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*Everyday people don't have fancy lobbyists and lawyers – that's why they need a public advocate who will have their back and make sure they're treated fairly.*

”

**Letitia James**  
**PUBLIC ADVOCATE**  
FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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# THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK

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Dear friend,

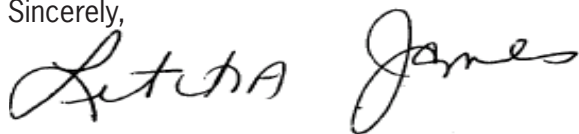
As we start a new year, I remain in awe of New York – a city that challenges the most diverse group of people on earth to live, work, and play together. Every day I represent you in the Office of the Public Advocate is an opportunity to stand up for New Yorkers without a voice in government.

In 2014, the Public Advocate's Office aggressively pursued its functions of ombudsman and watchdog. We focused on advancing key policy initiatives to address the real life challenges of New Yorkers in every community.

In this Annual Report, which the Public Advocate publishes yearly, you will read about our work on important issue areas ranging from expanding school lunch for students to protecting subway riders from sexual harassment; from implementing body-worn cameras for police officers to saving good-paying jobs in the city. You'll also learn about our office's robust constituent services program, which in our first year alone has helped hundreds of individuals and families in dire need.

Though serious challenges continue to be present, there's ample reason to be confident in the future and optimistic about the promise our city holds for all New Yorkers. Together, we can build stronger neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and, with it, a better New York City.

Sincerely,



Letitia "Tish" James

Public Advocate for the City of New York



# About the Office

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*“The Public Advocate’s Office can do many things. But our focus has been to pursue issues that most directly impact the lives of working families in New York City.”*

— Public Advocate James

The Office of the Public Advocate for the City of New York is a city-wide elected position that is first in line to succeed the mayor. The office serves as a direct link between the electorate and city government, effectively acting as an ombudsman, or “watchdog,” for New Yorkers by providing oversight over city agencies, investigating citizens’ complaints about city services, and making proposals to address perceived shortcomings or failures of those services.

The Public Advocate presides over the New York City Council and has the right to sponsor legislation and hold hearings. The Public Advocate is also charged with appointing members to various boards and commissions, such as the New York City Planning Commission.

On November 5, 2013, Letitia “Tish” James was elected as the fourth Public Advocate for the City of New York. PA James is the first woman of color to hold city-wide office in New York City history. She began her term on January 1, 2014.

# DELIVERING FOR

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## PROTECTING GOOD, MIDDLE-CLASS JOBS AT UPS

When UPS tried to fire 250 employees in retaliation for a union action, PA James stepped in and fought for the workers, reminding UPS that New York City would not do business with those who harm our workforce. She helped save 250 good, middle-class jobs.



## PREVENTING PRIVATIZATION OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Patients should always be placed above profits. When the Health and Hospitals Corporation sought to privatize dialysis services and transfer them to a private company that prioritized profits over patient health, PA James worked with unionized workers to call out the deal, expose the increased safety risks, and prevent the privatization from moving forward.

This built upon PA James' earlier work to preserve healthcare services at Long Island College Hospital.

## UNIVERSAL SCHOOL LUNCH

Study after study demonstrates that when students are well nourished, they learn better. PA James successfully delivered the expansion of free school lunch for our students.



## HOMELESS SERVICES REFORM

The Public Advocate has helped improve the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) system so that families are treated with greater fairness and dignity. PA James proposed and helped implement reforms that resulted in better access to improved services, dignified treatment, and greater clarity.

## DRINKING WATER IN HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

There is nothing more important than protecting the health of all New Yorkers. It starts with clean water. PA James successfully pushed the Board of Health to tighten inspections of water towers so that dangerous bacteria does not make it into our vital water supply.



## FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RENT-REGULATED TENANTS

Treating rent-regulated tenants as second-class citizens is simply unacceptable. It's why PA James took decisive action when the office received complaints of discrimination by a building owner towards rent-regulated tenants by denying those tenants access to building entrances and amenities. PA James filed a brief with the City's Human Rights Commission to challenge the landlord's actions and helped put a stop to the discriminatory practices.

# NEW YORKERS

## FIGHTING FOR TENANTS IN COURT

PA James has used the legal functions of her office to fight for tenants. In one example, the Public Advocate took on a Bronx landlord who was trying to squeeze out rent-regulated tenants from his building. While the case is still ongoing, the Public Advocate's lawsuit has already resulted in better accommodations for tenants who remain in the building.



## HELPING YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Youth aging out of the foster care system have long been a population overlooked by the city and social service providers. These youth often enter a cycle of homelessness and chronic unemployment.

The Public Advocate's first bill signed into law requires the government to obtain data on youth as they age out, so we can better support them and address deficiencies in services provided.



## PROTECTING SUBWAY RIDERS FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT

After PA James drew attention to the problem of sexual harassment on subways and proposed several solutions, the MTA announced it will implement steps to better protect riders from sexual harassment. This includes security cameras on subways, more education for riders, support for victims, and better training for MTA personnel.

## PROTECTING EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS AT NAIL SALONS

The millions of New Yorkers that patronize nail salons and those who are employed there are often exposed to harmful toxins. PA James released a policy report highlighting health risks associated with chemical exposure and poor sanitary practices at nail salons and continues to advance legislation to address these challenges.



## BODY-WORN CAMERAS

As part of her efforts to secure substantive reforms, PA James successfully championed body-worn cameras for NYPD officers. This policy will increase transparency and improve community-police relations.



## GOING TO COURT TO CHALLENGE SECRECY IN ERIC GARNER CASE

PA James went to court to unseal the minutes of the Eric Garner Grand Jury case on the principle that transparency and accountability will restore New Yorkers' faith in the justice system.

# Successfully Champions Use of Body-Worn Cameras

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New York City must take clear and decisive action toward improving community-police relations. Police body-worn cameras will ensure greater transparency and accountability in all encounters between police and civilians. The use of body-worn cameras offers significant promise as a means to improve police conduct and reduce money the City spends on lawsuits resulting from allegations of police misconduct.

After a successful campaign by the Public Advocate, which included the release of a policy report and an extensive public case for body cameras, the NYPD implemented a body-worn camera pilot program that is currently under way.

Now that the pilot has begun, the Public Advocate is playing a leading role to ensure that the NYPD makes relevant video footage available to individuals involved in incidents with police, to relevant investigatory bodies such as district attorneys and the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB), and to the press. The protocol for making video footage available must ensure accessibility and transparency. The City must also provide additional resources to the CCRB to ensure investigations are conducted in a timely and competent manner. Ultimately, with appropriate rules and resources, body-worn cameras will help to restore confidence in the NYPD and bridge the gap between NYPD and the communities it serves.



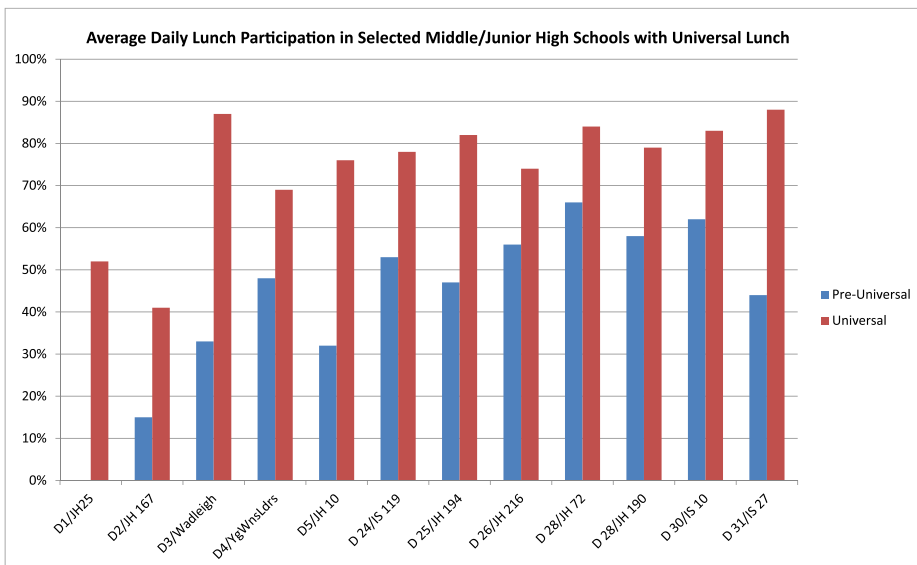


# PA James Delivers Free School Lunch for Students

Study after study demonstrates that students learn better when they are well nourished. Unfortunately, countless students do not eat lunch either because they can't afford to or they're discouraged by the poverty stigma associated with free lunch. Experts have recommended creating a universal school lunch program to eliminate these impediments and increase the number of students who eat lunch.



Public Advocate James partnered with the “Lunch 4 Learning Campaign,” a group of more than 150 community organizations, advocates, parents, students, and elected officials, to make universal school lunch a reality for all New York City students. Under the proposal, schools would eliminate onerous paperwork and practices that foster the poverty stigma associated with free or reduced price lunch and often stand in the way of hungry children being fed.



Data Provided by Community Food Advocates

Thanks to the successful advocacy of PA James and others, the Department of Education launched a universal school lunch program at the middle school level, expanding lunch access to 160,000 students.

# PA James Helps Save 250 Middle-Class Jobs at UPS

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When UPS unjustly fired 250 local workers as a retaliation for staging a brief protest, Public Advocate James stood up to the company and, using the leverage of the City's financial incentives to UPS, successfully pressured UPS to re-hire all 250 employees.



The Public Advocate's intervention on behalf of the workers demonstrated her commitment to fairness for all workers and refusal to back down even when confronted with large corporate interests. True to the mission of her office and a major accomplishment soon after assuming her city-wide role, Public Advocate James stepped in and fought successfully for the workers.

"We have sent a clear message that corporations can't benefit from public perks with one hand, and mistreat their employees with the other," said PA James.

*"Public Advocate Letitia James demonstrated tremendous leadership from the start, demanding fairness and offering to mediate a dispute that was harming working families and UPS alike. Tish's leadership helped save 250 drivers and their families and win respect and dignity for hard-working New Yorkers."*

— Tim Sylvester, President of Teamsters  
Local 804 (UPS employees)

# PA James Goes to Court to Protect Tenants' Rights

When unscrupulous landlords tried to force out disabled tenants by intentionally eliminating elevator service in their buildings, PA James fought back in the courts and successfully protected the rights of those disabled tenants.

The Public Advocate and four New Yorkers represented by Legal Services NYC-Bronx filed a lawsuit in federal court alleging violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, and State and City anti-discrimination laws in connection with planned elevator outages in four buildings in the Bronx. PA James also brought an action against the Department of Buildings to ensure that the agency does its part to enforce the accessibility regulations designed to protect tenants like those involved in the case.

The tenants that the landlords tried to force out included true New York heroes and some of the most vulnerable, who epitomize the people that the laws aims to protect: a lifelong New Yorker who suffers from respiratory problems caused by work at the site of the World Trade Center collapse; a retired firefighter who, after 30 years of service, suffers from dementia and mobility impairments; and a young child undergoing chemotherapy to combat eye cancer. The Public Advocate's involvement resulted in securing an offer from the landlord to supply an outside porter service and financial support up to \$300/month for in-home nurse services.

These efforts are part of a broader initiative by the Public Advocate to use the office's legal power to fight for tenants. The Office of the Public Advocate is currently investigating claims of other vulnerable tenants who experienced hardship as a result of previous outages as well.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

\_\_\_\_\_X  
PASQUALE PICARO, PRUDENCIO VALLE,  
JUDY BRATNICK, SANDY CAUSE,  
individually and as next friend to minor child S.C.,  
and LETITIA JAMES, as Public Advocate for  
the City of New York,

Plaintiffs,

-against-

PELHAM 1135 LLC, JOSHUA GOLDFARB,  
PHILIP GOLDFARB, MARC GOLDFARB,  
THOMAS FRYE, GOLDFARB PROPERTIES  
INC., PELICAN MANAGEMENT INC.,  
NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
BUILDINGS, and RICK D. CHANDLER,  
as Commissioner of the New York City  
Department of Buildings,

Defendants. \_\_\_\_\_X

**COMPLAINT**

14-Civ. \_\_\_\_\_

**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

1. This action for injunctive and declaratory relief seeks to protect mobility-impaired tenants' right of egress and ingress to their apartments during the rehabilitation of their 6-story building's sole elevator. Tenant Plaintiffs are unable or limited in their ability to use stairs because of their disabilities: Pasquale Picaro suffers from severe respiratory problems resulting from his work as a 9/11 first responder and Prudencio Valle suffers from advanced dementia and uses a wheelchair or a walker to ambulate. Landlord Defendants have notified the Tenant Plaintiffs of their intention to take the elevator out of service on September 15, 2014 for a period of five months, effectively trapping named Plaintiffs in their homes. Landlord Defendants have only entertained vague accommodations which would require that these tenants vacate their

# PROTECTING TENANTS

In October, Public Advocate James launched the 2014 Worst Landlords Watchlist, a list compiled through information obtained from the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), constituents, and other sources city-wide.

By releasing the list, the Public Advocate called out the worst landlords in the City and created a powerful tool to empower renters in some of the toughest buildings in the City.

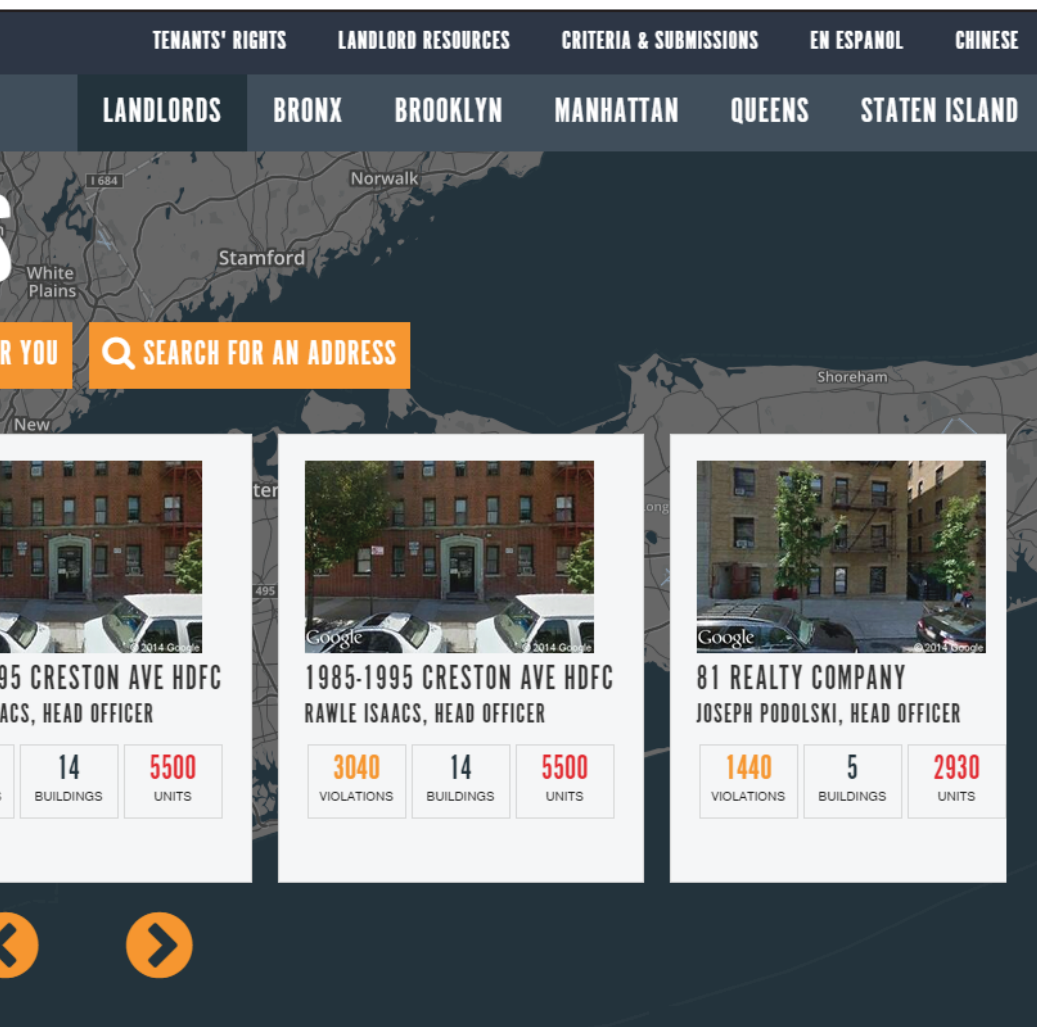
The Worst Landlords list was created in 2010 under now-Mayor Bill de Blasio, and has since become identified with the Office of the Public Advocate. For a landlord to be included on the Watchlist, they must own a building with a minimum

threshold of violations per unit — for buildings with fewer than 35 units, there must be an average of at least three open, serious violations per unit. For larger buildings with 35 units or more there must be an average of at least two open, serious violations per unit.

The 2014 list presents upgrades to previous lists, including images of buildings and increased navigation capabilities. This year users can search by borough and spot buildings with the most infractions. Accessible



# EXPOSING SLUMLORDS



via tablet or smart phone, the list is geocoded and can map the user's nearest building included on the list.

There are currently almost 6,800 buildings city-wide included in the 2014 list, none of which are part of HPD's Alternative Enforcement Program (AEP), which authorizes HPD to designate and assist 200 multiple-dwelling residential buildings to repair violations. Public Advocate James introduced the legislation that created the AEP while she was a member of City Council in 2007.

"Today, too many New Yorkers — especially those living in low-income communities — rent in substandard buildings where landlords pinch pennies and

avoid even the most basic repairs. I am proud to re-launch the Worst Landlord Watchlist as a tool to highlight our city's worst offenders, and to empower tenants around the City. My office will continue to monitor and bring forth legal action against landlords who put profits above the safety and well-being of tenants. We must help landlords who are trying to make improvements and take on those who neglect their responsibility to maintain safe buildings." The Watchlist can be found at <http://landlordwatchlist.com/>.

# Making Nail Salons Safer for Customers and Employees

Millions of New Yorkers frequent nail salons. Unfortunately, in the process, these customers and the employees who serve them are often exposed to harmful toxins. The Public Advocate's Office released findings on exposure to chemicals and sanitary concerns in nail salons and made recommendations on improving these conditions. Furthermore, she introduced legislation that will result in enhanced safety at nail salons for patrons and employees alike.



Photo Credit: Pseudomonas. (n.d.). NAILS Magazine 2005

One specific focus of the Public Advocate's initiative is to eliminate the use of the toxic trio of chemicals in salons, which will reduce the risk of inhalation of harmful toxins. These toxins have been proven to cause chronic and reproductive harm for those who are exposed. Other jurisdictions such as California and the European Union (EU) have already cracked down on the use of these toxins. Instead of the broken

*“Beautiful nails make a great impression but they shouldn’t come at the cost of our health. I’m proud to work on improving conditions at nail salons and empowering workers and customers.”*

— Public Advocate James

status-quo that relies on “self-regulation” practices, the Public Advocate's legislation will establish a “healthy nail salons” initiative that prohibits the toxic trio and increases the use of ventilation systems, while increasing education for customers and employees.

Implementing the stronger health, safety and education standards promoted by PA James, nail salons can be safer for the literally millions of employees and customers who work in and frequent these businesses in New York City.

# Taking on Sexual Assault on College Campuses

College campuses should be safe grounds for learning, not places where sexual assault is swept under the rug. The Office of the Public Advocate is pursuing comprehensive reforms to enhance safety at campuses throughout the City. The Public Advocate’s proposal includes a multi-pronged approach to prevent sexual assault and improve responses by colleges and universities. To inform this plan, the Public Advocate held several working-group meetings and a public hearing involving students and survivors of sexual assault, representatives of rape crises centers, and advocates working to combat sexual assault, as well as leaders of relevant City agencies.



The Public Advocate has begun working with local college presidents and administrators on a consensus letter establishing common rights and procedures for all colleges in New York City. By signing on to the letter, the presidents will be committing to making meaningful changes to their campus sexual assault policies including the following: partnering with local rape crisis centers to provide services to survivors of sexual violence; providing and requiring thorough and regularly-occurring education for students, faculty, administrators, and campus safety officers with respect to sexual assault including prevention education and bystander intervention; and ensuring that adjudications of sexual assault allegations are handled by trained, competent, and impartial individuals and that no determinations can be overruled without due process.

In addition to working with local colleges, the PA has sponsored legislation to provide City resources to establish a baseline of services and information for college students concerning sexual assault. This includes providing information on services available in New York City to survivors of sexual assault and the development of educational materials for prevention and response to sexual assault.

Finally, the PA plans to work with City Council to help increase funding for local rape crisis centers and to help private hospitals to secure funding for so-called SAFE Centers of Excellence, which are State-approved locations to respond and provide services to victims of sexual assault.

# Protecting Our Drinking Water Supply

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Public Advocate James sprung to action when reports surfaced that the safety of the City's water supply was being compromised by lax enforcement and oversight. One study found significant bacteria – including E. coli – in several of the rooftop water towers that were surveyed throughout the City. Although landlords were required by law to clean and inspect the water towers annually, a survey conducted by the City found that 60% of landlords acknowledged that they did not comply with the law.

Knowing that a safe drinking water system is vital to the City's health, Public Advocate James pushed to increase reporting requirements. This includes ensuring that building owners inspect and clean water towers regularly. In several letters sent to the Department of Health and the Board of Health and in the testimony



she delivered at a Department of Health hearing on this issue, Public Advocate James emphasized the shortsightedness of spending literally billions of dollars over decades to secure and deliver clean water from throughout the state, only to allow bureaucratic considerations to jeopardize the cleanliness of the water once it arrives in the City. Following PA James' advocacy, the Board of Health agreed with the Public Advocate and on June 9, 2014, the Board voted in favor of the proposed change advocated by PA James.

As a result, all building owners are now required to report their annual water tower inspections to the City's Department of Health, thereby increasing compliance with the law and preserving the quality of our drinking water.



# Safeguarding the Right to Vote For All

Voting is a fundamental right in our electoral democracy and the means by which citizens can communicate their priorities and concerns to their government. Yet the more than 900,000 New Yorkers with disabilities often confront unreasonable challenges to exercise this most fundamental right.

The Office of the Public Advocate, with the assistance of volunteers and several groups advocating for the rights of people with disabilities, surveyed polling locations on primary election day in 2014 and issued a report detailing specific challenges that New Yorkers with disabilities face at polling sites and making a series of recommendations to address those challenges.

The recommendations made by the report focus in part on the relationship between the Board of Elections (BOE) and the City's Department of Education (DOE), which houses many of the polling locations. By executing a memorandum of understanding, BOE can make clear to school principals and superintendents the specific requirements needed at each school to accommodate New Yorkers with disabilities. In addition, the report calls for increased BOE inspectors to ensure poll site compliance and improved training for poll site workers. Following these recommendations would go a long way towards eliminating the concerns of New Yorkers with disabilities and ensure that New York City's electoral system is accessible to all.



*“We are grateful to Public Advocate James...for helping to monitor accessibility for voters with disabilities.”*

— Susan Dooha, Executive Director,  
Center for Independence of the  
Disabled in New York (CIDNY)

# PA Passes Legislation to Protect Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

A childhood in the foster care system should not warrant an adult life of poverty and homelessness, dependence on welfare or prison; yet all too often, it does. There is an urgent need to track foster youth aging out of the system so we know what happens to them and they don't simply get lost in a cycle of homelessness and poverty. Public Advocate James' legislation – which was passed by the City Council and signed into law by the mayor – will provide the crucial data necessary to ensure that youth aging out of foster care have access

to the support and resources that will prevent homelessness and other lifelong challenges.

As part of her work on this issue, the Public Advocate issued a report on improving outcomes for youth that age out of foster care, which includes recommendations such as designating an agency to provide oversight and assistance to youth that have aged out of the foster care system; expanding housing options; easing regulations to apply for housing; and designating additional units in NYCHA for youth leaving the foster care system.

The image shows the cover of a policy report. At the top left, there are two small photographs: one of a woman hugging a child, and another of a young person looking thoughtful. To the right of these photos is the address: "1 CENTRE STREET 15TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10007" and the website "WWW.PUBADVOCATE.NYC.GOV" with the phone number "(212) 669-7200". Below the photos is a photograph of a woman, Letitia James, sitting at a desk. To the right of this photo is the official seal of the City of New York. On the left side of the cover, there is a vertical banner with the text "THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK" and "Letitia James". Below this banner is a large photograph of a city building at night. At the bottom right of the cover, the title "POLICY REPORT: IMPROVING THE OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE IN NEW YORK CITY" is displayed in bold, followed by "New York City Public Advocate Letitia James" and a date box "SEPTEMBER 2014". A small credit "photo by Michael Everardo" is visible at the bottom left of the cover image.

# Directly Connecting with New Yorkers and Their Needs

A main principle of constituent services is going to the people... where they are. PA James has aggressively pursued an outreach program that includes the **Talk to TISH** initiative.

PA James visits neighborhoods and communities across the City to have unfiltered conversations with New Yorkers and use their input to shape the Office's agenda.



*“New Yorkers must know that their government has their back. This includes cutting through red tape and addressing real life issues with real life solutions.”*

— Public Advocate James

Held regularly across the five boroughs, **Talk to TISH** events provide an ideal forum for everyday New Yorkers to share their concerns about local issues. Those who have individual concerns are addressed by the Public Advocate and her staff, thereby cutting through the red tape and providing direct access to government.

# Constituent Services: Helping Everyday New Yorkers Get the Services They Need

Helping the most vulnerable individuals and families in need is the bedrock of Public Advocate James' constituent services operations. Each month, thousands of New Yorkers call or visit the Public Advocate's office where they receive help cutting through red tape, identifying resources, getting questions answered, and obtaining general support. The office's Constituent Services team has helped families with heat and hot water complaints, stopped unfair evictions and investigated and reported wrong-doing that results in sub-par public services. The office opens an average of 400 constituent cases each month.



## **CHRISTINE ORTEGA, Brooklyn**

*“My baby fell critically ill and her Medicaid closed without my knowledge. When I came to the Public Advocate’s office, they helped me quickly and efficiently. Thanks to their work with Medicaid, my daughter is now covered and I can focus on her health instead of medical bills.”*

## **JOHN KEMPF, Staten Island**

*“With the intervention of the Public Advocate’s Office my Electrical License was approved. I want to thank the Public Advocate’s Office for their assistance and guidance and I have respect for all they do.”*



# New York City Agencies

*Constituent cases addressed by the Public Advocate's Office.*

■ 19

Agency	Closed Favorable	Closed Referred	Closed Unfavorable	Agency Total
Administration for Children's Services	7	11	0	18
Board of Elections	0	0	0	0
BSA	0	1	0	1
Community Board	1	0	0	1
City Clerk	1	3	0	4
Civilian Complaint Review Board	2	25	2	29
Comptroller	1	2	0	3
Courts	2	19	0	21
Department of Consumer Affairs	19	9	1	29
Dept of Citywide Administrative Services	3	5	2	10
Department of Design and Construction	0	2	0	2
Department of Environmental Protection	28	37	7	72
Department for the Aging	6	14	1	21
Div. of Housing & Community Renewal	15	13	2	30
Department of Homeless Services	65	53	6	124
Department of Buildings	25	10	5	40
Department of Education	39	25	2	66
Department of Finance	18	4	4	26
Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene	23	9	1	33
Department of Investigations	4	7	0	11

# New York City Agencies

*Constituent cases addressed by the Public Advocate's Office.*

Agency	Closed Favorable	Closed Referred	Closed Unfavorable	Agency Total
Department of Sanitation	28	10	2	40
Department of Transportation	30	1	1	32
Department of Parks and Recreation	31	22	10	63
Dept of Youth & Community Development	0	0	0	0
Environmental Control Board	2	2	1	5
Economic Development Corp	0	0	0	0
Fire Department of New York	3	1	2	6
Health and Hospitals Corporation	12	9	1	22
Health and Human Services	0	3	0	3
New York City Housing Preservation	133	75	10	218
Human Resources Administration	275	151	40	466
Legal	14	77	2	93
Metropolitan Transportation Authority	24	42	6	72
Mayor's Office	2	1	0	3
Co-OP	1	4	0	5
CUNY	1	0	0	1
District Attorney's Office	0	0	1	1
Office of Labor Relations	0	4	0	4
Other	3	4	1	8
Public Library	0	2	0	2

# New York City Agencies

*Constituent cases addressed by the Public Advocate's Office.*

■ 21

Agency	Closed Favorable	Closed Referred	Closed Unfavorable	Agency Total
Records & Information Services	0	1	0	1
NYC Dept. of Corrections	7	5	0	12
Employee Retirement System	1	0	0	1
New York City Housing Authority	106	32	13	151
NYP   Pension	0	0	0	0
New York Police Department	72	110	5	187
OPA   Other	1	0	1	2
Public Advocate   Correspondence	155	16	0	171
Public Advocate   Issue Opinion	10	10	0	20
Public Advocate   MISC	25	32	1	58
Taxi and Limousine Commission	4	0	4	8
Uncoded	3	3	0	6
Utilities	19	4	0	23

# New York State Agencies

*Constituent cases addressed by the Public Advocate's Office.*

Agency	Closed Favorable	Closed Referred	Closed Unfavorable	Agency Total
NYSAG-Attorney General	0	2	0	2
NYSBHE-Higher Education	0	0	0	0
NYSC-Court	0	2	0	2
NYSCJS-Criminal Justice Services	0	1	0	1
NYSDCS-Civil Service	0	0	0	0
NYSDFS-Dept of Financial Services	1	0	0	1
NYSDHR-Human Rights	1	1	0	2
NYSDL-Labor	3	13	0	16
NYSDOC-Correctional Services	10	10	0	20
NYSDOE-Education	0	0	0	0
NYSDOF-Finance	0	0	0	0
NYS DP-Parole	0	1	0	1
NYS DS-Department of State	0	1	0	1
NYS DT-Taxation & Finance	2	2	0	4
NYS LC-Legal Court	0	0	0	0
NYS WC-Worker's Compensation	2	2	0	4
NYS   Other	0	3	0	3
Department of Motor Vehicles Complaint	1	3	0	4
Department of Health	2	0	0	2



# Federal Agencies

*Constituent cases addressed by the Public Advocate's Office.*

■ 23

Agency	Closed Favorable	Closed Referred	Closed Unfavorable	Agency Total
Congress	2	0	0	2
FAA   Aviation	0	1	0	1
FBI   Investigation	0	2	0	2
Federal Emergency Management Agency	0	0	0	0
Health & Human Services	0	0	0	0
Housing & Urban Development	1	1	0	2
FED   Other	3	3	0	6
Small Business Administration	1	0	0	1
Social Security Administration	3	5	1	9
Commission on Civil Rights	0	0	0	0
Citizenship & Immigration Services	1	9	0	10
US Department of Education	1	1	0	2
US Department of Labor	1	1	0	2
Equal Employment Opportunity	0	4	0	4
Bureau of Investigation	0	2	0	2
Federal Communication Commission	0	0	0	0
Trade Commission	0	0	0	0
Internal Revenue Service	0	0	0	0
Postal Service	3	4	0	7
Veterans Administration	0	0	0	0

# PA Holds Public Hearings That Are Vital to New Yorkers

**College Sexual Assault.** PA James has been perhaps the strongest local voice addressing campus sexual assault. In addition to introducing legislation and convening meetings with students, advocates, and college administrators, PA James joined with her City Council colleagues on October 27 to hold an oversight hearing on college sexual assault. The hearing was attended by students and administrators from colleges throughout the City and brought to light shortcomings in education, response, and adjudication with respect to college sexual assault at several local schools. The hearing is part of PA James legislative, budget, and policy proposal to better address college sexual assault.

**Comcast/Time Warner Cable Merger.** On December 11, PA James convened a hearing on the proposed merger of Comcast and Time Warner Cable, a merger that would have important impacts on the majority of cable subscribers in New York City. The hearing focused on issues like competition, net neutrality, and broadband access and was attended by representatives from Comcast, labor leaders from the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers (IBEW), academic leaders like Professor Tim Wu, representatives from technology companies, representatives of various NYCHA tenant associations, and other members of the public. PA James was joined by Manhattan Borough President

Gale Brewer and City Council Member Ben Kallos.

As chair of the City's Commission on Public Information and Communications (CoPIC), PA James has a vested interest in the impact that the proposed merger would have on customers in New York City and the City's standing as a competitive location for the technology sector.

**Foster Care.** Public Advocate James takes very seriously her role as a voice for the voiceless. To that end, on June 16 she worked with the City Council's Committee on General Welfare, to convene a hearing on addressing the needs of youth that age out of the City's foster care system. PA James believes strongly that a childhood in foster care should not be a guarantee of an adult life of homelessness, dependence on welfare, or prison. Yet all too often, it is. The purpose of the hearing was to better understand the resources that the City spends in preparing young adults to age out of the foster care system and how outcomes can improve with better reporting and more resources for successful programs. Following the hearing, PA James successfully passed Local Law 46 of 2014, to improve the reporting and collection of data concerning youth aging out of the foster care system.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2014 has been a year of great challenges and opportunities. We have stood up against those who are harming our city, and supported those who are improving it. To all those who continue to help in building a better New York for all - thank you. My team and I greatly appreciate the time, energy, and effort contributed by our many interns, volunteers, and partners who remain active in our communities. I would also like to thank Cheryl Mann for her assistance with producing this report.

To quote a role model of mine, the great Shirley Chisholm, "You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines....You make progress by implementing ideas." By joining hands and working together, we can continue to advance the ideas that will take our city into the future.

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