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***NYC Public Defenders, Public Advocate Williams, and Immigrant & Civil Rights Groups Laud Court Ruling That Blocks ICE's Return to Rikers***

***Ruling Follows Amicus Brief Filed and Argued in Support of City Council's Challenge to Mayor Adams' Executive Order 50***

**(NEW YORK, NY) - A coalition of New York City public defender offices, immigrant and civil rights organizations, advocacy groups, and New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams** hailed a court ruling that found the Adams Administration's Executive Order 50 — which sought to reopen the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office at Rikers Island — illegal.

Earlier this year, the groups submitted a [joint amicus brief](#) in support of the New York City Council's lawsuit, urged the court to block the order, and warned that it would cause immediate and irreparable harm to incarcerated immigrants, their families, and entire communities across New York City.

The groups argued that Executive Order 50 dangerously undermined New York City's sanctuary laws and facilitated collusion between city agencies and federal immigration enforcement. The organizations drew on extensive evidence — from past abuses by ICE on Rikers to the federal government's then-current pattern of unconstitutional mass deportations — to demonstrate the grave risk of renewed harm.

They detailed how ICE's prior activities at Rikers violated due process and targeted New Yorkers based on racial and national origin profiling. The coalition warned that the federal administration had gone even further, deporting individuals without hearings under the Alien Enemies Act — including to countries like El Salvador, where deportees faced abuse and indefinite detention in notorious prisons.

ICE's return, they argued, would also have exploited the city's data systems, family visitation records, and phone surveillance to fuel deportations, particularly of Latinx youth and survivors of trauma who might have qualified for immigration relief.

The amici further cited the documented history of collusion between the New York City Department of Correction and ICE, including transfers into ICE custody without judicial warrants and the sharing of confidential information — despite laws that expressly forbade it.

“This ruling is a critical victory for all New Yorkers and a rejection of the federal government’s mass deportation agenda, and of the Adams administration’s unlawful and dangerous Executive Order 50,” said **Meghna Philip, Director of the Special Litigation Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “The Executive Order was a clear violation of New York City’s sanctuary protections and would have opened the door to racial profiling, wrongful deportations, and constitutional violations by ICE on Rikers Island. The court’s decision ensures that ICE stays out of New York City jails and that our sanctuary city laws are upheld.”

"This decision affirms that the Adams Administration's invitation to ICE into Rikers not only violates sanctuary city laws but also represents the alarming nationwide trend toward the erosion of due process," said **Jodi Ziesemer, Co-Director of New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)'s Immigrant Protection Unit**. "The erosion of immigrants’ rights is the erosion of everyone’s rights, and when the government violates their rights based on assumptions about who does and does not belong here, we are all in danger."

“The Mayor’s attempt to bring ICE back to Rikers Island has failed. By declaring the Mayoral Administration's executive order to re-open an ICE office at Rikers ‘null and void,’ the NYS Supreme Court has offered a vital degree of protection for our immigrant neighbors. Thousands of New Yorkers will no longer face the prospect of detention and deportation because they were sent to Rikers after being simply accused – not convicted – of a crime. New York City must never collude with the Federal Administration’s mass deportation agenda, and our Mayor should be ensuring that every New Yorker has their due process rights protected. We commend the NYS Supreme Court, Speaker Adrienne Adams, City Council and the people of New York for continuing to stand up for our immigrant neighbors,” said **Murad Awawdeh, President and CEO, New York Immigration Coalition**.

“We applaud the court for striking down the Mayor’s attack on sanctuary which sought to return ICE to Rikers Island and give them free reign to target New Yorkers, and we are grateful for the leadership of our City Council and the Speaker who stood up for our values as a city,” said **Yasmine Farhang, Executive Director of the Immigrant Defense Project**. “To roll back the clock a decade would have fueled severe abuse of power against New Yorkers – especially Black, Latinx and other immigrants of color - at the same time that the violence, abuse and mismanagement at Rikers worsens daily. Together we are clear and unequivocal: our city’s historic sanctuary laws ensure that the rights of New Yorkers are protected and that our city resources help all New Yorkers thrive.”

“Under the Mayor’s Executive Order, people accused of a crime faced the threat of deportation without due process or constitutional protections. This unlawful attempt to roll back New York’s sanctuary laws stripped immigrant New Yorkers of their rights and spread fear across communities already targeted by over-policing and discrimination. The court’s ruling is a clear rebuke of this dangerous agenda, and we applaud the City Council for defending immigrant communities and the values of this city,” said **Piyali Basak, Managing Director of the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem**.

“This ruling makes clear that there is no place for ICE on Rikers Island,” said **Rosa Cohen-Cruz, Director of Immigration Policy at The Bronx Defenders**. “Allowing ICE back would have cemented the arrest to deportation pipeline, enabling ICE officers to once again intimidate, abuse, and violate the due process rights of New Yorkers with impunity. The court has shut the door to a return to this unconstitutional behavior, and we commend the New York City Council and Public Advocate for their courage and leadership in standing against this attempt to turn back the clock on a decade's long law that has kept New Yorkers safe and advanced justice for all.”

“The court’s decision is clear: New York City will not collude with ICE at the expense of our communities,” said **Tania Mattos, Executive Director of UnLocal**.

“The court’s ruling that the Adams administration’s attempt to open an ICE office at Rikers is illegal emphatically rejects improper attempts to weaken common sense laws to protect public safety, which are often

referred to as sanctuary laws,” said **Rex Chen, Supervising Counsel for Immigrant Rights at LatinoJustice PRLDEF**. “We applaud this court for stepping in to make sure deportation efforts follow the law and respect people's civil rights.”

“This ruling is a powerful affirmation that New York City will not turn its back on immigrant communities. Allowing ICE to return to Rikers would have placed children and young people directly in the pipeline from arrest to deportation. The court’s decision makes clear that our city’s laws and values stand for due process, dignity, and safety for all New Yorkers. We applaud the leadership that brought this case forward and recommit to ensuring immigrant children and families are met with protection, not punishment,” said **Sierra Kraft, Executive Director, Immigrant Children Advocates’ Relief Effort (ICARE)**.

“This decision rightly stops Mayor Adams’s dangerous, anti-immigrant policy in its tracks,” said **Donna Lieberman, Executive Director of the New York Civil Liberties Union**. “Giving ICE the keys to Rikers Island violates New York City’s sanctuary laws, puts immigrant New Yorkers in jeopardy, and serves no legitimate purpose. Instead of cozying up to Trump and making needless concessions to ICE, we encourage Mayor Adams to respect the will of the people and uphold New York City’s well-established sanctuary laws.”

“The law is clear: The Department of Corrections cannot expend limited city resources on federal law enforcement. New York City has always been, and will always be a city of immigrants. This decision affirms our city’s commitment to the rights of all New Yorkers and further affirms that every New Yorker has the right to due process and to see their criminal case through without unlawful interference and disruption from ICE. We thank the NYC Council for fighting to uphold our city’s laws and for defending the rights of non-citizens,” said **Brittany S. Brown, Supervising Attorney, Collateral Consequences Unit at New York County Defender Services**.

“The court’s ruling invalidating Executive Order 50 underscores the importance of preserving public trust in local government and ensuring necessary legal guardrails continue to protect the rights of New Yorkers,” said **Lucas Marquez, Director of Civil Rights and Law Reform at Brooklyn Defenders**. “As public defenders and amici curiae in this lawsuit, we explained how, prior to the passage of the 2014 detainer law, ICE routinely violated the rights of people in DOC custody and their families. We thank the NYC Council for taking urgent action against this unlawful measure that would have allowed ICE to return to Rikers.”

“This decision is a victory that we should never have had to win in the first place. Allowing ICE presence at Rikers would have opened the doors to further terrorizing immigrant New Yorkers and encouraged the current administration's mass deportation plans,” said **Natalia Aristizabal, Deputy Director at Make the Road New York**. “We applaud the NYS Supreme Court’s decision to stand with immigrant New Yorkers in this critical moment. We also commend the Speaker, the City Council, and Public Advocate for their strong leadership against the Mayor’s attempt to circumvent the law, potentially putting thousands of people at risk and instilling more fear in our communities. We will continue to fight to prevent our communities from being criminalized and placed in deportation proceedings in New York, and shut down Rikers once and for all.”

The amicus brief was filed by The Legal Aid Society, in partnership with New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Immigrant Children Advocates’ Relief Effort, Immigrant Defense Project, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Make the Road New York, New York Civil Liberties Union, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Service, New York Legal Assistance Group, New York Immigration Coalition, Queens Defenders, and UnLocal.

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*The Legal Aid Society is a nonprofit organization that exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For nearly 150 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every*

*borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.*  
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