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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***Community Organizations, Civil Rights Groups, and Advocates  
Call on City Council to Abolish the NYPD Gang Database Ahead  
of Hearing on Stop-and-Frisk Policing***

**(New York, NY)** - Today, multiple organizations and advocates convened a press conference and rally on the steps of City Hall ahead of a New York City Council oversight hearing on the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) use of stop-and-frisk policing. Advocates called on the City Council to pass Intro 798, legislation that would abolish the NYPD's Criminal Group Database, otherwise known as the "gang" database. The database has long been used by NYPD officers to label thousands of Black and Latino New Yorkers as "members" or "associates" of gangs based on imprecise criteria, resulting in community members enduring numerous harms from the criminal legal system process. The policing and surveillance arising out of the gang database are reminiscent of the NYPD's racially discriminatory stop-and-frisk practices.

"Despite our efforts, youth in our communities are still unfairly targeted by stop-and-frisk and investigatory stops. This ongoing surveillance fosters distrust and criminalization. Passing intro 798 is vital to dismantling these harmful practices and ensuring our young people can walk their streets without fear," said **Victor Dempsey representative from G.A.N.G.S. Coalition**. "We urge the City Council to support intro 798 and protect the rights and dignity of all New Yorkers."

"Stop and frisk practices, as well as gang policing, continue to target Black and Latinx members of our community disparately," said **Lori Zeno, Executive Director of Queens Defenders**. "New Yorkers deserve transparency for how police powers are implemented, and we demand accountability when those procedures are used unfairly. Queens Defenders joins the G.A.N.G.S. Coalition in urging the New York City Council to support Int. 798, which will abolish the discriminatory Gang Database and help protect the individual and privacy rights of all New Yorkers."

"Current policy regarding gang policing in New York has served to exacerbate the challenges faced by our communities rather than addressing the root causes of community violence. These strategies disproportionately target young people of color, relying on surveillance and sweeping indictments that tear families apart and instill fear, instead of offering resources or opportunities," said **Romie Sachs-Devere, Social Worker for We Build the Block**. "Our focus should be on investing in restorative practices, education, and community-based programs that empower and uplift, not criminalize, the next generation."

"The unfortunate truth is that marginalized young people are unfairly targeted for harassment and arrest by virtue of where they live. This practice perpetuates the cycle of poverty and victimization. To be presumed guilty based solely on your zip code, physical appearance, familial bonds and/or racial or ethnic identity should not be a tolerated practice. Intro 798 removes a harmful and discriminatory database that unfairly targets young people and leads to disproportionate criminalization. Passing the bill must be a priority to reduce wrongful arrests and mistreatment of communities of color," **said Reverend Wendy Calderón- Payne, Executive Director, Urban Youth Alliance (BronxConnect)**

"Despite a federal court ruling NYPD's stop-and-frisk practice unconstitutional in 2013, the legacy of racist and abusive policing tactics remains," **said Jacqueline Gosdigian, Supervising Policy Counsel with Brooklyn Defenders' Criminal Defense Practice.** "The NYPD's 'criminal group database,' otherwise known as the 'gang' database, leverages surveillance technology to racially profile New Yorkers and justify more aggressive and unlawful stops, frisks, and searches. The City Council should reject stop-and-frisk policing by passing Intro 798 to abolish the NYPD's Gang Database once and for all."

"NYPD's so-called 'gang database' is nothing more than digital stop-and-frisk policing, criminalizing Black and Latinx children for the colors they wear and the places they live," **said Surveillance Technology Oversight Project Legal Fellow Jason Taper.** "The database makes New Yorkers less safe by targeting thousands of young people of color who have done nothing wrong. There is no fixing NYPD's gang database and it is long past time the City Council abolish it completely."

"The Gang Database disproportionately harms Black and Brown communities. It relies on vague criteria to racially profile, target and harm our community," **said Robert Willis, Justice Advocate Coordinator at LatinoJustice PRLDEF.** "It's time for the City Council to pass Intro 798 to abolish the database and end this cycle of racial profiling."

"Int. 798 is not just a piece of legislation; it is a step toward repairing the harm caused by the carceral system and moving closer to a city that values equity, dignity, and justice for all its residents," **said Marquis Jenkins, Director of Organizing at Common Justice.** "To those council members who remain undecided, we urge you to join this effort and do the right thing: endorse Int. 798 and ensure we reach a veto-proof majority to guarantee its passage."

"As Chair of the Committee on Children and Youth, I am committed to creating transparency within the NYPD and addressing practices that unfairly target our city's young people—especially Black and Brown youth," **said City Council Member Althea Stevens.** "The Gang Database is a discriminatory tool that perpetuates harmful policing tactics and devastates our communities. By passing Intro 798, we can take a significant step toward fostering trust and safety in our neighborhoods. It is our duty to protect our children and ensure that they have the freedom to thrive without fear of unjust surveillance or criminalization."

"Our communities deserve safety and dignity, but that will never be achieved through the discriminatory practices of stop-and-frisk or the NYPD's harmful gang database. These tools have disproportionately targeted young Black and Brown New Yorkers, perpetuating cycles of surveillance and mistrust," **said City Council Member Yusef Salaam.** "Earlier this year, the How Many Stops Act took effect to bring transparency to

police interactions, and now, we take another critical step forward. Passing Intro 798 will dismantle a database that has caused immeasurable harm and replace fear with accountability and justice."

"The NYPD's gang database is a dangerous and racist tool that disproportionately targets young people of color with little to no evidence of criminal involvement," said **Cassandra Kelly, Staff Attorney with the Criminal Law Reform Team at The Legal Aid Society**. "For too long, this database has fueled over-policing in communities that are already overburdened. The City Council must finally act to abolish this harmful policing practice by passing Intro.798. It's time to shift from punishment to prevention and invest in real safety through community-led solutions, not harmful databases that perpetuate the carceral system."

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