boroughs. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on Int. 1235, a Local Law regarding the creation of a centralized system for processing Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION

Since 1876, The Legal Aid Society (LAS) has provided free legal services to New York City residents who are unable to afford private counsel. Annually, through our criminal, civil and juvenile offices, our staff handles over 180,000 matters for low-income families and individuals. By contract with the city, the Society serves as the primary defender of indigent people prosecuted in the state court system.

In 2013, LAS created the Digital Forensics Unit to serve and support LAS attorneys and investigators in our criminal defense offices. Since that time, we have expanded to two digital forensics facilities, three analysts, two senior analysts, six staff attorneys, and one director. The Unit routinely submits FOIL requests to better understand the surveillance technologies and practices that arise in our cases and affect our current and future clients.

Our colleagues in other sections of LAS also frequently submit and litigate FOIL requests to obtain records that help the organization better represent our clients and their communities.

II. SHORTCOMINGS OF FOIL

FOIL is based on the recognition that "a free society is maintained when government is responsive and responsible to the public, and when the public is aware of governmental actions."¹ By its text, FOIL requires that agencies make available for public inspection all

¹ Public Officers Law, Art. 6 § 84.

records—except for those in specified exemptions—in five days or in a reasonable amount of time.²

In practice, it is exceedingly difficult for the public to get insight into governmental decision-making and policies, because agencies routinely fail to meet the deadlines they set for themselves, delay producing records for months—or even years—without justification, and improperly redact large portions of records or deny access to the records altogether.

LAS has often experienced roadblocks in its work due to agencies’ failures to comply with FOIL. Below are just a few examples of many:

A. The 55-month (and counting) wait for SPEX Budget Contracts

In Fall of 2020, LAS submitted FOIL requests to various agencies including the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Mayor’s Office for specific documents related to the NYPD’s special expense budget contracts (SPEX contracts) from a specified time period.³ Nearly five months later, on March 16, 2021, the NYPD issued a blanket denial of the request, claiming that the FOIL request failed to describe the records in a manner that could enable a search.⁴ LAS appealed the NYPD’s denial on April 5, 2021, noting that the FOIL request identified several possible responsive documents—which had been identified in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed in 2007 by the NYPD, Office of the Comptroller, New York Law Department, New York City Mayor’s Office of Contract Services, New York City Department of Investigation, and the New York City Office of Management and Budget. The same documents were also identified in a 2010 amendment to the MOU.⁵

² Public Officers Law, Art. 6 §89(3)(a).

³ See *The Legal Aid Society v. NYPD*, Index No. 156967/2021 (N.Y. Co. Sup. Ct.), Doc No. 3 (Ex. 1 to Petition), available at https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/nyscef/DocumentList?docketId=ddl0yvk3CclXg/W_PLUS_Fmtqqw==&display=all&courtType=New%20York%20County%20Supreme%20Court&resultsPageNum=1.

⁴ *Id.* Doc No. 4 (Ex. 2 to Petition).

⁵ *Id.* Doc No. 5 (Ex. 3 to Petition).

The NYPD denied LAS's FOIL appeal, stating again that the request did not "reasonably describe a record in a manner that could enable a search" and that the request did not "reasonably describe any actual records maintained by this agency in that it is overbroad and this agency does not maintain records in a manner in which responsive records can be located."⁶ The NYPD claimed that, because it does not maintain a searchable database of SPEX contracts and the request would require a manual review of hard-copy records, the request would be "unduly burdensome."⁷

These claims were nonsensical, given that (1) the FOIL request described specific categories of records that were also identified in the MOU, and (2) the MOU amendment included a protocol under which the NYPD would provide unredacted SPEX contracts—including the documents sought in LAS's FOIL request—to the New York City Office of the Comptroller for review on demand.

On July 27, 2021, LAS filed an Article 78 Petition explaining how the NYPD's denial of its request violated FOIL.⁸ Under the plain text of FOIL, an agency "shall not deny a request on the basis that the request is voluminous or that locating or reviewing the requested records or providing the requested copies is burdensome because the agency lacks sufficient staffing or on any other basis if the agency may engage an outside professional service to provide copying, programming or other services required to provide the copy, the costs of which the agency may recover pursuant to paragraph (c) of subdivision one of section eighty-seven of this article."⁹

While the NYPD stated that the records were so sensitive that outsourcing redactions to a vendor

⁶ *Id.* Doc No. 6 (Ex. 4 to Petition).

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.* Doc No. 1 (Petition).

⁹ Public Officers Law § 89(3)(a).

would be impracticable, the NYPD made no showing that the records would require redactions—or that a vendor would be unable to accomplish the task.

After more than two years of litigation, on October 26, 2023, the Honorable Lyle E. Frank ruled that the NYPD was required to produce the requested documents.¹⁰ Per the court's order, LAS was to receive the first production of records on or before March 31, 2024.¹¹ However, the NYPD appealed the order.¹² With the help of pro bono counsel, LAS spent another fifteen months in litigation until the Appellate Division affirmed Judge Frank's order that the NYPD produce the requested records.¹³

Although LAS requested these records more than four years ago, and two courts have held that LAS is entitled to the requested records, the wait is still not over. After several failed attempts to communicate with the NYPD about a production schedule, the soonest the NYPD would agree to producing records was August 1, 2025.

The Mayor's Office also has not produced any responsive records. Since receiving the request in 2020, the Mayor's Office has been continuously extending their deadline to respond. According to their most recent extension (from May 22, 2025), LAS should expect the requested records on or about July 8, 2025. But according to LAS's experience over the past 4.5 years, it is perhaps more realistic to expect yet another extension at that time.

B. The 17-month (and counting) wait for drone records

¹⁰ *The Legal Aid Society v. NYPD*, Index No. 156967/2021, Doc No. 73 (Decision and Order on Motion).

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.* Doc No. 75 (Notice of Appeal).

¹³ See *The Legal Aid Society v. NYPD*, 2024-0003 (1st Dept.), Doc No. 15 (Decision and Order), available at <https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/nyscef/DocumentList?docketId=LdxGdMsnwCUWIsr/auHpMw==&display=all&courtType=Appellate%20Division%20-%201st%20Dept&resultsPageNum=1>.

On January 4, 2024, LAS requested forms related to the deployment of drones from a roughly three-month period, and footage created by NYPD drones from a one-month period.¹⁴ The NYPD acknowledged its receipt of the FOIL request on January 11, and indicated that a response could be expected on or about May 20, 2024.¹⁵ More than seven months past that date, LAS still had not received any records—or any other communications about the request. Treating the NYPD’s silence as a constructive denial of its FOIL request, on January 2, 2025, LAS appealed.¹⁶ On January 16, 2025 the NYPD responded that the appeal was “premature” because the Records Access Officer had not yet issued a determination on the initial request—filed more than a year earlier.¹⁷ The response indicated that “the search for the records responsive to [LAS’s] request remains ongoing.”¹⁸ It provided no new estimate as to when a response could be expected. Four months later, having received neither a response nor any estimate on a when a response could be expected, LAS once again resorted to filing Article 78 Petition with pro bono counsel.¹⁹

LAS also submitted FOIL requests to the NYPD for drone-related records on April 18, 2024 and May 22, 2024. Both requests were acknowledged, and the NYPD indicated that it would provide responses roughly five months after the requests were submitted. LAS did not receive responses to either request by the expected deadline. The NYPD indicated that it would need a three-month extension for one of the requests—though after three months, LAS still had not received any records. The NYPD never provided a response to the other request. LAS

¹⁴ See *The Legal Aid Society v. NYPD*, Index No. 156385/2025 (N.Y. Co. Sup. Ct.), Doc No. 2 (Ex. 1 to Petition), available at <https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/nyscef/DocumentList?docketId=LNyCfWJWmy683qAQPjyeDA==&display=all&courtType=New%20York%20County%20Supreme%20Court&resultsPageNum=1>.

¹⁵ *Id.* Doc No. 3 (Ex. 2 to Petition).

¹⁶ *Id.* Doc No. 4 (Ex. 3 to Petition).

¹⁷ *Id.* Doc No. 5 (Ex. 4 to Petition).

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.* Doc No. 1 (Petition).

appealed the NYPD's constructive denials of its FOIL requests, and the NYPD responded that the appeals were "premature," and that the Records Access Officer would issue a determination on each request "on or about October 29, 2025"—more than fifteen months after the requests were submitted.

C. The seven-month (and counting) wait for facial recognition records

On November 20, 2024, LAS requested records related to the New York City Fire Department's (FDNY's) acquisition of facial recognition systems. The FDNY acknowledged the request and stated that LAS could expect a response on or about December 27, 2024. More than two months after the expected response date, LAS had not received any records. On March 4, 2025, treating the FDNY's silence as a constructive denial of its FOIL request, LAS appealed. FDNY did not acknowledge the appeal, and LAS engaged pro bono counsel to help obtain the records. On April 3, 2025, the FDNY informed LAS that it had extended the time to respond to the FOIL request, and that LAS could expect a response on or about June 24, 2025—7 months after the initial request was filed. On May 23, LAS—through its pro bono counsel—wrote to FDNY requesting that the records be provided by June 2, 2025. As of June 25, 2025, LAS has received neither responsive records nor a response to its letter.

* * *

The examples above are just a few of the many instances of agencies improperly delaying and denying FOIL requests. While LAS can litigate denials of FOIL requests using our in-house attorneys and is also sometimes able to rely on pro bono counsel for help, individual requesters often do not have access to such resources. Individuals may have no choice but to wait for years as agencies get limitless extensions to produce records that are supposed to be presumptively open to the public. Indeed, LAS Attorney Shane Ferro submitted a FOIL request to the Mayor's

Office while she was in law school; six years and one law degree later, she has still not received a response.²⁰

So long as agencies continue to improperly deny requests and endlessly extend their deadlines to respond, the right to inspect government records is merely theoretical. A recent report by Reinvent Albany found that the volume of FOIL requests submitted through the City's OpenRecords portal is increasing, and the time to process the requests is getting longer.²¹ There is an urgent need for oversight of City agencies' FOIL processes.

III. INT. 1235'S IMPROVEMENTS TO FOIL

Int. 1235 will enact desperately needed reforms to FOIL. Anecdotes abound about agencies improperly delaying or denying access to records, but evidence of FOIL's inadequacy remains largely anecdotal, because the City does not currently compile comprehensive statistics on how agencies respond (or fail to respond) to FOIL requests. Int. 1235 requires the development of a centralized portal to process all FOIL requests and display information about agencies' responses to FOIL requests, both individually and in the aggregate.²² It will become abundantly clear which agencies are routinely denying the bulk of the requests they receive or leaving requests outstanding for more than thirty business days.²³ Int. 1235's reporting mechanisms are crucial to diagnosing and resolving issues with the current FOIL system. The development of performance guidelines, as required by Section 1(h) will also improve the current landscape where each agency has its own procedures and no meaningful oversight.

²⁰ Shane Ferro of the Legal Aid Society NYC Speaks at Sunshine Week 2025, YouTube (Mar. 23, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xRCZvUhw1rM>.

²¹ Reinvent Albany, *Report: New York City Government Flouting Freedom of Information Law* (Apr. 10, 2025), <https://reinventalbany.org/2025/04/report-new-york-city-government-flouting-freedom-of-information-law/>.

²² Section 1(b), (c)(11).

²³ See Section 1(c)(11).

The centralized portal mandated by Int. 1235 will also drastically reduce unnecessary inefficiencies in the FOIL process. Currently, requesters have no readily available way to determine whether someone else has already requested the records they seek. Int. 1235's requirement that records released in response to any FOIL request be made available through the centralized portal, Section 1(b)(19), will allow requesters to search through already-produced records and obviate the need to submit duplicative FOIL requests. This saves time and money for both requesters and City agencies by eliminating the need for duplicative requests.

The commonsense requirements that requests and responsive records be searchable,²⁴ and that individuals be able to receive automated notifications of FOIL-related determinations,²⁵ will reduce barriers to accessing records that are quietly produced, or produced in unusable formats.

Finally, the tracking of FOIL-related fees²⁶ will disincentivize improper denials.

As the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project has reported, Int. 1235 “is a blueprint for digital-era transparency.”²⁷ Its provisions are necessary to streamline access to records and ensure that FOIL's promise of transparency is not an empty one.

IV. CONCLUSION

The public is unable to understand, debate, and challenge government practices if it is kept in the dark about what they are. Int. 1235 is urgently needed to shed light on City agencies' practices with respect to FOIL requests and to eliminate unnecessary inefficiencies in the process. The Legal Aid Society encourages the City Council to enact Int. 1235 into law.

²⁴ Section 1(c)(5), (6).

²⁵ Section 1(c)(9).

²⁶ Section 1(b)(17).

²⁷ David Siffert et al., *Failures of FOIL* (May 22, 2025), https://www.stopspying.org/s/2025522_STOP_Failures-of-FOIL_Report.pdf.

Testimony of Associate Professor Adam Scott Wandt, J.D., M.P.A

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York

Before the New York City Council – Committee on Technology
Improving Accountability and Transparency through Technology
6/26/2025

Chairpersons, Council Members, and Members of the Public:

Thank you for the invitation and opportunity to testify today. My name is Professor Adam Scott Wandt, and I serve as Associate Professor of Public Policy and Deputy Chair for Technology within the Department of Public Management at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. A great deal of my academic and professional work focuses on the intersection of law, technology, and government transparency. I am also a licensed and practicing attorney, and co-chair of the New York City Bar Association's Committee on Technology, Cyber and Privacy Law. I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Inspectors' General, where I work to increase the technology and cyber knowledge levels of our inspection and oversight professionals. I have spent nearly two decades researching and advising on digital policy initiatives aimed at increasing public trust, accountability, and access to government services. My complete biography is available on my website: wandt.us. My comments are my own and do not reflect the official position of any organization I am affiliated with.

I am here to express my strong support for two of today's proposed legislative amendments as they would do two key things:

1. Int. 1235: Establish a real-time tracking system for Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests; and
2. Int. 372: Require city agencies that issue permits or licenses to publish approval timelines, provide real-time application tracking tools, and adopt structured accountability measures when deadlines are not met.

These are not just upgrades in technology; they are reinforcements of democratic principles that are so important to all of us in New York City. Transparency tools like these reduce bureaucratic opaqueness, empower residents, and help ensure that government is responsive, fair, and efficient. They harness existing technology to address a core civic concern: how responsive and transparent is our government to the people it serves?

Other cities and states that have implemented real-time tracking systems—such as Chicago’s FOIA portal or Los Angeles’ permit dashboards—have demonstrated measurable improvements in compliance, public satisfaction, and internal accountability. In a city as complex and dynamic as New York, these reforms are not just beneficial—they are essential. They promote data-driven oversight, mitigate delays and inconsistencies, and restore public confidence in government processes, particularly in marginalized communities who are disproportionately burdened by administrative delays and denials.

Let me begin with the FOIL process. For too long, the public’s right to access government records has been undermined by a lack of transparency in how those requests are handled. Inconsistent timelines, delayed responses, and a lack of visibility into agency workflows have eroded public confidence in FOIL as a meaningful access tool. Implementing a real-time tracking system for FOIL requests—similar to tracking a package online—would offer requestors updates on the status of their submissions, from initial receipt to final release or denial. **How confident in a retailer would you be ordering a package online and not receiving tracking information?** It is the same idea here. Real-time tracking tools make us more confident in our online transactions, whether that be with Government or Amazon. It also greatly increases accountability and transparency... when our package goes missing.

This isn’t theoretical. Jurisdictions like Chicago, Oakland, and New York State’s own Office of Information Technology Services have demonstrated that implementing such systems is not only technically feasible—it results in faster processing times, fewer complaints, and improved compliance with statutory deadlines. Transparency also deters internal bottlenecks and encourages agencies to treat FOIL obligations with the seriousness they deserve.

The second provision—requiring agencies that issue permits and licenses to publish approval timelines and offer real-time status updates—is equally critical. New Yorkers regularly face unnecessary administrative cloudiness when applying for building permits, business licenses, or even event approvals. The lack of clear expectations leads to frustration, delays, and in many cases, economic harm.

A public timeline is not a promise of perfection, but it sets a reasonable benchmark. When residents or business owners can see where their application stands, and when it is expected to be processed, they gain a measure of predictability and trust in the system. More importantly, embedding accountability measures—such as internal reviews or reports when timelines are not met—ensures that these timelines are not merely decorative. They become enforceable goals.

As a professor of public policy and an expert in technology implementation, I can say that these systems are well within the scope of existing capabilities. Nothing is technologically difficult about what these bills are trying to accomplish. The necessary components—databases, dashboards, notification systems—are readily available, often as open-source platforms or through vetted vendors. The challenge is not technological; it is institutional will. But the payoff is significant. Transparency reduces opportunities for corruption, promotes efficiency, and improves equity. It also levels the playing field—reducing reliance on personal connections, insider knowledge, or costly consultants to navigate opaque processes.

Let me close by stressing that this is not just a matter of administrative convenience—it is a matter of public trust. In an era where faith in government is increasingly strained, it is essential that we take bold and measurable steps to reaffirm our commitment to transparency, accountability, and open government. These proposals are a step in that direction. I urge the Council to adopt them and to continue investing in smart, secure, and citizen-focused technology initiatives.

I am happy to provide examples, research findings, and recommendations to help the Council consider how best to implement these reforms in a way that is scalable, secure, and equitable.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to contribute to this important conversation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.



Richie Lipkowitz <richielipkowitz@gmail.com>

LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

1 message

Richie Lipkowitz <richielipkowitz@gmail.com>
 To: Richie Lipkowitz <richielipkowitz@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 25, 2025 at 3:16 PM

I CAN -YOU CAN-WE CAN

RICHIE LIPKOWITZ

Civic Action Nation-Founder
 QBP Youth & Young Adult Council
 UNAUSA- MEMBERSHIP United Nations
 718 380-2943
 richielipkowitz@gmail.com

A.L.U.M.(Acquiring Leadership Utilizing Mentors)**WEST HEM**

A U.S.-GUYANA DEFENSE AGREEMENT, INVESTMENT FUND has Republicans & Democrats making a Western Hemisphere & ELSEWHERE PIVOT.

With ORDER RESTORED- ECONOMIC INVESTMENT can POTENTIALLY turn these NATIONS into Thriving Economies.
 Careers: Coordination with TRAINING INSTITUTES & U.S. State Dept. will Support those AVAILABLE to LEAD NATIONS in TRANSITION.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS- A BONUS**Queens College Tech Incubator****Ying Zhou** -Executive Director ying.zhou@qc.cuny.edu

718 997-4609

c 917 319-4027

TiE U is a program of TiE Global with the objective of fostering entrepreneurship among college and university students.



- Open mic night every month: startups get to pitch their ideas in front of angel investors. Mentorship is also offered.
 I think TiE NY and Queens College can have a mutually beneficial relationship. Companies incubated by and/or started by QC students/professors would have the benefit of TiE's extensive global network.

Please let me know what else I can provide and the next step in building a relationship.

Jignesh Patel President TiE NY
 Managing Partner
 Charioteer Capital LLC
 +1 609-851-2625

Craig and Ritchie,

4/2/25

I wanted to introduce you two.

Craig is look for a sherpa / guidance into how to connect at Queens College.

Richie is a retired teacher who likes to mentor young people.

Richie

richielipkowitz@gmail.com

718 380 2943

Craig Abbot TiE University

Craigwabbott@gmail.com

203-858-5830

kdama@sandrinecapital.com **NIVAS AFFORDABLE HOUSING** 516 712-9200 **CONTACTS FOR **YOU ONLY**

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NY Foundation For Senior Citizens (NYSFC)
- 3- T.E.C.H. Technology Enables Choice-Youth Opportunities- Skills-Angel Investors
- 4- S.C.O.R.E. Service Corps Of Retired Executives(Various Languages Available)
- 5- SAFE PASSAGE Business Decals + Community Patrols

June 27, 2025

Dear Mayor Adams and New York City City Council,

I'm writing to you to indicate my support for [Intro 1235 of 2025 \(CM Brewer's Bill on OpenFOIL\)](#)

This bill will require NYC agencies to publicly report FOIL logs.

I support this legislation because we believe it will help the public and government better understand how FOIL is working in New York City and what steps are necessary to improve it.

NYC's OpenRecords portal is arguably the best technology system for FOIL in the country. Despite this, some NYC agencies are notorious for failing to respond to requests in a timely manner. Reinvent Albany's report, [NYC Government Flouting Freedom of Information Law \(April 2025\)](#), found that 16% of NYC requests filed in 2024 were still open a year later. The Department of Corrections, for example, takes an average of 485 days to respond to requests. Many agencies also do not publish records released via FOIL, even though "release to one, release to all" was the intent of the developer when OpenRecords was launched in 2014.

This legislation will codify and expand the [OpenRecords portal](#) to help it better serve New Yorkers. It will require agencies to publish data about the status of requests—allowing New Yorkers to see which agencies are complying with the law—and also make "release to one, release to all" the law rather than a mere guideline. These changes will ensure that NYC government continues to be transparent and accountable to its biggest funders – the public.

We urge the Council to pass the bill, and the Mayor to sign it.

Thank you for your time,

Sergio Castillo Cervantes

Testimony Before the New York City Council Committees on Civil Service and Labor, and Technology

Thursday, June 26, 2025, – Council Chambers, City Hall

By William Medina, on behalf of Workers Justice Project (WJP)

Good afternoon, Chair Carmen De La Rosa and Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez.

My name is William Medina, and I am an organizer and member leader with the Workers' Justice Project. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of WJP, which organizes and supports *Los Deliveristas Unidos*.

We want to highlight how technology is radically transforming the working lives of these workers. While digital platforms provide a source of income for thousands of people—most of them immigrants and essential workers—they have also introduced new forms of labor precarity.

The algorithms that govern delivery apps determine how much workers earn, which orders we receive, and all without transparency or the ability to a just appeal process in case of having our accounts deactivated. This has created an unequal system where deliveristas have very little control over their working conditions. On top of that, constant surveillance through GPS tracking, customer ratings, and delivery times creates high levels of stress and psychological pressure.

At WJP, we work directly with this community. We hear their stories every day: deliveries in extreme weather, accidents with no medical coverage, accounts suspended without explanation. Many workers are forced to choose between their safety and the daily income that feeds their families.

That is why today we urge the City Council to invest more resources into programs that protect and empower this workforce. We need an increased budget to strengthen existing labor laws, support community resource centers like *Los Deliveristas Unidos*, and fund education, legal defense, and workplace safety programs.

New York City has the opportunity to lead with justice—ensuring that technology is not used to exploit, but to dignify work. Deliveristas are not just symbols of a modern economy—they are human beings, parents, neighbors—and they deserve fair, safe, and transparent working conditions.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to labor justice.

THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1235 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Laura Moraff

Address: 49 Thomas St.

I represent: Legal Aid Society

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

No Panels, City government agree
Date: _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Malek Al-Shammari

Address: _____

I represent: Independent budget office

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: NORMA SIMON

Address: [REDACTED] NY NY 10036

I represent: Norma Simon (SELF)

Address: [REDACTED] N.Y.N.Y. 10036

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. 1735 + 277 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/26/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ADAM WANDT

Address: 524 W. 59th ST, NY, NY

I represent: Associate Professor, JOHN SUNG CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAYAN LOMAX

Address: 45 West 14th

I represent: DOJ Painters

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: FAISAL LALANI

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. _____ Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Faust

Address: [REDACTED]

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1235 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rachel Faust

Address: _____

I represent: Reinvent Albany

Address: 377 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1235 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 06/26/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sarah Roth

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, NY 11221

I represent: Surveillance Technology Oversight Project

Address: 90 Rector St, New York, NY 10066

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: 06/26/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Rafael Espinal

Address: _____

I represent: Freelancers Union

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 540 Res. No. _____
☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 6/26/25

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALEX SPYROPOULOS

Address: 152 W 57th ST

I represent: TECH:NYC

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: Liliana De Lucca

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. 1235 Res. No. 2025
☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Michele Anne Blondmonille

Address: Cambria Heights NY

I represent: Lead for Humanity

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: Pauline Toob

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Dept of Records & Information Services

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: Katrina Porter

Address: 1 Centre St

I represent: DCAS

Address: _____

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

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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: Alex Faurd

Address: _____

I represent: OTI

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1066 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 06/26/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nadira Pittman

Address: _____

I represent: _____

Address: Issues of AI in workplace/privacy

**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: PRINCE GUPTA

Address: OTI

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. 1066 Res. No. _____

☐ in favor ☒ in opposition

Date: 06/26/2025

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Foluso Ogundepo

Address: [REDACTED] Brooklyn, NY 11221

I represent: Myself

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1235 Res. No. _____

☒ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beverly Blomquist

Address: Queens NY

I represent: Lead for Humanity

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: William Medina

Address: 365 Broadway

I represent: Workers Justice Project

Address: _____

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