Committee on Women & Gender Equity:

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**The Council of the City of New York**

Committee Report of the Human Services Division

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**Committee on Women & Gender Equity**

Hon. Tiffany L. Cabán, Chair

February 27, 2023

**Oversight:** **The HOME+ Program**

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| **Proposed Int. No. 534-A** | By Council Members Hanif, Cabán, Narcisse, Farías, Louis, Riley, Abreu, Williams, Velázquez, Schulman, Krishnan, Ung, Ossé, Brooks-Powers, Gutiérrez, Joseph, Avilés, Hudson, Restler, Won, Marte, Yeger, Sanchez, De La Rosa and Brewer |
| **Title:** | A Local Law relation to establishing a program to assist with changing door locks on the dwellings of survivors of domestic and gender-based violence |

**Res. no. 475** By Council Members Farías, Cabán, Louis, Hanif, Yeger, Riley, Brewer and Richardson Jordan

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| **Title:** | Resolution calling on the New York state legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to create a "purple alert system" for missing victims of domestic violence. |

1. **Introduction**

On February 27, 2023, the Committee on Women and Gender Equity, chaired by Council Member Tiffany Cabán, will hold a hearing on “Oversight: the HOME+ Program,” at which the Committee will hear Proposed Introduction Number (Proposed Int. No.) 534-A, co-sponsored by Council Members Shahana K. Hanif, Tiffany Cabán, Mercedes Narcisse, Amanda Farías, Farah N. Louis and Kevin C. Riley, related to establishing a program to assist with changing door locks on the dwellings of survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, and Resolution Number (Res. No.) 475, co-sponsored by Council Members Amanda Farías, Tiffany Cabán and Farah N. Louis, calling on the New York state legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to create a "purple alert system" for missing victims of domestic violence. Witnesses invited to testify include representatives from the New York City (New York (“NYC” or “City”) Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-based Violence (ENDGBV), survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, local legal service providers, community-based service providers, advocates, and experts in the field of domestic violence, gender-based violence and gender equity, and other interested stakeholders.

1. **Background**

***Domestic and Gender-Based and Violence***

Domestic violence (DV) is a pattern of economic, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and other behaviors intended to exert power and control, committed against members of the same family or household or individuals who are or have been in an intimate relationship.[[1]](#footnote-1) Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to any type of violence that is rooted in exploiting unequal power relationships between genders.[[2]](#footnote-2) GBV may exploit gender norms and role expectations specific to a society, as well as situational power imbalances and inequities.[[3]](#footnote-3) More specifically, GBV can include sexual, physical, mental and economic harm, as well as threats of violence, coercion and manipulation.[[4]](#footnote-4) It can take many forms, such as intimate partner and family violence, elder abuse, sexual violence, stalking and human trafficking.[[5]](#footnote-5) DV, GBV, and intimate partner violence (IPV)[[6]](#footnote-6) occur in all settings and among all cultural, religious and socioeconomic groups, but disproportionately affect women, racial and ethnic minorities,[[7]](#footnote-7) and members of the LGBTQIA+[[8]](#footnote-8) community.[[9]](#footnote-9) Victims[[10]](#footnote-10) of DV and GBV often feel stuck in abusive relationships, as any action they take may have immediate and disruptive consequences for them and their families.[[11]](#footnote-11) Research also indicates that survivors in certain potentially vulnerable communities and populations—including youth, older adults, communities of color, individuals with disabilities and deaf survivors, immigrant survivors, survivors with limited English proficiency, LGBTQIA+ individuals, criminalized survivors, veterans, and survivors with mental health or substance use challenges[[12]](#footnote-12)—may face additional barriers in accessing resources and support.[[13]](#footnote-13) Additionally, many survivors' experiences of abuse worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic,[[14]](#footnote-14) and the pandemic exacerbated financial, work, and housing challenges survivors face.[[15]](#footnote-15) Evidence suggests that domestic violence is among the leading causes of housing instability (including homelessness),[[16]](#footnote-16) especially for women and children.[[17]](#footnote-17) Further research stresses a need for policies that address housing instability and the related needs of survivors to be fully implemented and enforced.[[18]](#footnote-18)

1. **The Home+ Program**

The HOME+ program, launched in 2021 by the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA), is a redesign of HRA’s Alternative to Shelter (ATS) program, a program that provides free and confidential security resources to survivors of DV and GBV who want to stay in their homes instead of entering shelter or going somewhere else.[[19]](#footnote-19) ATS was first implemented as a pilot program in Manhattan's 24th and 26th Precincts in 1995.[[20]](#footnote-20) In 1999, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani expanded the program to include 100 DV victims in 10 police Precincts throughout the City.[[21]](#footnote-21) In 2021, HOME+ was created to provide survivors with emergency-response systems, personal alarms that clients can customize to notify trusted family, friends, service providers or police when activated.[[22]](#footnote-22)

In 2023, the HOME+ program was expanded to provide survivors with additional options,[[23]](#footnote-23) including lock, door, and window repair and replacement services, when appropriate, including basic lock installation/replacement within 24 hours.[[24]](#footnote-24) ENDGBV also assumed management of the program,[[25]](#footnote-25) which eliminated requirements for an active order of protection and police response for program participation[[26]](#footnote-26) and “moved the program from City-run to operation by borough-based non-profit service providers.”[[27]](#footnote-27) This change has resulted in a doubling of the number of program participants.[[28]](#footnote-28) Like other ENDGBV programming, HOME+ services are available to survivors regardless of language, income, gender identity, immigration status or demographic factors.[[29]](#footnote-29)

1. **Analysis of Proposed Int. no. 534-A**

Proposed Int. No. 534-A would require ENDGBV to establish a trauma-informed program that connects eligible survivors of domestic or gender-based violence to support services, including, but not limited to, lock change services for the dwellings of eligible survivors. Pursuant to the legislation, the agency would submit a report on the program to the Mayor and Speaker of the Council and post such report on the office’s website no later than one year after EBDGBV establishes the program.

1. **Conclusion**

At today’s hearing, the Committee on Women and Gender Equity aims to learn more about the HOME+ program, the reasoning behind the program expansion, and whether there have been any other updates, as well as testimony from the survivor and advocacy community about challenges and successes with the program and housing stability for survivors. The Committees is also interested in learning about witnesses’ positions on Proposed Int. No. 534-A and Res. 475.

Proposed Int. No. 534-A

By Council Members Hanif, Cabán, Narcisse, Farías, Louis, Riley, Abreu, Williams, Velázquez, Schulman, Krishnan, Ung, Ossé, Brooks-Powers, Gutiérrez, Joseph, Avilés, Hudson, Restler, Won, Marte, Yeger, Sanchez, De La Rosa and Brewer

A Local Law in relation to establishing a program to assist with changing door locks on the dwellings of survivors of domestic and gender-based violence

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. a. Definitions. For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

                     Community-based organization. The term “community-based organization” means a non-profit organization that provides services to survivors of domestic violence or gender-based violence regardless of language spoken, gender identity, sexual orientation, criminal history, or immigration status.

Designated organizations. The term “designated organizations” means 5 or more community-based organizations, which the director designates to administer with the program and supervise survivor advocates.

Director. The term “director” means the director of the office.

Domestic violence. The term “domestic violence” has the same meaning as such term is defined in section 8-102 or as such term is defined in section 459-a of the social services law.

Dwelling. The term “dwelling” means any building or structure or portion thereof that is occupied in whole or in part as a home, residence, or sleeping place of one or more human beings.

Eligible household. The term “eligible household” means a household that meets the following criteria:

1.                     Includes a survivor of domestic or gender-based violence whose status is established by a self-attestation, documentation from an agency or community-based organization, or an order of a court of competent jurisdiction;

2.                     A resident of the city of New York; and

3.                     Any other criteria deemed appropriate by the office to further the purposes of the program, except that, to the extent allowed under applicable law, such criteria shall not relate to an individual’s consumer credit history, criminal history, or immigration status.

Gender-based violence. The term “gender-based violence” means acts or threats of violence directed against a person because of their gender or perceived gender, including, but not limited to, family violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, sex or labor trafficking, elder abuse, and stalking.

Lock change service. The term “lock change service” means the provision of new locks and keys for the doors of an eligible household.

Office. The term “office” means the office to end domestic and gender-based violence.

Owner. The term “owner” means the owner of a dwelling.

Program. The term “program” means the program established by subdivision b of this section.

Program participant. The term “program participant” means an eligible household that a designated organization selects to participate in the program.

Relevant agencies. The term “relevant agencies” means the center for innovation through data intelligence, the department of housing preservation and development, the department of social services, the mayor’s office of data analytics, any successor of an agency specified in this definition, and any other agency that the director deems relevant.

Support service. The term “support service” means a social service that a survivor advocate connects a program participant to during the program, including, but not limited to, counseling services, housing services, safety planning and legal services.

Survivor. The term “survivor” means a person who has experienced or reported domestic or gender-based violence.

Survivor advocate. The term “survivor advocate” means a non-attorney advocate employed and supervised by a designated organization who provides information and support to a program participant in connection with a lock change service and connecting a program participant to any support services.

b. Program established. 1. Subject to appropriation, the office shall establish a trauma-informed program that provides connection to support services to eligible survivors, and where permitted by applicable law, may provide a lock change service for the dwellings of eligible survivors.

2. The director shall administer such program and coordinate the following:

(a) Establishing a list of qualified designated organizations to implement the program;

(b) The application for such program, which shall be made available on the office’s website; and

(c) The connection to supportive services for program participants.

c. Report. No later than 1 year after the office establishes the program required by subdivision b of this section, the director shall issue a report on such program to the mayor and speaker of the council and post such report on the office’s website. The information in such report shall be anonymized and include, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. The number of households participating in such program and the zip code of and primary language spoken in each such household;

2. A description of the impact, if any, that the survivor advocates, lock change services, and support services had on the program participants;

3. A description of any challenges the office had in implementing such program and any efforts the office took to address such challenges; and

4. Any recommendations on how to improve the program.

d. Privacy. No information that is required to be reported pursuant to subdivision c of this section shall be reported if doing so would violate any applicable provision of federal, state, or local law relating to the privacy, confidentiality, use, or disclosure of such information. If a category contains between 1 to 9 households, or allows another category to be narrowed to be between 1 to 9 households, the number shall be replaced with a symbol. A category that contains zero shall be reported as zero.

e. Data sharing. Relevant agencies shall share relevant data regarding the program participants with the office as permitted by applicable laws.

f. Owner liability. Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a cause of action against an owner of a dwelling or lock change services provider.

                     § 2. This local law takes effect immediately.

NLB / BM

LS #6801

2/13/23 3:30 pm

Res. No. 475

Resolution calling on the New York state legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation to create a "purple alert system" for missing victims of domestic violence.

By Council Members Farías, Cabán, Louis, Hanif, Yeger, Riley, Brewer and Richardson Jordan

Whereas, An emergency alert system is essential for conducting speedy and complete investigations into missing victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; and

Whereas, The New York State Missing Persons Clearinghouse within the New York State Division of Criminal Justice administers three alert programs; and

Whereas, Alerts are issued at the request of law enforcement when certain criteria are met; and

Whereas, Alerts are designed to ensure the most rapid and widespread dissemination of information about missing children under the age of 21, missing college students of any age, and missing vulnerable adults who are cognitively impaired; and

Whereas, Within minutes of an alert activation, information about the person is distributed to police agencies, the media, New York State Thruway Authority signs and plazas, New York State Department of Transportation highway signs, airports, bus terminals, train stations, hospitals, social media, and other locations; and

Whereas, Details are displayed on highway signs for up to eight hours and alerts can remain active for up to 72 hours; and

Whereas, New York State’s AMBER Alert system, which distributes pertinent information to locate missing children, has proven extraordinarily effective in reuniting children with their families; and

Whereas, According to New York States' AMBER Alert statistics, in nearly 7 of every 10 AMBER Alert cases, children are successfully reunited with their parents and in just over 17 percent of cases, the recovery is a direct result of the AMBER Alert; and

Whereas, The development of a statewide Purple Alert system, for those who have elected to participate, to disseminate much needed emergency notifications, about missing victims of domestic violence and coordinate the efforts of law enforcement, would support the safe rescue and return of victims in life threatening situations; and

Whereas, In most missing persons cases, the first 48 hours are the most critical to successfully reunite victims with their loved ones; and

Whereas, A Purple Alert system would galvanize communities to assist in the search and safe recovery of vulnerable victims of domestic violence; and

Whereas, The “Purple Alert” bill, A8492/S7562 of the 2021-2022 legislative session, sponsored Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson and Senator Julia Salazar, would establish a “Purple Alert” to notify the public of missing victims of domestic violence by unifying the resources of the Division of Criminal Services, Department of Transportation, and appropriate state agencies to inform the public along with private or governmental entities who participate in the dissemination of urgent public information; and

Whereas, Open lines of communication between law enforcement, victims and their families, and the public are necessary during ongoing investigations into cases of missing persons; and

Whereas, The legislation mandates the use of interagency collaboration and the urgent dissemination of information to investigate and provide for the safe rescue of vulnerable victims of domestic violence; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York state legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, legislation, to create a "purple alert system" for missing victims of domestic violence.

EA

LS 10855, LS 12162, LS 12163

1/11/2023

1. Domestic violence is one part of a larger continuum of issues related to gender-based violence, which includes intimate partner violence, family violence, sexual assault, stalking and human trafficking. *See* ENDGBV, *Introduction to Domestic Violence & GBV* (n.d.), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/services/introduction-to-domestic-violence-and-gender-based-violence.page>; *see also* Mayo Clinic, *Domestic Violence against Women: Recognize Patterns, Seek Help* (Feb. 25, 2020), *available at* <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/domestic-violence/art-20048397>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NYC Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (hereinafter “ENDGBV”), *Introduction to Domestic Violence & GBV* (n.d.), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/services/introduction-to-domestic-violence-and-gender-based-violence.page>; *See also* Local Law number 112 for the year 2022, *available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5555432&GUID=5693B5B1-8E9B-4540-BA49-85D923A1CD51&Options=ID|Text|&Search=153> (adding a definition for gender-based violence, or “acts or threats of violence directed against a person because of their gender or perceived gender, including, but not limited to, family violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, sex or labor trafficking, elder abuse, and stalking”). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. IPV is the specific subset of DV involving individuals who are married, formerly married, have a child in common or have been involved in an intimate relationship. *See* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Intimate Partner Violence (n.d.), *available at* <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/index.html>; World Health Organization, *Understanding and Addressing Domestic Violence: Intimate Partner Violence* (n.d.), a*vailable at* <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_en>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. World Health Organization, *Understanding and Addressing Violence Against Women* (2012), *available at* <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf?sequence=1>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. LGBTQIA+ is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, queer and questioning people. Other variations of the acronym include but are not limited to other sexualities such as asexual, demisexual, genderqueer, gender fluid, gray sexual, intersex, pansexual and unassigned at birth. *See* Michael Gold, *The ABCs of L.G.B.T.Q.I.A.+*, The New York Times (Jun. 21, 2018, updated Jun. 7, 2019), *available at* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/style/lgbtq-gender-language.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. VAWnet: A project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, “The Problem: DV in LGBTQ Communities & Barriers to Safety” (n.d.), *available at* <https://vawnet.org/sc/rates-and-prevalence-dv-lgbtq-communities>; *see also* Ashley Abramson, *How COVID-19 may increase domestic violence and child abuse*, Amer. Psych. Society (Apr. 8, 2020), *available at* <https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/domestic-violence-child-abuse>. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This Committee Report utilizes both the terms “victim” and “survivor” to reflect that both are used in the field and the context with which they are used by the source being cited. These terms, however, can take on similar but different meanings based on the jurisdiction or organization using them. *See e.g.,* RAINN, *Key Terms or Phrases* (n.d.), *available at* <https://www.rainn.org/articles/key-terms-and-phrases>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. ENDGBV, *Introduction to Domestic Violence & GBV* (n.d.), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/services/introduction-to-domestic-violence-and-gender-based-violence.page>; NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, *Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)* (n.d.), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/resources/public-health-action-kits-ipv.page>; *See also* *Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in New York City* (Sept. 8, 2008), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/ipv-08.pdf>*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *See* Domestic Violence and Housing Technical Assistance Consortium, *Working with Underserved or Marginalized Survivors* (n.d.), *available at* <https://safehousingpartnerships.org/key-approaches/survivor-centered-services/working-with-underserved>; ENDGBV, *COVID-29 RESPONSE WORK GROUP SUMMARY REPORT: Supporting Survivors of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence from Crisis through Recovery* 1, 4-5 (July 2020), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/crwg-summary-report-july-2020.pdf>; Futures without Violence, *The Facts on Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence* (n.d.), *available at* <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Immigrant.pdf> (explaining that immigrant women, for example, may face a more difficult time escaping abuse due to their immigration status, or feel trapped in abusive relationships due to language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ENDGBV, *COVID-29 RESPONSE WORK GROUP SUMMARY REPORT: Supporting Survivors of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence from Crisis through Recovery* 1, 4-5 (July 2020), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/crwg-summary-report-july-2020.pdf>; Futures without Violence, *The Facts on Immigrant Women and Domestic Violence* (n.d.), *available at* <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Immigrant.pdf> (explaining that immigrant women, for example, may face a more difficult time escaping abuse due to their immigration status, or feel trapped in abusive relationships due to language barriers, social isolation, and lack of financial resources). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. City of New York, *COVID-19 Impact Survey for Survivors of Domestic Violence* at 4 (Sep. 2021), *available at* <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/ocdv/downloads/pdf/covid-19-impact-survey-for-survivors-of-domestic-violence-report.pdf>; *See also* NYC City Council, Ov*ersight - The Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Domestic Violence in New York City* (May 1, 2020), *available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4425375&GUID=DF53B803-1FCE-459F-AE78-DEBB9E684D90&Options=&Search=> (hereinafter “May 2020 hearing”); NYC City Council, *Oversight - The Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence and COVID-19* (Apr. 30, 2021), *available at* <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4859346&GUID=58E055FC-0001-4872-B8E9-431DD44ACB72&Options=&Search=>; Charlotte Cowles, *The Pandemic is Letting Economic Abuse Flourish* (Nov. 26, 2020), a*vailable at* <https://www.thecut.com/2020/11/the-pandemic-is-letting-economic-abuse-flourish.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Charlene K. Baker, et al., *Domestic violence, Housing Instability, and Homelessness: A Review of Housing Policies and Program Practices for Meeting the Needs of Survivors* (2010), *available at* <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1359178910000480>. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Id.*; *See alsos* Jane Pavao, et al., *Intimate Partner Violence and Housing Instability*, 32(2) Am J Prev Med, 143-6 (2007), *available at* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17234488/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Jane Pavao, et al., *Intimate Partner Violence and Housing Instability*, 32(2) Am J Prev Med, 143-6 (2007), *available at* <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17234488/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. ENDGBV, Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Expands HOME+ Program, Connecting Survivors to Free Home Security Resources to Prevent Homelessness , *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/press-resources/connecting-survivors-to-free-home-security-resources.page>. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. New York City, Press release: *Mayor Giuliani Announces Expansion of Alternative to Shelter Program for Victims of Domestic Violence* (Mar. 15, 1999), available at <https://www.nyc.gov/html/om/html/99a/pr093-99.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. ENDGBV, Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Expands HOME+ Program, Connecting Survivors to Free Home Security Resources to Prevent Homelessness , *available at* <https://www.nyc.gov/site/ocdv/press-resources/connecting-survivors-to-free-home-security-resources.page>. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Id.* [↑](#footnote-ref-29)