Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2025 Executive Budget
Senate Public Protections Hearing
February 13th, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Natalia Aristizabal and I am the Deputy Director at Make the Road New York. We are New York State's largest grassroots immigrants rights organization, and I am here today representing our 28,000 members across New York City, Long Island, and Westchester.

It is of the utmost importance that the New York State Senate use this budget to stand with immigrant families and essential workers. The current President has turned the full force of the federal government upon immigrant communities, and our members are justifiably concerned about their livelihoods, scared to send their children to school, nervous to seek out medical care, and are facing whiplash in a country whose foundation was built by immigrants only to now vilify them.

The New York State Senate must act now to protect immigrant New Yorkers. One critical way to do so is to use our budget to pass Senate Bill 2235, the New York for All Act, a bill sponsored by Senator Gounardes that would ensure that New York state and local resources are not diverted to the Trump Administration's cruel and inhumane deportation agenda.

Study[1] after study[2] have shown that policies that protect against local collaboration with ICE decrease crime and strengthen economies. Despite the clear benefits of these policies, New York State is behind states like Illinois, New Jersey, Washington, and California which have had similar laws on the books for years. Now is the time for our state government to show leadership and join our peers.

Under New York for All, state and local officers would be prohibited from enforcing federal immigration laws, funneling people into ICE custody, and sharing sensitive information with federal immigration authorities. The bill also ensures that people in custody are informed of their rights before being interviewed by ICE and prohibits ICE and CBP from entering non-public areas of state and local property without a judicial warrant and begins the process of limiting their access to state information databases. This bill would complement the protections that already exist, and ensure that the state does not use money that can be used for infrastructure or other social services to funnel people into Trump's detention and deportation machine.

Interactions with law enforcement can be traumatic and have harmful effects for immigrants and communities of color. No one should be detained and potentially deported for going about their lives and trying to provide for their families. These interactions can become even more dangerous when there is the additional risk of deportation and family separation at play. Under a new agreement in Nassau County,

[1] Manning, D.T. & Burkhardt, J. (2022) The local effects of federal law enforcement policies: evidence from sanctuary jurisdictions and crime. Contemporary Economic Policy, 40(3), 423–438. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/coep.12564.

[2] American Immigration Council. (2021) Sanctuary Policies: An Overview. Available from: https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/sanctuary_policies_an_overview.pdf

Nassau Police would be deputized to act as immigration officials, which will result in families separated and lives disrupted.

Think about the chilling effect such collaboration with ICE can have on whole communities. Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers live in mixed status families, and every single one of us here has friends who are immigrants. Because we are not just talking about undocumented people here. Anyone who is not a citizen could be subject to deportation, and you can bet the Trump administration is ready to use all their resources deporting as many people as they possibly can. It is our duty to be there for our immigrant community members in these moments, when our communities are being scapegoated by a federal administration run amok.

This bill would protect against inconsistent ICE collaboration across the state which leads to confusion, fear, and arbitrary consequences. For example, in New York City, the NYPD only collaborates with ICE in a small number of instances, such as when presented with a valid judicial warrant. But step over the county line from Queens to Nassau, and you will be in a jurisdiction where local police are *deputized* to act as immigration officers and have the power to detain and deport New Yorkers. This patchwork is jarring. It's time for the New York State Legislature to step in, and create a single baseline for all New Yorkers.

This bill also safeguards the rights of all New Yorkers to access critical resources. It should be uncontroversial that everyone should feel safe entering sensitive locations like hospital clinics and schools. But since the Trump Administration rescinded the federal sensitive locations memo, there is confusion and fear about accessing these spaces. New York for All would make it clear that in New York, all New Yorkers are safe to access sensitive locations on state or local property, and that ICE cannot enter these spaces without a judicial warrant. Without it, we have already seen what ICE will try to do, such as when they tried to enter schools upstate in Geneva.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not uplift the financial contributions that immigrants bring to this state, this includes over $153 billion dollars in spending power and $68 billion dollars in taxes. These contributions make our state stronger, and also serve to power our state services, which is why the state must not spend state money on cruelty and family separation.

New York is home, and its residents know that. It is time for electeds to step up and pass New York for All in the budget, or our state will lose its vibrancy and fail to meet this moment.

Thank you.