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ADVOCATES APPLAUD NEW EFFORT TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

City pledges more resources and support for survivors of family and gender-based violence

NEW YORK—Advocates and stakeholders today praised Mayor de Blasio's new effort to support survivors of gender-based violence as part of the City's larger New York City Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative draft plan.

"Home should be a safe place for everyone in our city, and we will not accept any other reality," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "We want any New Yorker experiencing violence at home to know that help is always available. New York City is here for survivors and we will continue to do all we can to ensure they are safe and supported."

"Domestic violence survivors in New York City should have easy access to safety and support," said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. "When survivors take the courageous step to seek help, we want them to know that wherever they turn, they will be welcomed and provided with the support they need to heal and begin their lives anew. The City's pledge to expand and improve resources for survivors will help to break patterns of abuse and create safer communities."

Through new investments and resources, the City will expand and strengthen its support for survivors outside of the criminal justice system. The Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender Based Violence (ENDGBV) will conduct a citywide review to identify services that currently require a survivor file a police report to receive them and understand the impact of that requirement. The review will identify changes that can be made at the city and state levels to support survivors and preserve their safety while reducing the harm associated with criminalization.

Additionally, with a focus on expanding family violence prevention and intervention services, new community-based resources in neighborhoods with the highest rates of family violence will enhance access to critical services including counseling, mediation, benefits assistance, and case management. This effort will aim to reduce violence, promote housing stability, and reduce law enforcement involvement for victims.

To enhance engagement with survivors and families, the NYPD, in partnership with ENDGBV, will also mandate training for officers to help them better support survivors and communities affected by domestic and gender-based violence. This partnership will improve the referral process between NYPD and domestic and gender-based violence service providers, as well

as create a referral pathway to ENDGBV's soon-to-launch Respect and Responsibility, a voluntary community-based program for people who are using abuse in their intimate relationships.

“As New York City moves to reform policing and its role in the community, it is critical to consider domestic and gender-based violence survivors, particularly survivors from marginalized communities, including Black survivors, survivors of color, LGBTQI+ survivors and survivors with disabilities,” said **Commissioner Cecile Noel, Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence (ENDGBV)**. “And while we work to reform policing practices and structures within the NYPD to better support survivors, such as new training initiatives, we must also simultaneously develop additional options for those survivors who do not want or may never want to engage with the criminal justice system by deepening our investments in community-based resources.”

“As a trauma-informed social service organization, the Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC) is proud to partner with the Mayor’s Office to promote safety and healing for survivors of domestic and gender-based violence,” said **Rawaa Nancy Albilal, President and CEO of the Arab-American Family Support Center, and Co-Chair of the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Council**. “AAFSC is committed to enhancing equitable access to the resources, opportunities, and support systems that survivors often lack and to fostering harm reduction as an affirmative vision of justice. We look forward to deepening our partnership with the city as we collectively create responsive approaches that meet the needs of those experiencing systemic inequities.”

“Every person in this city deserves safety, stability, and a life free from violence,” said **Christopher Bromson, Executive Director of the Crime Victims Treatment Center and Co-Chair of the Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Advisory Council**. “The vast majority of survivors don’t seek remedies through the criminal justice system, and should have access to support and resources that exist outside of it. We’re pleased the City is taking steps to expand the ways people who have been harmed can access support.”

“The story of every survivor of abuse or violence is different,” said **Liz Roberts, CEO of Safe Horizon**. “We need to offer many different paths to safety, support, hope and healing. By expanding options outside of the criminal justice system and investing in violence prevention, this plan takes an important step forward.”

“Sanctuary for Families applauds Mayor de Blasio’s proposed police reforms to support survivors of gender-based violence,” **Hon. Judy Harris Kluger, executive director, Sanctuary for Families**. “As a leading service provider and advocate for survivors, over 90% of whom are immigrants and women of color, we have seen how our clients are often hesitant and, at times, fearful of involving law enforcement. Expanding resources for survivors outside the criminal justice system, bolstering preventative services, training for police officers, and deepening partnerships between police and service providers will ensure more survivors have access to the support they need and will make New York a safer home for all of us. As executive director of Sanctuary and a member of the End Gender Based Violence Advisory Council, I am pleased that

the Mayor has embraced many of the Council's recommendations and look forward to seeing the final Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative plan."

"NMIC supports efforts to move away from a model that relies on the criminal legal system as an entry point for survivors to access services, to one that is community-based. Investing in these programs will ensure access to key services, including counseling, case management, benefits assistance, and many more. Engaging these crucial programs will uplift survivors in their efforts to heal and live at peace in their communities," said **Maria Lizardo, Executive Director at NMIC**.

"Physical and verbal abuse is totally unacceptable," said **Mona Montigua, President of the Antigua & Barbuda Progressive Society Association**. "It is important that we take more steps like this to bring more resources to prevent and prosecute domestic abuse."

"With the history of police misconduct in communities of color, it is a matter of urgency that we enact immediate reform and support those impacted by domestic violence," said **Janette Riviera of Progressive Democrat's Political Association (PDPA)**.

"KAFSC applauds Mayor de Blasio's efforts to partner and involve community based organizations, like the Korean American Family Service Center, that provide culturally and linguistically competent services and bridges the gaps to provide direct service to our immigrant survivors and their children at this critical time," said **Jeehae Fischer, Executive Director at the Korean American Family Service Center**. "KAFSC never closed our doors throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and our frontline essential workers fielded a 300% increase in calls to our 24 hour bilingual hotline of which 88% were related to domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. In 2020, KAFSC not only responded to a 49% increase in DV/SA cases but also an alarming upward trend in the severity of cases as well as cases involving children. It is imperative that any effort to reduce community violence and law enforcement involvement for victims be designed holistically and in partnership with immigrant led- and serving organizations."

"Evidence points to the success of providing wrap around support services for children and families of incarcerated women and men in diminishing the incidences of family violence and involvement with law enforcement. We see it at Hour Children, where 90% of the women who enter our programs do not return to prison, and nearly 100% of their children in our programs avoid involvement with the criminal justice system. Hour Children applauds the mayor's efforts to expand and strengthen these services, giving families a foundation for success," said **Sister Tesa Fitzgerald, CSJ, Executive Director of Hour Children**.

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