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CARLINA RIVERA
COUNCIL MEMBER, 2ND DISTRICT
CITY OF NEW YORK

April 9, 2018

**Testimony regarding Intro 0660A-2018 at the Hearing of the
Committee on Civil and Human Rights**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide brief remarks on Int. 0660A-2018. Thank you to Chair Eugene, committee members, staff and Speaker Johnson for your leadership and response as a Council in the wake of the intense media scrutiny over the violations and sexual misconduct that have always existed but have now come to light. In this city, we pride ourselves as being fair, progressive leaders, and I introduced this legislation to help us codify legal definitions of and mechanisms to deal with harassment.

This bill, part of the Stop Sexual Harassment in NYC Act, would require that the City of New York amend the policy statement of the New York City Human Rights Law to include sexual harassment as a form of discrimination. Taken all together, the full package of legislation strengthens New York City's anti-sexual harassment policies to combat incidents in the workplace. Intro 660 in particular sends a message that addressing sexual harassment remains at the core of the mission of the Human Rights Commission.

In recent months, movements such as #MeToo and Time's Up have brought forward much-needed attention to the issues women continue to face in the workplace throughout various industries. However, this bill will work towards protecting not just women from sexual harassment, but all New Yorkers, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or gender identity. By explicitly defining sexual harassment as a form of discrimination under the Commission's purview, we are defining a person's ability to live free from these incidents as a right in itself.

With support around this larger movement for equality, it is this body that must push our city to take responsibility and codify change to serve those who, up to now, have been too afraid to speak up.

I, therefore, urge my colleagues to support this legislation and the Stop Sexual Harassment package entirely, and look forward to the subsequent support and speedy implementation by the administration.

Thank you.

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THE COUNCIL
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LAND USE
PUBLIC SAFETY
TRANSPORTATION

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LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND MARITIME USES

April 9, 2018

I join Speaker Corey Johnson, Councilwoman Rosenthal, Chair Eugene and the rest of my colleagues in taking a clear and forceful stand against sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment takes root in a workplace when offensive, menacing and degrading behavior is condoned, not condemned; perpetrators are protected, not penalized; and victims are discouraged, not defended.

We are in the midst of a transformation from a culture of indifference and complicity that breeds sexual harassment towards one promoting safe and healthy work environments free from this manner of abuse.

I am sponsoring **Resolution 222**, calling on the United States Congress to pass the Ending Forced Arbitration of Sexual Harassment Act by U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congresswoman Cheri Bustos.

Forced arbitration is a practice that runs counter to efforts to curb sexual harassment and should not be applicable where allegations of such conduct are concerned.

It deprives those who may have been subjected to harassment of access to the courts to seek potential relief or corrective measures, which effectively silences their voices and prevents any thorough and impartial investigation of their claims.

I thank the Chair for calling today's vote.

I wish to encourage my colleagues to lend their support to this resolution as part of our body's greater initiative to purge sexual harassment from every workplace in our City.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "I. Danek Miller".

I. Danek Miller
Council Member
27th District, Queens