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

Civil Rights Advocates, LGBTQ+ Organizations, and Concerned New Yorkers Urge New York City Council to Pass Legislation to Protect TGNCNBI People in NYC Jails from Violence

Intro 625-2024 Would Ensure TGNCNBI People in NYC Jails Have Meaningful Choice to be Housed in Alignment with Their Gender Identity

(NEW YORK, NY) - A coalition of public defenders, civil rights advocates, LGBTQ+ organizations, and concerned New Yorkers sent a letter urging the New York City Council to pass Intro 0625-2024, legislation that will ensure that transgender, gender nonconforming, nonbinary, and intersex (TGNCNBI) individuals in city jails have a meaningful choice to be housed in alignment with their gender identity – essential protection against the rampant violence TGNCNBI people face in custody.

The letter states:

“We are deeply alarmed by President Trump's Executive Order explicitly targeting transgender women in prisons. By attempting to roll back important protections for transgender people under the Prison Rape Elimination Act, Trump's directive strips TGNCNBI people of their dignity and places them at heightened risk of violence and sexual assault in correctional facilities.

“This is not merely a policy shift – it is a calculated effort to erase trans lives and fuel a climate of hatred that places TGNCNBI individuals in direct danger. Here, in New York City, the Department of Correction (DOC) routinely forcibly transfers transgender women to men's jails without notice, often without justification and with no meaningful pathway for appeal. DOC also routinely denies requests for gender-aligned housing. In the first fiscal quarter of 2025, DOC denied half of the requests for gender aligned housing and, of those transferred, five were involuntarily forced to transfer from the women's jail back to a men's jail.

“New York City must act now. Trump's order emboldens the abuses TGNCNBI people face by sending the chilling message that transgender people's lives are expendable. At this pivotal moment, the city has an opportunity to take a stand and send a different message - one that affirms New York City's commitment to human rights and the safety of all its residents. Your office has a longstanding record of championing marginalized communities at the intersections of identity and incarceration, which is precisely what this urgent legislation does. This legislation is not just necessary; it is urgent. In August 2023, the City Council Task Force on Issues Facing TGNCNBI People in the NYC Jails named this bill as their number one policy

recommendation to make immediate changes in jail conditions. As recently as September 2024, the Task Force has reiterated its stance that this bill would make the most effective life-saving changes for TGNCNBI people in city custody. It is essential for our city to address the persistent violence and discrimination TGNCNBI individuals face in custody and to uphold the city's values of equality, dignity, and respect for all.

“Passing Int. 625 would align New York City with other progressive jurisdictions with similar protections, including many New York State counties, ensuring that our city remains a leader in upholding LGBTQ+ rights. Moreover, it would send a clear message that, even in the face of regressive federal policies, New York City remains steadfast in its commitment to champion transgender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and inclusivity for all. We call on you to support Int. 625 and bring it to a vote.”

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