



City Council: Protect free speech and student safety by sustaining the veto on Intro. 175-B.

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, write to urge the City Council to sustain Mayor Mamdani’s veto of Intro. 175-B, which requires the NYPD Commissioner to develop a plan for the establishment of security perimeters around every entrance and exit of “educational facilities”¹ across New York City.

This bill is simply not a transparency measure as supporters state. Intro. 175-B does not ask the NYPD to outline *current* policies and practices related to how and when police are deployed to educational facilities, but rather calls on the NYPD to advance one particular response – security perimeters – to respond to protests near covered facilities. There are many other response tactics at the NYPD’s disposal, and security perimeters will not always be an appropriate or constitutional response.² Here, we address concerns about the harms of increased policing that we believe will result from this bill, not because we are naive of the Council’s claims that this bill is only about transparency, but because we vehemently disagree with that assessment.

While we agree combating hate and protecting vulnerable communities is paramount, this proposal runs counter to that goal. The bill risks expanding surveillance, deepening the City’s overreliance on policing, and undermining students, parents, and teachers’ constitutional rights, all of which would make school communities less safe and have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities. Research consistently shows that the presence of law enforcement in schools does not enhance safety. Instead, it fosters environments of fear and criminalization, disproportionately impacting Black, Brown, immigrant, transgender and queer students, and students with disabilities.³

Intro. 175-B grants sweeping discretion to the Police Commissioner to impose perimeters of any size without clear transparency or oversight, expanding surveillance in a city already marked by racial disparities in policing. This heightened enforcement risks unnecessary police encounters that will disproportionately target people of color: The measures increase the likelihood that young people will be restrained, arrested, or placed in the NYPD’s gang database, and that those

¹ Intro. 175-B defines educational facilities incredibly broadly, as “any building, structure, or place where educational programming takes place,” noting that the “term includes but is not limited to public and nonpublic childcare programs, early childhood programs, elementary schools, middle schools, junior high schools, high schools, colleges, and universities.” This definition takes in daycares, libraries, job training programs, local YMCA’s offering educational programming, teaching hospitals, and more. Additionally, by applying to private facilities, Intro. 175-B could take in entire neighborhoods, like the West Village.

² Further legal concerns can be found in a letter opposing Intros. 001-B and 175-B signed by over 55 organizations, <https://www.nyclu.org/resources/policy/testimonies/55-group-letter-opposing-the-city-councils-proposals-to-establish-speech-free-zones>.

³ See Tyler Whittenberg & Maria Fernandez, Advancement Project, *Ending Student Criminalization and the School-to-Prison Pipeline*, New York University. 2024, <https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ejroc/ending-student-criminalization-and-school-prison-pipeline>.

exercising their First Amendment rights could face deportation at a time of heightened political repression. Rather than improving safety, such measures further criminalization. Instead, we call for investment in proven strategies that support well-being, including restorative justice, mental health services, conflict resolution programs, immigrant protections, culturally responsive education, equitable resources, and community-accountable safety approaches. The City must work with communities facing identity-based hate violence together to address this serious issue. Toward this end, we encourage consideration of policy recommendations aimed at advancing such reforms, like those outlined in the [NYC Against Hate Violence](#) report released by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and other anti-hate violence groups.

Educational institutions have long been spaces for civic engagement and peaceful protests that have transformed our society. Students have successfully advocated for human, civil, and educational rights, engaging in lunch-counter sit-ins during the civil rights movement, and leading protests for the end of the Vietnam war, for freedom of speech rights, ethnic studies classes, and other fundamental rights. Most recently, students have stood in the gap created by the inaction of adults in power by walking out of class to: fight for budget justice and against funding cuts;; demand COVID protections, police free schools, ICE out of schools; protest gun violence; and call for a ceasefire in Palestine.

In a city shaped by student activism – from New York City high schools to City University of New York, the New School, and Columbia University –increasing police presence at and around educational facilities could punish and hinder constitutionally protected expression and repress certain viewpoints. Given the repression NYC students have already experienced in the last few years, including suspensions, expulsions, detentions, harassment, and doxxing for exercising their constitutionally protected First and Fourth Amendment rights, these proposals raise serious concerns about further suppressing student expression. Further, Intro. 175-B fails to recognize that the U.S. Constitution creates differing legal standards restricting when restrictions may be placed on free speech, providing even greater protections for free speech rights in institutions of higher learning.

We are united in the belief that combating hate requires policies that expand rights, protect free expression, encourage dialogue, and invest in communities, not measures that curtail constitutional freedoms or expand policing and surveillance.

We urge the City Council to sustain the veto of **Intro. 175-B**, to stand in opposition to all legislation restricting the right to assemble, and to pursue solutions that protect students while safeguarding civil liberties and advancing racial equity.

Signed by:

139 For Palestine
ACT UP NY
Advocates for Trans Equality (A4TE)
Arab-American Family Support Center
Art Against Displacement (AAD)
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
The Ali Forney Center
Alliance for Quality Education
All* Above All
America On Trial Inc. (AOT)
APNA Community Services
Aunties (& Friends) for Liberation
BAAG
BKForge: Brooklyn for Reproductive and Gender Equity
Black Lives Matter at NYC Schools
Callen-Lorde Community Health Center
Caribbean Equality Project
Center for Anti-Violence Education
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Gender Justice
Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats
The Circle Keepers
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York
Class Size Matters
CLEAR
Climate Families NYC
Coalition For Asian American Children and Families
Coalition for Educational Justice
Common Justice
Community Education Council 4
D15 Coalition for Equitable Schools
Dignity in Schools Campaign - NY
DREAM!
DRUM - Desis Rising Up & Moving
ECE on the Move
The Education Council Consortium
Equality New York
Families for Change NYC

Families Standing with Trans Kids in District 30
Flanbwayan Haitian Literacy Project
Free to BE Youth Project
Freedom Agenda
Gays Against Guns
Hands Off NYC Families
Health Care Justice 4 New York
Homecrest Community Services
Jackson Heights Indivisible
The Japanese American Association of New York, Inc.
Jewish Voice for Peace NYC
Jews For Racial & Economic Justice (JFREJ)
Justice Committee
Korean American Civic Empowerment: KACE
The Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc
Lambda Independent Democrats of Brooklyn
The Legal Aid Society
Leviathan Lab Inc
Make the Road New York
Malikah
MASA
Middle Church
MORE-UFT
Muslim American Society Brooklyn
Muslim Community Network
National Queer Theater
New Alternatives for Homeless LGBT Youth
New Kings Democrats
NEW Pride Agenda
New Settlement Parent Action Committee
New York City Democratic Socialists of America
New York Civil Liberties Union
New York Communities for Change
The New York State LGBT Health and Human Services Network
New York State Youth Leadership Council
New York Transgender Advocacy Group (NYTAG)
New Yorkers for Racially Just Public Schools (RJPS)
NYC for Abortion Rights
NYC Pride
NYC Queer Activists
NYC Trans & Queer Coalition
NYU National Lawyers Guild Board

OCA-NY

Parents to Improve School Transportation

Parents Supporting Parents NY

The People's Plan NYC

Planned Parenthood of Greater New York

Policing and Social Justice Project – Brooklyn College

RaisingHealth Partners

Reclaim Pride Coalition

Right To Be

Rise and Resist

Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus

Sapna NYC

Shoresh

South Asian Youth Action (SAYA)

Stonewall Democrats

Sunrise Movement at Columbia University

Surveillance Technology Oversight Project

Trans formative Schools

VOCAL-NY

We Are Revolutionary

Working Families Party

WCLA - Choice Matters

YA-YA Network