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**MAYOR ADAMS ESTABLISHES FIRST-EVER OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT,
STREAMLINES CITY'S CIVIC ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS**

Mayor Creates Chief Engagement Officer to Coordinate and Lead New Office of Engagement

*Appoints Chief Democracy Officer, Re-Appoints Chair and Executive Director of Civic
Engagement Commission, NYC Chief Service Officer, Executive Director of Mayor's Public
Engagement Unit*

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today took efforts to streamline the city's civic engagement efforts by establishing the city's first-ever Office of Engagement and appointing Betsy MacLean as its chief engagement officer. The chief engagement officer will ensure that the city coordinates community engagement efforts across agencies, systematically learns from communities to inform policy and programs, builds the capacity of all city agency outreach and engagement teams, and advances community-driven solutions. In addition to leading the Office of Engagement, MacLean will oversee the city's primary engagement offices: the Community Affairs Unit (CAU), the Civic Engagement Commission (CEC), the Public Engagement Unit (PEU), and NYC Service.

"Community engagement is a core pillar of this administration. We are committed to ensuring that New Yorkers have the tools they need to better engage with government and access its benefits, but to also do it in a more streamlined, simple-to-use manner," said **Mayor Adams**. "The newly created Office of Engagement will ensure that we continue to collaborate, coordinate, and prioritize engagement across all agencies and that New Yorkers have a say in our policies, priorities, and resources. There is no better person to lead this effort than Betsy MacLean. Betsy chaired our Civic Engagement Committee during the transition and has had a groundbreaking career in community development for over 20 years. Once again, I have an all-star team of five women leading the charge with Betsy, Sarah, Laura, Adrienne, and Kathleen, and working alongside Fred Kreizman at CAU — all heading up our city's engagement efforts. Together, we will continue to 'Get Stuff Done' and engage New Yorkers in new and creative ways."

To maximize the opportunities for New Yorkers to work hand-in-hand with government, Mayor Adams also made these key appointments and reappointments:

- Kathleen Daniel, chief democracy officer, CEC
- Adrienne Lever, executive director, PEU
- Laura Rog, NYC chief service officer, NYC Service
- Dr. Sarah Sayeed, chair and executive director, CEC

These five appointments/reappointments will work hand-in-hand with CAU Commissioner Fred Kreizman.

“The Adams administration is committed to re-structuring government to ensure that our policies and programs are aligned with the priorities of the communities we serve each and every day,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Sheena Wright**. “Betsy MacLean is a talented public servant who has dedicated her time in government to advancing community-driven initiatives and I know that there’s no one better to lead our city into this new era of participatory democracy. I’m thrilled she will be joined by our talented team of community engagement experts, including, Commissioner Fred Kreizman, Chief Democracy Officer Kathleen Daniel, Chair and Executive Director Dr. Sarah Sayeed, Chief Service Officer Laura Rog, and Executive Director Adrienne Lever.”

“I believe that democracy is a team sport,” said **New York City Chief Engagement Officer Betsy MacLean**. “I’m grateful to the mayor for the opportunity to work together with city agencies, community-based organizations, small businesses, and New Yorkers themselves to create the kind of civic infrastructure that will enable every New Yorker to have a say in all of the systems that shape our lives — from housing to jobs, schools to transportation, health care to parks. From my decades of experience working with residents throughout our city and beyond, I know that community engagement is not a photo op or a box to check; it is deep partnership, consensus building, power sharing, and paradigm shifting. And when we do it right, this kind of inclusive democracy builds community power, brings us closer together, and results in better policies and better outcomes. What a thrill to work alongside these inspired engagement leaders to expand our definition of civic engagement beyond elections, increase opportunities for government to work together with communities and amplify the voices of our neighbors.”

“Congratulations to Laura Rog on her reappointment as the chief service officer for New York City,” said **New York City Police Department (NYPD) Deputy Commissioner Collaborative Policing Chauncey Parker**. “Laura is a visionary leader and great partner. Together with Laura and her exceptional NYC Service team, the NYPD has built a Youth Leadership Council in every NYPD precinct and command — connecting hundreds of young people and police officers to serve communities across New York City.”

“Our ability to respond to emergencies is made stronger by our network of volunteers, who are ready to offer a helping hand to all New Yorkers recovering from any disaster,” said **New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM) Commissioner Zach Iscol**. “Through the Volunteer Coordination Task Force, Laura Rog and NYC Service are active partners with NYCEM. From the COVID-19 pandemic to Hurricane Ida and many other task force activations, Laura has been

a tremendous partner to us. She is an incredible champion for what volunteerism can do and does for all New Yorkers. We are thrilled to continue to get to work with her and that she will continue to be a part of NYC Service. And Adrienne Lever and her team have been fantastic partners throughout a number of critical emergency responses efforts. The work she and her team did to support asylum seekers arriving at Port Authority was nothing short of heroic, and I am very grateful to know that we will continue to have Adrienne and PEU's support as we continue to serve New Yorkers through the challenges that lie ahead.”

“I want to extend my congratulations to Betsy MacLean and all of these distinguished women who have been nothing short of extraordinary partners in city government” said **New York City Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit Commissioner Fred Kreizman**. “Our mission at CAU is to connect communities across the city directly to City Hall, and all of our agencies work together hand-in-hand to serve every neighborhood. I look forward to the continued partnership with this amazing team to continue to ‘Get Stuff Done’ for the communities we serve.”

“For decades, Dr. Sayeed has worked tirelessly to expand democracy and ensure that all New Yorkers have a direct role in shaping the future of their communities and our city. She is caring, compassionate, and focused on execution — uplifting diverse voices to spur action within government and beyond,” said **New York City Mayor's Office of Equity Commissioner Sideya Sherman**. “I am thrilled to continue working with Dr. Sayeed and this all-star engagement team.”

“Adrienne Lever's visionary approach to collaboration between city agencies like ours ensures that we are reaching all New Yorkers on critical issues, including health, housing, and more,” said **New York City Department of Veterans’ Services Commissioner James Hendon**. “The Department of Veterans’ Services celebrates the reappointment of Adrienne Lever as executive director of the Office of Public Engagement and our continued collaboration, especially as we work towards expanding health insurance access to veterans.”

“I am thrilled that the mayor is reappointing Adrienne Lever as executive director of the Office of Public Engagement to continue leading the city's public engagement efforts. Her deep experience in grassroots organizing and outreach campaigns is an invaluable resource to our city,” said **New York State Senator Alessandra Biaggi**. “The work that Adrienne and her team are doing so that New Yorkers can more easily access benefits is one of the most important investments in time, energy, and money that can be made in improving outcomes for the most vulnerable in our communities.”

“I am thrilled that Kathleen Daniel has been appointed as chief democracy officer. During my tenure as director of NYC Census 2020, Kathleen served as field director and played a very critical role in ensuring we reached New Yorkers in the neighborhoods they live in, the languages they speak, and the communities they trust,” said **New York City Councilmember Julie Menin**. “The field strategy that we developed ensured a historic census count as New York City gained more population than any city in America. Kathleen is a public servant at her core, and I am excited to see her continuing to serve in a position where she will work collaboratively to ensure all residents receive the resources and representation they deserve.”

“Community power cannot reach its potential without the right civic infrastructure, and there’s no one better to lead our city government in rebuilding how we engage New Yorkers than Betsy MacLean,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “As the first chief engagement officer, Betsy will be a champion of true democracy, an advocate for the people, and the connective tissue between various agencies. I look forward to seeing all the good things that will come from a more inclusive government that centers the voice of the people and congratulate Betsy and Mayor Adams on this appointment.”

“We’re thrilled to congratulate Betsy MacLean on her new role as chief engagement officer,” said **José López, co-executive director, Make the Road New York**. “New Yorkers across the city understand that effective governance requires meeting communities where they are, engaging in good faith, and executing on community-generated strategies. Having a chief engagement officer to build out civic infrastructure and maintain connection between agencies is a step forward in that direction, and, as a long-time partner of Make the Road New York, we are confident that Betsy MacLean is the right choice to lead this effort. Betsy has spent her career working in partnership with communities — designing, managing and implementing community engagement strategies to promote racial and economic justice. We look forward to working with Betsy to ensure that New York City prioritizes the voices and ideas of our members and neighbors across the five boroughs.”

“I am thrilled to see the administration make a coordinated effort to improve interagency collaboration and public participation, and Betsy MacLean is uniquely qualified to lead that charge,” said **Linda E. Johnson, president and CEO, Brooklyn Public Library**. “I look forward to working together toward our shared mission of strengthening democracy and empowering New Yorkers to remain engaged and informed.”

“I am thrilled that Mayor Adams is creating the position of chief engagement officer to deepen community engagement and outreach across all agencies, and there is no better candidate than Betsy MacLean. I have seen firsthand the dedication, drive, and commitment to community input that Betsy brings to all her work to ensure New York City neighborhoods are informed and involved in our democracy,” said **Thomas Yu, executive director, Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE)**.

“The designation of a chief engagement officer and the strengthening of New York City’s civic engagement and outreach infrastructure will ensure that communities that have had historically limited access will now have meaningful influence,” said **Marco A. Carrión, executive director of El Puente and former commissioner, New York City Community Affairs Unit**. “The combined experience, talent and commitment that Betsy MacLean, Dr. Sarah Sayeed and all the exceptional leaders appointed today bring to their roles will spur a definite shift in how our communities’ voices are centered.”

“Betsy MacLean’s historic appointment as New York City’s inaugural chief engagement officer affirms the Adams administration’s commitment to participatory democracy,” said **Wole Coaxum, founder and CEO, MoCaFi**. “The best community outcomes occur when ideas from all quarters are raised, considered, debated, and incorporated into city programs and policy. Betsy is uniquely qualified for this role with a strong track record of active listening, creativity,

and ‘Getting Stuff Done.’ It is exciting that all New Yorkers are getting a strong advocate for inclusive democracy for this critical work.”

“I have great pride and joy about the appointment of Laura Rog as NYC’s chief service officer. NYC Service is an extraordinary part of our great city. Laura’s leadership is mission driven, caring, innovative and impactful for the people of our city — 8.5 million New Yorkers. Together. Serving Each Other,” said **Paula Gavin, former chief service officer, City of New York.**

“Dr. Sayeed is one of the strongest champions for civic participation in our city. I have worked closely with her over the last four years and watched her fearlessly lead the charge to implement the impressive charter mandate of the Civic Engagement Commission,” said **Anetta Seecharran, CEC commissioner and executive director, Chhaya Community Development Corporation.** “Dr. Sayeed has a remarkable ability to find common ground among diverse voices and push forward for the betterment of our city and our communities. I am delighted she will be able to continue to build on the solid foundation she has established over the last four years.”

“On behalf of the staff, board, and faith-leader constituents of the Interfaith Center of New York, I celebrate the re-appointment of Dr. Sarah Sayeed as chair and executive director of the CEC,” said **Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer, executive director, Interfaith Center of New York.** “Under Dr. Sayeed’s leadership these past few years, the Commission has flourished — providing language assistance at polls and participatory budgeting tools to congregations and community associations around the city. Dr. Sayeed’s continued leadership at the CEC is welcome news for all New Yorkers who seek to strengthen our diverse democracy.”

“During the pandemic, Laura worked closely with New York Cares to mobilize New Yorkers in volunteer opportunities pivotal in our city-wide response,” said **Sapreet K. Saluja, executive director, New York Cares.** “We look forward to continuing our partnership with Laura and NYC Service, while championing new and innovative approaches to service throughout the five boroughs.”

“For over two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kathleen served as director of community engagement for the NYC Test & Treat Corps’ contact tracing effort, helping our program reach hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers and offering critical support in their greatest time of need,” said **NYC Test & Treat Corps Executive Director Dr. Ted Long.** “New York City is lucky to have dedicated public servants like Kathleen, a born-and-raised New Yorker who knows how to engage our city’s diverse communities and is a champion of civic participation. I wish her luck in her new role as New York City’s chief democracy officer and I know New York City voters will be more engaged and informed because of her leadership.”

“Kathleen Daniel has been a tireless advocate throughout her career, fighting for all New Yorkers to be included and heard in the democratic process,” said **Omar Khan, former executive director, Mayor’s Public Engagement Unit.** “In our work together at Census, she was a leading voice and strategist in organizing the effort to engage millions of residents all

across the five boroughs. She has the ideal combination experience, vision, and integrity to serve as our city's next chief democracy officer.”

“It gives me great pleasure and excitement to formally pass the baton to Kathleen Daniel as our city’s new chief democracy officer,” said **Laura Wood, leadership in government fellow, Open Society Foundations, and former chief democracy officer, NYC**. “The chief democracy officer plays a central role in setting the priorities and strategy for engaging New Yorkers at every level of civic participation. It requires an individual with compassion and real experience building lasting relationships and centering community voice in our democratic processes. With this appointment, the Civic Engagement Commission will be even stronger in its mission to build trust in democracy in New York City and given Kathleen’s extensive experience in community engagement, there is no better person for this role.”

“As we forge forward in creating a city reflecting the diversity of New Yorkers, I am proud of Mayor Adams and his administration on the reappointment of Dr. Sarah Sayeed,” said **Dr. Debbie Almontaser, CEO & founder, Bridging Cultures Group Inc.** “Dr. Sayeed is no stranger to this work and she will continue to build bridges of engagement that will allow every New Yorker feel a part of the beautiful mosaic we call New York City.”

“Lots of cities around the world today evoke the idea of participation and engagement. Yet, despite good intentions, much of what goes by civic participation falls short of its potential. I am impressed at the magnitude of changes being undertaken in New York City today with the appointment of a chief engagement officer,” said **Gianpaolo Baiocchi, director, NYU Urban Democracy Lab**. “It represents a radical and transformative re-thinking of civic engagement in this city. Betsy MacLean comes to the position with the vision, experience, and independence a position like this requires. Big changes like these don’t come about without hard work and willingness to push against established routines. I am confident MacLean brings the leadership necessary to help create the kind of inclusive co-governance this city deserves.”

“I’ve had the honor of knowing Kathleen Daniel for over 35 years. From her time in student government to her tenure within New York City municipalities, Kathleen has remained an exemplary servant leader. She is faith-filled and forward thinking, brave and brilliant, a skillful grass roots organizer and multi-gifted orator,” said **Reverend Dionne P. Boissiere, MDiv., chaplain, Church Center of the United Nations**. “Kathleen has a heart for people. She seeks to bring communities together across creed, ethnicity, age, or ability and into a beautiful mosaic of harmony, equity, and justice. Kathleen’s global leadership is proven and can be trusted — and our city will only be better because of it.”

About Betsy MacLean

Betsy MacLean serves as chief engagement officer for New York City. MacLean has been engaged in groundbreaking community development work for more than 20 years. In her role as senior advisor for the deputy mayor for strategic initiatives, MacLean has led several cross-agency, cross-sectoral initiatives, including NYC Speaks, the New York City Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, and NYC Benefits. Additionally, MacLean led the Civic Engagement

Committee of Mayor Adams' transition team and the Housing, Land Use, and Planning Committee of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso's transition team.

Before City Hall, MacLean served as executive director of Hester Street, a national leader in participatory planning, policymaking, and design. She led borough-wide community planning efforts in East Harlem and Bushwick; citywide participatory policy efforts on fair housing and cultural equity; and national community and economic development efforts in the Midwest, Puerto Rico, and the Navajo Nation.

Prior to moving into national work, MacLean was the director of Community Development at Cypress Hills LDC. There she planned and developed hundreds of affordable homes, spearheaded the community-led design and construction of Brooklyn's first green public school (PS/IS 89) and created a community-wide planning and sustainability initiative.

MacLean began her career as a carpenter. Her carpentry work brought her to Cuba where she created and led an international community development program. She was named to the New York Community Engagement Power 50 in 2021 and has been recognized with the New York Housing Conference Public Service Award, the APA Leadership in Housing & Equal Opportunity Award, and the ALIGN-NYC Movement Builder Award, among others.

MacLean holds master's degrees in Urban Planning and International Affairs from Columbia University.

MacLean will report to incoming Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack.

About Dr. Sarah Sayeed

Dr. Sarah Sayeed serves as chair and executive director of the CEC. Sayeed is a proud Bronxite and resident who has been dedicated to building civic capacity in New York City for decades. Since her appointment in 2018, Dr. Sayeed has assembled a team to deliver on the CEC's core mandate to build trust in democracy for all New Yorkers. In crafting the agency's vision for a more inclusive New York City, rooted in the values of dignity and collaboration, she has creatively worked to build new bridges into civic participation. This work culminated in the launch of "The People's Money" in September of 2022, the city's first-ever citywide participatory budgeting process and continues throughout all of the CEC's core programs.

Prior to her appointment, Dr. Sayeed was a senior advisor for the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, where she worked with a diverse, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual Muslim constituency to strengthen civic engagement.

Dr. Sayeed's public service builds upon years of bridge building projects at the Interfaith Center of New York, where she regularly convened New York's diverse grassroots religious leaders with secular and city agencies and implemented an extended collaboration between Catholic and Muslim social service providers. Dr. Sayeed also taught communications to graduates and undergraduates at Baruch's School of Public Affairs for five years.

Dr. Sayeed earned a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Near East Studies from Princeton University, a Master of Arts, and a Ph.D in Communications from the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

About Kathleen Daniel

Kathleen Daniel serves as chief democracy officer of the CEC. She has served the City of New York for nearly a decade. Most recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she served as the director of community engagement for Test & Treat — the largest citywide contact tracing operation in the nation — where she led a team of 700 tracers visiting the sick and their close contacts daily to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Daniel took on the role of field director for NYC Census 2020 — then the largest outreach initiative ever conducted by the city, as well as the most robust census-related campaign in the country. She also served for several years as the first-ever outreach director in the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams.

Daniel was recognized in the inaugural “Community Engagement Power 50” list by City & State New York. Daniel is a veteran of multiple congressional, state, local, and issue-based campaigns.

Daniel attended SUNY Albany and then New York University, where she studied organizational behavior and communications.

About Laura Rog

Laura Rog serves as the chief service officer at NYC Service, where she has driven volunteer strategy, including emergency response efforts, civic engagement research, community-based resource development, and youth focused initiatives. She first started serving in this role in April 2021. Rog leads a strong team of fellows, AmeriCorps members, and staff that implement a broad portfolio of volunteer and service programs to deepen civic engagement and unite New Yorkers in service.

Rog most recently oversaw the Adams administration’s launch of the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Health Corps, a new AmeriCorps program, and the relaunch of the city’s volunteer engagement portal.

Since joining the Mayor’s Office eight years ago, Rog cultivated NYC Service’s Youth Leadership Council program from its inception, growing the program to be the largest municipal youth leadership program in the nation.

In response to COVID-19, Rog spearheaded the citywide Volunteer Coordination Task Force, partnering with New York City Emergency Management, New York Cares, and New York City Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster to centralize volunteer efforts. She also oversaw implementation of the NYC Civic Impact Funding Initiative, powering nonprofits with the resources to engage nearly 6,000 volunteers to provide culturally responsive emergency food services to hundreds of thousands of residents between 2020 and present day.

Rog began her career as an AmeriCorps VISTA with the New York State Department of Education. She has worked on youth development and service learning within schools in New York, Tanzania, and Japan.

Rog is a New York State native and long-time New Yorker with a Bachelor of Arts in English from SUNY Geneseo, and a Master of Science in Teaching and Curriculum from the University of Rochester.

About Adrienne Lever

Adrienne Lever serves as executive director to the PEU. She was first appointed in 2019. Over the past two years, she has spearheaded a number of critical initiatives — from connecting homebound New Yorkers to at-home vaccination appointments to emergency canvassing in the wake of Hurricane Ida. Under her leadership, the PEU has successfully executed outreach campaigns to support New Yorkers in accessing critical benefits and services. In addition to scaling proactive community outreach through door-to-door canvassing, phone banking, and peer-to-peer text messaging around a range of services, Lever worked to formalize the Tenant Support Helpline that takes incoming calls from tenants who are facing eviction, landlord harassment, and other housing-related issues.

Lever brings over 15 years of community organizing, campaign management and government experience to the city. She is an alumnus of the Obama and Clinton presidential campaigns, and a founding member of Swing Left, a national grassroots political organization. She also worked as a senior director at Democracy Works, a non-profit that builds tools to streamline the election process and coordinate voter registration efforts at U.S. colleges and universities, and served as a director of partnerships at Change.org, the world's largest civic action petition platform.

From 2009 to 2011, Lever served as a political appointee to the Obama Administration, serving in the U.S. Department of Energy.

Lever is a graduate of University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, and the London School of Economics.

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