

# Mayor Adams Reappoints Annabel Palma as Commissioner and Chair of NYC Commission on Human Rights

June 6, 2022

**NEW YORK** – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced the reappointment of Annabel Palma as commissioner and chair of the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). Palma will continue to lead the enforcement of New York City’s human rights law — one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation. Under her leadership, CCHR has expanded current protections to include domestic workers and additional salary transparency safeguards, as well as developed new trainings to combat antisemitism in New York City.

“The work that Annabel Palma has done at the New York City Commission on human rights speaks to the commitment and dedication she has for the well-being of all New Yorkers,” said **Mayor Adams**. “Through her leadership, the commission is working hard to enforce our human rights law, combat discrimination and harassment in their many forms, and be a resource to our residents no matter how they identify in the diversity of our great city. New Yorkers are lucky to have Annabel as an advocate in this important role.”

“Reappointing Annabel Palma as commissioner to the New York City Commission on Human Rights is a win for all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable among us,” said **Chief Counsel Brendan McGuire**. “No one works as hard as Annabel to protect the civil rights of the people in our city. I look forward to continuing to work with her to further the mission of this important agency.”

“It is truly an honor and privilege to continue to serve New Yorkers as chair and commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights. I have experienced discrimination and harassment, witnessed its impacts in my community, and dedicated my career to fostering change, so I take the responsibility to protect all New Yorkers very seriously,” said **New York City Commission on Human Rights Commissioner**

**and Chair Annabel Palma.** “While New York City has one of the most expansive human rights laws in the country, there is always more work to do to make human rights a reality, and we are ready to collaborate with all stakeholders to meet this challenge. I want to thank Mayor Adams for the opportunity to continue to lead this important city agency and to continue to fight for a more inclusive and welcoming city, free of discrimination, for all of us.”

“I had the pleasure of working with Annabel Palma when she was councilmember for the 18th district during my time as Bronx Borough president, and I’m thrilled to work alongside her again as a part of the Adams administration,” said **New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Adolfo Carrión Jr.** “Commissioner Palma draws from her experience as a health care worker, a labor leader, and, especially, as a mom and wife to inform her work and make government more responsive to the needs of all New Yorkers. Her reappointment is a testament to her proven track record of fighting on behalf of New Yorkers’ rights.”

“Commissioner Palma’s unwavering dedication to upholding the rights of vulnerable New Yorkers while serving and supporting our underserved communities in various capacities throughout her career has been nothing short of inspiring,” said **New York City Department of Social Services Commissioner Gary P. Jenkins.** “In drawing from her own life experiences, she brings profound empathy to her work and a great understanding of the challenges facing New Yorkers in need. I have had the honor of working with Commissioner Palma to make our city more equitable and inclusive, and I greatly look forward to building on this partnership as she continues to lead CCHR.”

“Over her career in public service, Annabel Palma has shown an unwavering commitment to the most marginalized communities in the city, which is why she is such an inspired choice by Mayor Adams to lead the New York City Commission on Human Rights,” said **New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Ydanis Rodriguez.** “It was an honor to serve in the New York City Council alongside Commissioner Palma, and I am confident that she will continue to serve with distinction — protecting and expanding the rights of all New Yorkers.”

“Commissioner Palma has years of experience as a distinguished public servant who truly knows New York City’s diverse community needs,” said **New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Manuel Castro.** “I congratulate her on her

reappointment and look forward to working alongside her and her team to protect all New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status.”

“I’m thrilled that Chair and Commissioner Palma has been reappointed to lead CCHR’s critical work defending and protecting all New Yorkers’ civil and human rights, especially survivors of domestic and gender-based violence,” said **New York City Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Commissioner Cecile Noel**. “We look forward to continuing to partner with the CCHR to make sure survivors know their rights and live free from discrimination.”

“Congratulations to my friend and former colleague Annabel Palma on being reappointed commissioner and chair of the Commission on Human Rights by Mayor Eric Adams,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. “During her time as commissioner under the previous administration, Commissioner Palma fought for the rights of all New Yorkers and advocated for diversity and inclusion. I know under the leadership of Mayor Adams, she will continue to fight for historically underserved communities throughout our city. I wish Commissioner Palma the very best, and I know she will continue to lead the Commission on Human Rights in combating discrimination and providing opportunities for all New Yorkers regardless of race, gender, age, and income.”

“Commissioner Palma’s career exemplifies her commitment and dedication to fighting for a diverse and just city for all New Yorkers,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “She has a proven track record across many fields, and, having personally worked with her in the New York City Council, I know she is the ideal voice to lead the New York City Commission on Human Rights. She will continue to work tirelessly for our most vulnerable communities and ensure that all New Yorkers are aware and protected by the city’s human rights law. I am excited to continue working with her.”

“Annabel Palma has proven she has the skill, smarts, and savvy to effectively lead the Commission on Human Rights during these challenging times,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** “I congratulate Commissioner Palma on her reappointment from Mayor Adams to carry on leading this vitally important agency. I look forward to continuing to work with Commissioner Palma in supporting the commission’s mission to fight discrimination and promote harmonious relations among our city’s diverse communities.”

“Annabel Palma is a dedicated public servant and has been her entire life,” said **New York State Assemblymember Kenny Burgos**. “I am confident in her commitment to ensuring civil and human rights for all New Yorkers, regardless of gender, creed, sexual orientation, or social economic status. I am ecstatic Commissioner Palma has been reappointed as commissioner and chair of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, as she will continue to be an incredible voice and advocate. I can’t wait to watch her succeed in this role.”

“At a time when civil and human rights are increasingly under attack, New York City needs a strong Commission on Human Rights to enforce protections for all New Yorkers,” said **New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams**. “Commissioner Annabel Palma has led this agency well since her appointment last October, and I am glad to see Mayor Adams has reappointed her to this important position. I look forward to continuing to work with Commissioner Palma to support New Yorkers’ rights.”

“As chair of the Committee on Civil and Human Rights, I have had the pleasure to work with Commissioner Palma and the rest of the team at the Commission on Human Rights,” said **New York City Councilmember Nantasha Williams, chair, Committee on Civil and Human Rights**. “I am excited for Commissioner Palma’s reappointment as chair of this agency, and I am looking forward to continue working together.”

“Commissioner Palma has dedicated her life to public service,” said **New York City Councilmember Erik Bottcher**. “I’ve had the pleasure of working with her for years, and I’m excited to continue doing so as a Councilmember.”

“I served alongside Annabel in the City Council and know she is a distinguished leader firmly committed to advancing equity and justice for all New Yorkers,” said **New York City Councilmember Gale A. Brewer**. “I congratulate her on being reappointed as the commissioner of New York City Human Rights Commission.”

“I am thrilled to see that Annabel Palma has been reappointed by Mayor Eric Adams as the commissioner and chair of the New York City Commission on Human Rights,” said **New York City Councilmember Amanda Farías**. “Commissioner Palma was my Councilmember from 2004 to 2017 and has been a great influence in our local government for young women of color, like myself, and Bronxites. It is so meaningful that our city has not only a Latina but also a dedicated Bronxite at the wheel of enforcing our city’s human rights law — one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws

in the nation. The commissioner has an unparalleled record of fighting for those who are most affected by systematic oppression and historical disenfranchisement. Whether it was fighting as a 1199 healthcare worker, working for equity in COVID-19 testing, or fighting for investments to be made in the Southeast Bronx, it is clear that Commissioner Palma has the dedication, expertise, and sense of urgency to, again, be a fantastic commissioner. Congratulations to Commissioner Annabel Palma on your re-appointment and to Mayor Eric Adams for having a truly great advocate on his team.”

“Annabel Palma has a long-standing commitment to serving underserved communities across the city,” said **New York City Councilmember Rafael Salamanca Jr.** “As a former union organizer and City Councilmember, Commissioner Palma knows firsthand the struggles everyday New Yorkers face and has fought to deliver critical resources directly to the families who need it most. I am excited to continue working with her in her role as commissioner and chair of the Commission on Human Rights.”

“Commissioner Palma has an incredible career of fighting inequities and ensuring access to critical programming for the people of New York City,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velazquez.** “Her experience at the New York City Council, as a union organizer, helping to lead NYC Test & Trace Corps, and as commissioner and chair of the Commission on Human Rights establish her as a leader. I’m excited to see Mayor Adams’ continued trust in her and to work with a fellow Bronxite hermana to provide better care for people.”

“Annabel Palma is a well-respected and distinguished public servant, with great depth of knowledge of our diverse community needs, a proven track record of community service, and broad professional experience,” said **Guillermo Chacon, president, Latino Commission on AIDS; founder, Hispanic Health Network.** “Equality, social justice, and human rights have been the central focus of Commissioner Palma’s work. As a City Councilmember and as deputy commissioner at the New York City Department of Social Services, Commissioner Palma always champions opportunities for all. I congratulate Commissioner Palma on her reappointment as commissioner and chair for the Commission on Human Rights for our beloved New York City.”

“I congratulate and look forward to working with Commissioner Annabel Palma with her reappointment by Mayor Eric Adams,” said **Rocky Chin, former government civil rights attorney and member, New York City Commission on Human Rights.** “Commissioner Palma is a longtime advocate for civil rights and social justice, who

knows from personal and professional experience the importance of a strong and robust civil rights agency and building resilient partnerships in these troubling times.”

“Annabel Palma has always been a staunch advocate for the most marginalized,” said **Sean Coleman, executive director, Destination Tomorrow**. “She has demonstrated time and time again her commitment to ensuring every New Yorker has access to equitable services. In a city that prides itself on diversity, Commissioner Palma makes sure those historically left behind have a voice.”

“In these challenging times, so filled with hate and toxic polarity, we are grateful to Mayor Eric Adams for reappointing Annabel Palma as chair and commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights,” said **Rabbi Bob Kaplan, executive director, Center for Community Leadership, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York**. “Under her insightful and wise leadership, the commission has dedicated itself to upholding the dignity of all New Yorkers making our city a more equitable place for all.”

“South Queens Women’s March joins in congratulating Annabel Palma on her reappointment as commissioner and chair of the New York City Commission on Human Rights,” said **Aminta Kilawan-Narine, founder and director, South Queens Women’s March**. “Commissioner Palma has been an exemplary public servant, who has championed BIPOC communities, responding in real time to a global pandemic and ensuring that New Yorkers have what they need to survive and thrive. We know we can count on Commissioner Palma to center impacted people and to promote justice and equity across our city.”

“I want to congratulate Commissioner Palma,” said **Imam Tahir Kukaj, Albanian Islamic Center**. “I support Mayor Adams’ decision to reappoint Annabel Palma as chair and commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights, and I believe that her experience and competencies are particularly well-suited.”

“We congratulate Annabel Palma on her reappointment as commissioner and chair of the New York City Commission on Human Rights,” said **Pastor Edward-Richard Hinds, president, 67th Precinct Clergy Council, “The GodSquad.”** “Ms. Palma is an outstanding public servant, who has dedicated her time to rendering altruistic service in the fight for working families in our communities. In her role as chair and commissioner,

we are confident that she will continue to be a champion for restorative justice against discrimination and bias and protecting the civil rights of New Yorkers.”

“I applaud Mayor Adams’s reappointment of Annabel Palma to lead New York City’s Commission on Human Rights,” said **Teresita R. Rodriguez, CEO, Apicha Community Health Center**. “Her track record fighting for vulnerable communities — from senior citizens to underprivileged youth to people who experience homelessness or lack access to healthcare — demonstrates her commitment to New Yorkers. Her collaborative work with other New York City Councilmembers to provide support for people living with HIV/AIDS and the LGBTQ+ community has been invaluable. Apicha Community Health Center looks forward to partnering with Commissioner Palma and her agency to further health equity.”

“The National Domestic Workers Alliance applauds New York City Mayor Adams for re-appointing Commissioner Palma to the city’s Commission on Human Rights,” said **Marrisa Senteno, New York director, National Domestic Workers Alliance**. “Commissioner Palma has been a great partner supporting the humanity and rights of domestic workers. The collaborative efforts that we have seen in education, outreach, and resources for some of the most marginalized workers shows CCHR’s long-standing commitment to human rights. The most recent enactment of Local Law 88 of 2021 — in which domestic workers, for the first time in New York City’s history, finally have the full weight of human rights protections in the workplace — is a monumental accomplishment for Commissioner Palma and the city. We have faith that, through the re-appointment of Commissioner Palma, CCHR and New York City will continue to do great things leading the way for human rights for all New Yorkers.”

“Annabel Palma brings a wide range of experiences to the important position of commissioner and chair of the Commission on Human Rights,” said **Monsignor Kevin Sullivan, executive director, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York**. “Her sensitivity, compassion, and dedication is needed even more today to fairly balance the complex human rights demands that the vibrant and diverse City of New York faces daily.”

“Congratulations to Commissioner Palma on her reappointment to lead the New York City Commission on Human Rights,” said **Glenda Testone, executive director, The LGBT Community Center**. “So many of the communities represented at The Center rely on the hard-earned protections guaranteed by the city’s human rights law and by

the work of CCHR. We look forward to continuing our work with Commissioner Palma to support this important agency's work and to ensure that all New Yorkers, including every LGBTQ person, can live and thrive in our city."

"It is an honor to work with Commissioner Annabel Palma in her formal reappointment as commissioner and chair of the Human Rights Commission for the City of New York," said **Reverend Terry Troia, president, CEO of Project Hospitality**. "In the wake of the horrific mass shooting in Buffalo, all of us are called to the task of ensuring the rights of all people — of all races, ethnicities, faiths, abilities, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigration, and social status — to live in safety and peace and be treated with justice and dignity. May all our work together as a commission make this safety, justice, dignity, and peace possible."

### **About Annabel Palma**

Annabel Palma currently serves as the chair and commissioner of the New York City Commission on Human Rights. Drawing on her own struggles with poverty, Commissioner Palma has dedicated her life to fight for workers' rights and for fairer, more responsive representation for New York City's many communities.

In 2018, Palma was appointed to serve as deputy commissioner of strategic initiatives in the New York City Department of Social Services, where she continued a lifetime of advocacy and commitment fighting for the people of the Bronx and all of New York.

In 2020, as the nation grappled with the impact of COVID-19, Palma joined the NYC Test + Trace Corps program to address the devastation COVID-19 was causing across New York City. The mission of the program was to deliver direct resources to all New Yorkers, especially those in the hardest-hit neighborhoods that historically have been marginalized.

In 2003, Palma was elected to the New York City Council and dedicated her career to providing her community the voice they needed to fight for quality education, safer schools, good-paying jobs, affordable housing, a cleaner environment, and greater access to health care. She proudly served district 18 as a member of the New York City Council for 14 years. Palma's experiences as a young, single mother, struggling to build a better life for her family, helped define her approach to the New York City Council and make government more responsive to the needs of the community. During her tenure,



she was instrumental in delivering tens of millions of dollars for projects in district 18 to renovate senior centers, public schools, youth centers, and parks. Through her efforts and support, four of the district's public libraries received funds that allowed them to open and operate six days per week. Her advocacy also allowed her to champion funds to expand and modernize Bronx institutions of higher education as well as various cultural institutions.

Palma received her Certified Nursing Assistant certification from Bronx Community College. At St. Vincent De Paul Senior Residence, she became a practicing nursing assistant and was elected as a union representative in 1994.

In 1998, Palma enrolled as a full-time student in Monroe College and earned her associate degree in business administration, while she worked a full-time job and raised her son. She graduated summa cum laude.

In 1999, Palma joined the staff at 1199SEIU as a full-time organizer, where she developed her passion for public service by organizing and educating workers on the issues of unfair working conditions and leading health and safety trainings.

Palma reports to Brendan McGuire, chief counsel to the mayor and City Hall.

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