



JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL
OPERATIONS, STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION
APRIL 24, 2025**

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, Public Advocate for the City of New York. I want to thank Chair Restler and the members of the Committee on Governmental Operations, State and Federal Legislation for voting on this legislation today.

[Intro 246](#) amends the New York City charter, where possible, to require city agencies to provide an "X" option for gender on certain forms. As of 2023, New York State has issued identification (driver's licenses, state ID, etc) with this marker but I believe it is also past time to move the needle on adding this marker to city public-facing forms. At a time when civil rights protections for transgender, nonbinary and other gender non-conforming individuals are being eroded, allowing city residents to more accurately express their gender on government forms would be a powerful form of affirmation and solidarity – not only in the eyes of the legal system but on a personal level. Numerous studies have shown that legal affirmation of one's gender identity is associated with lower depression, anxiety and psychiatric distress.¹

Furthermore, a refusal to update these forms leaves New York City open to claims of discrimination on the basis of gender identity, much like the ACLU of New York successfully argued in its 2021 lawsuit against the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, which led to the passage of the Gender Recognition Act in 2021 and the Governor's statute in 2022 mandating an "x" option for state agency data collection.² Therefore, I believe it is first and foremost not only a moral obligation to pass this bill but also a practical step that the city must take. New York City has always been known for its great diversity and our forms ought to reflect that.

Thank you.

¹ Restar A, Jin H, Breslow A, Reisner SL, Mimiaga M, Cahill S, Hughto JMW. "Legal gender marker and name change is associated with lower negative emotional response to gender-based mistreatment and improve mental health outcomes among trans populations." SSM POPULATION HEALTH. (Aug. 11, 2020) Available at [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7229467/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7229467/).

² "NYCLU Settlement Secures "X" Gender Marker for Nonbinary New Yorkers Seeking Public Assistance" <https://www.nyclu.org/press-release/nyclu-settlement-secures-x-gender-marker-nonbinary-new-yorkers-seeking-public>