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12/8/25

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Council Members Avilés, Cabán, Hanif Rally for Bills Protecting NY's Immigrant Communities; MOIA Refuses to Testify

Link to photos [HERE](#) (credit: NYC Council Media Unit) and videos/photos [HERE](#) (credit: office of Council Member Avilés). Link to this release [here](#).

City Hall, Manhattan – This morning, on the steps of City Hall, a bustling crowd of advocates gathered to rally in support of a slate of four bills aimed at protecting immigrant New Yorkers. This rally was led by Council Member Alexa Avilés, who chairs the Council's Committee on Immigration, alongside Council Members Cabán and Hanif, who authored the bills (INT 214, INT 1268, INT 1272, & INT 1412). This event was held in advance of a committee hearing to review the legislation and hear from dozens of constituents about its potential impacts. The Adams administration refused to testify at the hearing, once again making a show of abandoning immigrant New Yorkers.

The Council members spoke about NYC's history as an immigrant city. Immigrant populations making up nearly 40% of the city's current population have been responsible for innumerable cultural and economic contributions. The existing sanctuary protections, developed over the course of decades, are a direct result of that historical and present importance.

The City Council has long been united in ensuring our city's resources are used for the well-being of New Yorkers, not to further any deportation agenda for the federal administration. Earlier this year, the City Council provided historic levels of funding for immigration legal

services, but legislative action is needed to protect immigrant New Yorkers in the face of increasingly violent abductions by ICE. Council Members Avilés, Cabán, and Hanif are fighting together to defend our existing laws through 4 pieces of key legislation:

INT 214 (Hanif) (NYC Trust Act) - NYC has sanctuary laws that limit city agencies from sharing information with ICE, but these laws are frequently violated. The NYC Trust Act would hold the NYPD, DOC, and DOP accountable to the laws already on our books by creating a private right of action—empowering those whose rights have been violated to bring suit and seek justice.

INT 1268 (Avilés) - Requires our city government to create and hang signage on city property telling people about their rights when engaging with federal authorities. That way, New Yorkers know what's covered by our legal sanctuary protections.

INT 1272 (Hanif) - The PEMDAS Act establishes an order of operations for how E-Verify can be used during the hiring process—ensuring that E-Verify can't be misused by bad faith employers. That way, E-Verify can only be used to properly confirm the work authorization status of new hires, not to wrongfully intimidate or sideline workers.

INT 1412 (Cabán) (Safer Sanctuary Act) - Prohibits any federal agency acting out federal immigration enforcement from setting up an office on NYC Department of Corrections property. Ensures that all federal agencies acting out immigration enforcement are included under our sanctuary city policies.

Advocates representing millions of New Yorkers testified in support of these measures to defend our city from illegal attacks. MOIA did not send a representative to hear their concerns. At the rally, representatives from over 20 organizations spoke about reaffirming protections during this trying time for immigrant New Yorkers and ensuring our laws will not be undermined. Now, the Council Members and advocates are urging their colleagues to pass all four bills before the end of their term in December.

“It has been nearly a year since Donald Trump took office and began waging war on our immigrant communities. We have seen New Yorkers violently kidnapped in the hundreds at regular court proceedings, we have seen people ripped from their homes, outside schools, on the streets, at work, and beyond, Families have been torn apart. Students and children have disappeared from their classrooms. Today, we are reaffirming the laws that have worked to protect our city. We will hear 4 bills that will strengthen our city’s protection of immigrant populations. My bill, intro 1268 will require our city government to create and hang signage on city property telling people about their rights when engaging with federal authorities. That way, New Yorkers know what’s covered by our legal sanctuary protections. I urge the Council to pass all 4 of these bills before the end of the year. We don’t have time to waste,” **said Council Member Alexa Aviles, Chair of the Immigration Committee.**

“I’m proud to sponsor the Safer Sanctuary Act to protect our neighbors from kidnappings and terror,” said **Council Member Tiffany Cabán.** “Federal agencies that don’t normally do immigration enforcement are being used to terrorize our communities: beating up seniors, separating families, shackling pregnant mothers, and separating six-year olds from their fathers. Our bill clarifies New York's sanctuary laws, stops ICE from setting up in our jails, and ensures every New Yorker is protected, no matter which agency is weaponized against us.”

“Trump’s fascist agenda is terrorizing our immigrant communities and neighbors, and ripping families apart,” **said Council Member Shahana Hanif.** “Our sanctuary laws exist to keep our communities safe—but we’ve repeatedly seen our laws ignored by city agencies. City agencies unlawfully share information with federal immigration authorities, with no training, accountability, or enforcement mechanism when our laws are violated. My bill, the NYC Trust Act, would hold the NYPD, DOC, and DOP accountable to the laws already on our books by creating a private right of action—empowering those whose rights have been violated to bring suit and seek justice.”

"New York City has always been a place of refuge, and we will not allow fear, intimidation, or federal overreach to unravel decades of hard-fought sanctuary protections," **said New York City Council Majority Whip Selvena N. Brooks-Powers.** "These bills ensure that our laws are not just symbolic, but enforceable — so immigrant New Yorkers can go to school, seek medical care, and report crimes without fear. We stand united in defending the dignity, safety, and rights of our immigrant communities."

As the daughter of Haitian immigrants, I know firsthand that immigrant New Yorkers are the backbone of our city. That includes our immigrant students, who deserve to feel safe, supported, and welcomed in their classrooms because that is where they belong. Protecting our immigrant communities is essential to who we are as a city and to the future we are building. I remain committed to using my voice, my vote, and my platform to ensure every immigrant child and every immigrant family can learn, live, and thrive with dignity, safety, and opportunity,” **said Council Member Rita Joseph.**

“Back in June, a judge recognized the City Council was right after we sued the Mayor for selling out New York and allowing ICE to open an office on Rikers after his collaboration with Trump. Now, Int. 1412 provides an opportunity to back that ruling up with legislative muscle and prevent anybody from circumventing our sanctuary city laws in trying to put federal immigration authorities on DOC property. We are not inviting Donald Trump’s ICE onto our land,” **said Council Member Abreu.**

"As the Trump administration wages violent attacks on New York City's immigrant communities, the City Council must reaffirm and expand its longstanding commitment to sanctuary policies," **said Zach Ahmad, Senior Policy Counsel at the NYCLU.** "Our sanctuary laws must be strong, unambiguous, and have real, legal ability means to hold the city accountable. The Council must pass the NYC Trust Act to ensure that New Yorkers harmed by unlawful collusion with ICE can have their day in court, and must also pass the Safer Sanctuary Act to ensure that ICE is never again allowed to set up shop in our city jails."

“New Yorkers have spoken out in favor of sanctuary for decades and in turn, years ago our Council passed critical legislation to ensure New Yorkers are protected from racial profiling and abuses of power by disallowing collusion between our city agencies and ICE,” **said Yasmine Farhang, Executive Director at the Immigrant Defense Project.** “Yet to keep these historic promises, we need action from our Council now. We need the NYC Trust Act to ensure city agencies that have routinely violated our laws will be held accountable, and we need the Safer Sanctuary Act to ensure that New Yorkers already facing grave conditions at Rikers are not additionally at risk of unfettered access by ICE. We are long overdue for action - pass these bills now!"

"New York City is, and has always been, an immigrant city. Common Cause New York supports this legislative package to ensure that every immigrant can safely interact with government institutions without fear, confusion, or coercion," **said Samantha Sanchez, Program Manager for Common Cause New York.**

"New Yorkers know that we are all safer when our friends and neighbors are able to live here safely too," **said Adam Ring, a Coordinator at Indivisible Brooklyn.** "So as the people of New York come under attack, we call upon the City Council to reinforce the sanctuary protections that make all of us safer. Let's help New Yorkers understand our rights, strengthen protections against abuses of power, and improve accountability by passing these four bills before the end of this Council's term."

"For the past 50 years, the Southeast Asian community – including refugees from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam – have rebuilt their lives in New York City after surviving war, genocide, and the U.S.-led displacement that uprooted our people. Many of us were resettled in the Bronx, where we have worked tirelessly to heal, grow, and contribute to the city we now call home. But the trauma of forced migration did not end when we arrived. Our community has experienced a deportation crisis for over 20 years and it has only escalated under the Trump administration," **said Socheatta Meng, Executive Director at Mekong NYC.** As the federal government escalates violent attacks on immigrant New Yorkers, the City must strengthen its policies and practices to reaffirm that New York City is a sanctuary city. The NYC Trust Act, the Safer Sanctuary Act, and resources such as the RISE Network are a promise that New York will not abandon those who have already endured displacement and state violence. Mekong NYC stands with our allies and partners in calling for these critical protections. Our communities have survived so much and we refuse to allow another wave of displacement in the place we have fought to call home."

"Sanctuary protections only work when they are enforceable. We've already seen ICE rely on false gang allegations to justify arrests and deportations", **said Talia Kamran, Attorney with Brooklyn Defenders' Seizure and Surveillance Defense Project.** "The NYC Trust Act creates real accountability to NYC's sanctuary laws, but a true sanctuary city cannot allow discriminatory databases to become a backdoor to ICE enforcement. We must pass the NYC Trust Act to enforce sanctuary protections and pass Intro. 798 to abolish the NYPD gang database to protect immigrant New Yorkers."

“New York City’s longstanding sanctuary laws are the first line of defense to protect our city from federal attacks. Yet, these policies need to be bolstered to continue to safeguard New Yorkers from evolving tactics and assaults. The Safer Sanctuary Act and the NYC Trust Act are necessary steps the Council and Mayor must enact to strengthen our existing laws, close the loopholes for unlawful collusion between federal authorities and local law enforcement, and protect our immigrant communities from the federal government’s overreach. We call on the NYC Council to pass these bills to ensure the safety and well-being of every New Yorker,” **said Murad Awawdeh, President & CEO, New York Immigration Coalition.**

“NYLPI’s Health Justice program knows that New York City’s sanctuary laws are essential to ensuring the health and well-being of all New Yorkers. When immigrant New Yorkers lack confidence that City agencies and their representatives won’t communicate and collude with ICE, they stop seeking out essential services including healthcare. Lack of routine health leads to more emergencies, missed appointments for U.S. citizen children, and public health crises. And when immigrant New Yorkers face immigration enforcement, they are subjected to egregious lack of medical care in ICE detention, as our organization has documented for many years. We therefore urge the passage of the New York City Trust Act (Intro. 214-2024) and Intro. 1412-2025 as vital measures of public health,” **said Sophie Dalsimer, Co-Director of Health Justice, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI).**

“The New York City Trust Act is critical to ensuring our agencies follow our long-held sanctuary laws,” **said Rosa Cohen-Cruz, Director of Immigration Policy for The Bronx Defenders.** “Just in the last few months, the Department of Correction and the NYPD have been found to have violated the laws, and there is nothing new about these violations. It’s clear we need strong accountability measures in place, or the sanctuary laws will continue to be violated with impunity. The Safer Sanctuary Act and The New York City Trust Act take us a step further to realizing due process rights, public safety, and better confidence in our public institutions, for all New Yorkers.

“The Trump administration capitalize and exploit a senseless tragedy to target, demonize and vilify our Afghan community. At Federal Plaza, we’ve seen ICE target and detain our vulnerable Afghans. Afghans have already been betrayed numerous times by America. That

is why today, we urge the city of New York and the City Council to stand alongside us, offer our Afghans protection and to resist any and all cooperation with ICE. That work can start today with the passage of INT 1268 and INT 1272, two bills that would educate our community about their rights and ensure that employers treat our vulnerable community members with dignity and respect. Our community members are afraid for their safety and that of their family members in the wake of increased targeted enforcement of Afghans. The least New York City can do is to stand alongside and empower the most vulnerable folks who seek safety and security in our precious city. That is the least we are owed,” **said Arash Azizzada, Founding Co-Director, Afghans For a Better Tomorrow.**

“By authoring devastating cuts to housing, healthcare and food security and triggering a deportation regime terrorizing New Yorkers, no recent U.S. president has done more to upend public safety than President Trump. Every layer of local government must in response do more than simply oppose these deadly injustices – they must affirmatively provide durable counters and solutions and today we join our allies in calling for the New York City Council to pass Intros 1412 and 214 to permanently block ICE from establishing offices at NYC jails and to provide the public with opportunities for redress when our sanctuary city policies are violated,” **said Nick Encalada-Malinowski, Civil Rights Campaign Director, VOCAL-NY.**

Julissa Bisono, Director of Base building at Make the Road New York, said, “For decades, New York City has had long-standing and lawful sanctuary laws that provide protections for all its residents. As the federal government wages violent and dangerous attacks on New Yorkers, it is necessary to ensure we safeguard the policies that protect our communities and most vulnerable people. That’s why, I applaud the City Council for working to advance critical bills that defend our sanctuary city and help ensure safety and justice for immigrant New Yorkers.”

“As an organization serving LGBTQ+ and HIV-affected immigrant survivors, AVP knows sanctuary protections are essential to our community’s safety and dignity. We applaud the City Council and Council Members Avilés, Cabán, and Hanif for advancing legislation that keeps immigrant New Yorkers safe, informed, and free from unconstitutional collaboration with federal immigration enforcement. These bills protect our clients, uphold our city’s values, and ensure LGBTQ+ immigrants can seek support and navigate the city with greater safety and trust.” **Paulina Cohen, Senior Staff Attorney, New York City Anti-Violence Project”**

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