



Office of
Immigrant Affairs
Nisha Agarwal
Commissioner

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**Testimony of Acting Commissioner Bitta Mostofi
NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs**

Before a hearing of the New York City Council Committee on Immigration:

“Preliminary Budget Hearing - Immigration”

Thank you to Speaker Johnson, Chair Menchaca, and the members of the Committee on Immigration. My name is Bitta Mostofi, and I am the Acting Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA).

My testimony today covers MOIA's mission and role in the Administration. I will highlight the City's key accomplishments over the last year to make New York City more accessible and inclusive for immigrants. In addition, I will share how MOIA has worked hand-in-hand with immigrant communities, elected officials, advocates and key partners to respond to the Trump Administration's xenophobic rhetoric, policies, and actions.

I look forward to sharing details about our achievements with you.

MOIA's Mission

MOIA is tasked with the broad mission of promoting the well-being of immigrant communities in New York City. Our efforts and resources are focused on three key priority areas.

First, MOIA facilitates immigrants' access to City services and resources, and promotes greater immigrant inclusion across local government. Our role at MOIA is to ensure that City government is responsible and accountable to all New Yorkers, including the 40 percent of our population that is foreign-born. In partnership with sister agencies, we develop strategies to enhance the economic, civic, and social integration of all residents.

Second, we promote access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers. By expanding access to high-quality immigration legal services and legal rights education, we empower low-income immigrant communities and reduce income inequality. The increase in federal immigration enforcement and policy changes at the federal level have created acute needs for immigrant New Yorkers already navigating a complex and broken immigration system. Under the leadership of the Mayor and the City Council, New York City has made historic investments promoting access to justice for immigrant New Yorkers.

Third, MOIA advocates for reforms at all levels of government to fight inequities facing New York City's immigrant communities. MOIA monitors immigration-related developments and advocates on the local, state, federal, and international levels to support pro-immigrant policies and protect immigrant New Yorkers' rights.

Under new national leadership, MOIA's mission is more important than ever. In 2017, immigrant New Yorkers faced numerous attacks from the federal level. In the President's first months in office, he issued a xenophobic travel ban targeting Muslim-majority nations and abandoned our Dreamers. The Trump Administration has continued to spread hateful rhetoric, threatened to expel TPS recipients, increased immigration enforcement against all residents regardless of criminal history, and targeted cities that have common-sense laws and policies that protect public safety for all.

Despite attacks on the federal level, New York City is and will remain a city of immigrants. We are proud to be one of the most diverse cities in America. Immigrants are integral members of

our communities and make significant contributions to every facet of the city's civic, cultural, and economic life. Nearly 40 percent of New York City residents – more than three million people – are foreign-born, and 60 percent are immigrants or children of immigrants. Almost half of New Yorkers speak a language other than English at home, and there are over 150 languages spoken throughout the five boroughs.

While the majority of foreign-born residents in New York City are now U.S. citizens, there are approximately one million New Yorkers who have lawful permanent residents or another authorized immigration status. In addition there are approximately 560,000 undocumented immigrant New Yorkers.¹ Though non-citizen New Yorkers are deeply rooted in our city, this population faces additional barriers that MOIA has sought to eliminate with innovative programs and policies.

MOIA has responded to new challenges as well. The Trump administration has implemented major changes to federal immigration policy that have negatively impacted immigrant New Yorkers and their families.

The President's decisions to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for several countries, means that 30,000 Dreamers² and 10,000 TPS recipients from Haiti and El Salvador will be at risk of losing work authorization and protection from deportation.³

Dramatic increases in immigration enforcement under the Trump Administration are felt within our communities, and are borne out in federal data. By way of example, the number of non-criminal arrests of immigrants in and around New York City increased 421 percent in the months following President Trump's inauguration as compared to the months prior.⁴ Additionally, reports of ICE enforcement at courthouses in New York City increased by 1286 percent from 2016 to 2017.⁵ The City also saw an immense increase in detainer requests from ICE in FY 2017 compared to FY 2016.⁶

¹ State of Our Immigrant City: Annual Report March 2018.

² Based on 2012-2016 5-Year American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS) as augmented by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity.

³ Based on 2010-2014 5-Year ACS PUMS as augmented by the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity, for Haiti and El Salvador. President Trump has also announced the end of TPS for Nicaragua and Sudan, but the number of TPS recipients from those countries in New York City is too small to accurately report.

⁴ Analysis of immigration enforcement data by MOIA. See Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Local Removal and Administrative Arrest Data, available at <https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2017/localStats2017b.pdf> and https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2017/localStatistics2013_2016.pdf. MOIA compared Feb. 2017 through Sept. 2017 to Oct. 2017 through Jan. 2018 and adjusted for the difference in duration of those time periods.

⁵ Office of Court Administration and Immigrant Defense Project data.

⁶ DOC Summary of Discharges of Inmates with Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detainers and NYPD Statistics on Civil Immigration Detainers Received October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2017.

Against this challenging backdrop, MOIA has led the City's efforts to support and protect our immigrant residents. At the same time, MOIA has steadfastly continued building on our achievements.

Advancing the well-being of immigrants in NYC

I want to turn to some of the achievements in the past year, which show how MOIA has fortified its strong, immigrant-inclusive policies and programs even in a uniquely hostile federal environment.

I will start with our efforts to promote immigrant inclusion.

Immigrant Inclusion

IDNYC

The IDNYC municipal identification card program continues to be a huge success as a tool for connecting residents to City government and supporting populations without access to identification, including many immigrants. IDNYC remains by far the most successful municipal identification card in the country. This past year, IDNYC issued its one millionth card, and as of the end of 2017, IDNYC had issued over 1.2 million cards.

The number of cardholders is only one measure of IDNYC's success. We have also made the card more accessible and useful for all New Yorkers, with a particular focus on serving vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations:

- In April 2017, the program launched IDNYC On the Go, IDNYC's mobile command center, to travel to communities in the outer boroughs and parts of Manhattan.
- IDNYC saw great success with its temporary "pop-up" enrollment centers. IDNYC partnered with the Department of Homeless Services to organize pop-ups at four homeless shelters, enrolling 700 clients and staff. In partnership with the Department of Education, City University of New York (CUNY), and other educational institutions, IDNYC launched pop-up sites at Department of Education high schools, CUNY campuses, The Cooper Union, and The New School. In 2017, about 22,000 New Yorkers were enrolled at pop-up sites.
- In January 2017, IDNYC partnered with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to enable cardholders to access their vaccination records or those of their children through the Citywide Immunization Registry. By year's end, over 1,700 cardholders had accessed vaccination records.
- Patients at the majority of NYC Health + Hospitals facilities can connect their IDNYC to their patient record to facilitate registration and check-ins. In the coming months, IDNYC and Health + Hospitals will expand this to all Health + Hospitals facilities.

Language Access

New York City is home to a multilingual, multicultural mosaic of people. This linguistic diversity is a huge asset, but it also requires responsiveness from local government to ensure all New Yorkers can navigate their city. Almost a quarter of all New York City residents, or 1.8

million people, are limited English proficient (LEP). In 2017, MOIA significantly expanded a number of our language access programs to ensure the City speaks the language of all New Yorkers.

MOIA is coordinating the citywide implementation of Local Law 30, which is the most expansive language access law in the nation. Local Law 30 requires City agencies that provide public services to provide interpretation in at least 100 languages and translate commonly-used documents into the city's top 10 languages, as determined by Census and Department of Education data. MOIA works closely with agencies by providing consultation and technical assistance, as well as gathering information on progress and implementation. We provide ongoing support on language resources and tools, and share agency best practices for improving the availability and quality of language services for LEP New Yorkers. Since the passage of the law in 2017, MOIA has convened language access coordinators to review the law's requirements, developed guidance materials, and held a series of one-on-one meetings to assist with implementation. MOIA is also reviewing agencies' language access implementation plans, which are due to Council at the end of this fiscal year. In addition, in partnership with our sister agencies, our office is expanding internal capacity to provide language services. In 2017, MOIA provided simultaneous interpretation to 153 MOIA and Mayoral events such as ThriveNYC forums, Mayoral Town Halls, and the City's first Afghan Town Hall.

With support from the Council, MOIA piloted a groundbreaking project to place Russian and Haitian Creole interpreters at 20 poll sites in Brooklyn to help LEP voters during the November 2017 election. The 20 selected poll sites had the highest numbers of estimated eligible LEP voters in each Community District. I am proud to report that the interpreters that we hired and trained served nearly 500 LEP voters through this pilot. We look forward to further collaborations with the Council, the Board of Elections, and others to engage with LEP voters.

Another aspect of MOIA's language access work is MOIA's work to support LEP New Yorkers by providing programming to help language learners practice English. The We Are New York (WANY) Program helps immigrant New Yorkers practice English while learning about the City's resources using the Emmy award-winning *We Are New York* video series and companion educational materials. MOIA recruits and trains volunteers to facilitate 10-week English conversation classes at libraries, community organizations, and government agencies. This program served more than 3,500 English language learners in 2017. MOIA is expanding WANY in 2018 with new videos, new educational materials, a new interactive website and a rebranding.

Outreach to Historically Underserved Communities

MOIA's Outreach team is committed to serving all immigrant New Yorkers, including historically underserved communities. In 2017, MOIA's Outreach and Community Services teams participated in approximately 1,400 events throughout 2017. These included providing trainings, participating in community discussions, tabling at partner organizations' events, and canvassing targeted neighborhoods and public transportation with urgent information such as updates on the travel bans and DACA.

The Outreach team has also focused on bringing community-centric town halls to historically underserved communities. Our first community-centric town hall was an African Town Hall in 2016 in the South Bronx, and in December 2017 we held the first-ever Afghan Community Town Hall in Queens, conducted in the Dari and Pashto languages. More than 200 residents attended and discussed concerns regarding housing, legal services, ESOL classes, and more. Joining us at the town hall were representatives from MOIA and many other City agencies and community partners. We are currently working on a series of follow up engagements in the community, including sharing the new IDNYC application in Pashto.

We are also planning a Garifuna and Central American Town Hall in the South Bronx during Immigrant Heritage Week on April 21. This will be the City's first town hall dedicated to the Garifuna population.

Providing Support and Guidance to City Agencies

New York City's immigrant communities have an enormous range of experiences and needs. MOIA understands that we must coordinate with agencies across the City in order to fully serve the millions of immigrant New Yorkers. In 2017, MOIA has taken additional steps to help City agencies engage with immigrants and address their concerns in a new federal climate.

In 2017, MOIA kept City agencies informed about critical federal policy changes and the effects on their work. We held agency briefings, distributed talking points and materials agencies could disseminate to their staffs and the public, and worked with affected agencies to mitigate the negative impacts of federal policy changes on their services and programs.

Building on the City's research and data about immigrants in New York City, MOIA analyzed the effects of federal immigration policy changes on the City and its residents in relation to the DREAM Act and the end of DACA and TPS. We circulated this research to elected officials, including members of this Committee.

MOIA works with City agencies to factor immigrant communities' needs into the everyday work of local government. Key issue areas and agency partnerships in 2017 included:

- Holding a press conference to denounce housing discrimination and harassment in response to instances of tenant harassment, with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the Commission on Human Rights (CCHR), the Human Resources Administration, the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit, and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit. Following the event, MOIA and CCHR developed a one-page flyer in multiple languages on tenants' rights that MOIA and our agency partners distributed throughout the city.
- Addressing employers' concerns around immigration enforcement and employers' rights and responsibilities, particularly in the event of audits and ICE raids at workplaces, in a small business town hall hosted with the Department of Consumer Affairs' Office of Labor Protections and Standards (OLPS), CCHR, Small Business Services, and the Health Department.

- Participating in panels, trainings, and breakout sessions with OLPS, CCHR, and paid care workers, many of whom are immigrants, through which workers had the opportunity to learn about their rights and share their experiences in the industry.
- Working with the Department of Social Services/Department of Homeless Services to improve the processes for responding to shelter requests by asylum applicants and victims of human trafficking to ensure their safety.
- Coordinating language access services at the Disaster Assistance Service Centers organized by the Human Resources Administration and NYC Emergency Management for residents affected by an apartment building fire in Elmhurst, and for Puerto Ricans displaced by Hurricane Maria.

MOIA, the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence and Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice have also worked closely with agency partners in the New York Police Department, Law Department, Administration for Children's Services, CCHR, and the District Attorneys' offices to support public safety through collaborations that promote access to immigration relief via U and T visas for victims of serious crimes. MOIA has worked with agency partners to expand public awareness about the availability of these forms of immigration relief and improve the City's U and T visa certification processes. Through this partnership, the City has strengthened and increased the transparency of these processes, which has led to a marked increase in the number of applications and certifications. In 2017, we saw a 35 percent increase in the number of U and T visa applications, and a 36 percent increase in U and T visa certifications compared to 2016. This represents an 86 percent increase in applications and a 125 percent increase in certifications issued since 2014 and reflects the City's hard work to increase outreach and awareness to immigrant victims of crime.

MOIA is also working with our partners at DOHMH, NYC Health + Hospitals, and other agencies to ensure that immigrants are connected to the health care services they need. Just last month, Health + Hospitals announced a major new care management initiative, which, building on lessons learned through the ActionHealthNYC demonstration project, recognizes the importance of navigation and care management support regardless of a patient's ability to pay or their immigration status. In addition, in 2017 MOIA expanded our ActionNYC partnership with Health + Hospitals to provide immigration legal services for patients and community members in public hospitals and long-term care centers, recognizing that immigration status can affect health outcomes. We have also worked with DOE and DOHMH to inform immigrant families about the mental health supports available to them through ThriveNYC's NYC Well hotline.

Development of New Local Laws

In 2017, MOIA and others across the Administration worked closely with the City Council on several laws affecting immigrant New Yorkers. Many of these laws codified or built upon our City's inclusive policies, including a law on agencies' language access policies and a set of amendments to the City Charter to make permanent the scope of MOIA's work. The Council and Administration also worked together on legislation to make it clear that the City's role is to maintain a welcoming and safe city for all, not to enforce draconian immigration policies. We look forward to working with our sister agencies to implement these Local Laws in 2018.

Access to Justice

Access to immigration legal services is more crucial than ever, given the Trump Administration's increased immigration enforcement efforts. Under the leadership of the Mayor and City Council, New York City has made historic investments to promote access to justice for immigrant residents.

With this support, MOIA has led collaborations with other City agencies, legal service providers, and community partners to address the legal needs of New York City immigrants. Through ActionNYC, NYCcitizenship, and interagency work with HRA's Office of Civil Justice, MOIA and its partners facilitate the provision of high-quality immigration legal services and help community providers build their capacity.

ActionNYC

ActionNYC is a citywide, community-based immigration legal services program that provides access to legal services for residents, as well as resources for providers to grow the immigration legal services field. Immigrant New Yorkers receive free, safe, and high-quality immigration legal services in their community and in their language. ActionNYC serves as the entry point for New Yorkers seeking immigration legal services through its citywide hotline, centralized appointment-making system, and accessible service locations at community-based organizations (CBOs), schools, and hospitals.

In 2017, demand for ActionNYC services was consistently high. ActionNYC providers conducted 8,124 legal screenings over the course of 2017 and opened approximately 5,000 new cases.

In response to this demand, ActionNYC has worked to increase its reach in the city.

In 2017, ActionNYC expanded services. The team provided services at eight CBOs, held 53 clinics in 34 DOE schools, established permanent navigation sites at three NYC Health + Hospitals facilities, and provided services to long-term and acute care Health + Hospitals patients. Our model recognizes that immigrant New Yorkers interface with the City in many ways, and leverages those points of interaction to connect more residents to legal services.

Our legal navigation team, which rotates through City schools, grew to two teams in November 2017. These teams screened 761 people in 2017. Last year, the ActionNYC in Health + Hospitals Long Term Care program, consisting of an attorney and one paralegal that rotates across 7 Health + Hospitals facilities, conducted 120 intakes. In 2017, ActionNYC also began serving patients and community members at NYC Health + Hospitals/Gouverneur, NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst, and NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln. The expansion of services into hospitals has proven effective. The program provided screenings for 1,076 people at these Health + Hospitals locations. Through our long-term care work with ActionNYC in Health + Hospitals, we estimate that Health + Hospitals will realize \$2.8 million in Medicaid revenue per year, due to clients newly enrolled in Medicaid or expected to be enrolled in Medicaid.

ActionNYC also increased local providers' capacity to provide high-quality immigration legal services. All ActionNYC sites and organizational fellows receive support to obtain and maintain Department of Justice (DOJ) Recognition. ActionNYC helps its community navigators to become DOJ Accredited Representatives, allowing them to represent clients before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). In 2017, ActionNYC established a fellowship in partnership with the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity to build small- and medium-sized community organizations' capacity to deliver immigration legal services and conduct outreach.

In addition, as part of our capacity building efforts and to understand the gaps and needs in the field, ActionNYC undertook an extensive consultation process to get community input on the needs of immigration legal services for hard-to-reach immigrant communities. In 2017, ActionNYC released a Request for Applications (RFA), and I am pleased to announce that six CBOs have been selected to provide immigration legal services to these hard-to-reach communities in 2018. These organizations are uniquely placed to meet community-specific needs due to their strong ties to community members and well-established cultural and linguistic competence, and are:

- Council of Peoples Organization (COPO)
- Chinese American Planning Council (CPC)
- Korean Community Services (KCS)
- Chhaya Community Development Corporation
- Lutheran Social Services of Metropolitan New York (LSSNY)
- New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)

Services are expected to begin in late spring or early summer 2018.

NYCitizenship

MOIA's NYCitizenship program provides legal assistance and financial support for green card holders who are eligible to naturalize. The program is a collaboration by MOIA, HRA/DSS, the City's library systems, and the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG). NYCitizenship provides free legal assistance, including screenings and full legal representation, with citizenship applications at 12 public library branches across the five boroughs. If eligible, individuals also receive assistance with fee waiver and disability waiver applications. Additionally, clients are connected to free and confidential financial counseling.

NYCitizenship also provides citizenship services to a subset of DSS/HRA clients who stand to benefit significantly if they obtain citizenship. At DSS/ HRA, NYCitizenship places an emphasis on reaching the most financially vulnerable New Yorkers, such as disabled and/or senior clients, who may be eligible for the federal social security program once naturalized.

NYCitizenship is a public-private partnership, and 2017 marked the introduction of the first infusion of public dollars through the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity with a \$675,000 investment. In 2017, NYCitizenship reached over 7,200 individuals and filed over 850 citizenship applications.

National and International Organizing

Cities are on the front lines of the fight for immigrant-inclusive policies across the U.S. Together, cities have the power to shape the immigration debate and the law through policymaking, litigation, and collective advocacy.

Cities for Action

Mayor de Blasio created Cities for Action (C4A), a bipartisan coalition of U.S. cities and counties that collaborate to advocate on immigration issues and exchange best practices. In 2017, MOIA expanded C4A's influence in the national discourse around immigration, adding 47 cities to the coalition for a total of over 175 U.S. cities and counties. In March 2017, member cities met in San Francisco for a national convening to develop municipality-based advocacy strategies to address federal policy changes. In a few days, we will be holding another national convening in Chicago. There, we will use what we have learned from the first year of the Trump Administration to refine and adjust our strategies and set an advocacy agenda for the coming year.

C4A members have engaged in advocacy on a range of issues, including DACA, TPS, the travel bans, and the DOJ's efforts to target so-called sanctuary cities. C4A has issued five multi-city sign-on letters on these issues. Dozens of C4A member cities signed on to amicus briefs in cases challenging the Trump Administration's travel bans and cases related to threats to cut funding for cities with immigrant-inclusive policies.

In 2017, a major part of C4A's work was advocacy focused on a solution for Dreamers. Eleven coalition mayors held calls with the press in support of the DREAM Act. Mayors and Commissioners met with their Congressional delegates in Washington, D.C. to advocate for Dreamers in their cities. C4A organized a tele-town hall in support of the DREAM Act, which New York City hosted alongside representatives from Chicago and Los Angeles, and which reached 50,000 callers. While Congress has failed to pass any legislation for Dreamers, we remain committed to pushing for a permanent solution. We will not give up on our advocacy for the thousands of young immigrants across our nation, including over 150,000 New York City residents who stand to benefit from the DREAM Act.⁷

International Partnerships

While the federal government has stopped participating in the negotiations around the Global Compact on Migration, cities across the U.S. have stepped up to fill the void. In 2017, MOIA began elevating the City's voice in a new way, working with international municipal partners to shape global discussions around migration. In September, NYC hosted the Global Mayors Summit on Migration and Refugee Policy and Practice, which was attended by representatives from 34 cities from six continents. The Summit provided an opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to discuss issues of shared concern and begin developing international city-to-city partnerships. The conference also allowed cities to have their voices heard and brought their immigration policies and priorities to the attention of international decision-makers working on

⁷ New York City-analyzed 2014 5-year U.S. Census data

the United Nations' Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees. MOIA will continue our work to engage in and shape national and international conversations about immigration in 2018.

MOIA's Outreach Work in the Trump Era

Facing a wave of hate and bigotry, immigrants in New York City have understandably experienced immense anxiety, fear and confusion. Let me be clear: MOIA and this Administration will not be intimidated by the Trump Administration's attempts to bully cities and states into complying with its deportation agenda. We are in full compliance with the law, and our welcoming policies will not change.

This is the message we have strived to disseminate to immigrants across the city through the efforts of our Outreach and Community Services teams.

In 2017, our Community Services and Outreach teams participated in approximately 1,400 events with immigrant New Yorkers. The MOIA Community Services team conducted 248 KYR forums in partnership with community organizations and schools across the city, with a total attendance of almost 7,000 people. These forums educated community members about available City services, including an overview of programs such as IDNYC, We Are New York, ActionNYC, NYCitizenship, and other legal services, as well as information about affordable housing, fraud prevention, and discrimination protections.

This work is in addition to the more targeted actions MOIA took in reaction to specific policy changes on the federal level. Beginning with the President's travel ban executive orders, the Outreach team worked to confront the impact of this xenophobic policy in the communities directly affected. By coordinating 37 visits to 20 mosques in all five boroughs, MOIA provided critical and time-sensitive guidance about resources for New Yorkers affected by the bans while showing the affected communities that the City stands by all residents.

With support from volunteers, MOIA coordinated four DACA Days of Action to inform the public about the Trump Administration's decision to end DACA and the urgency of eligible DACA recipients renewing their status. As part of these Days of Action, MOIA staff and volunteers distributed flyers to the public and answered questions, directly reaching an estimated 36,000 people with this important and time-sensitive information. Immediately following the announcement to end DACA, MOIA organized a tele-town hall, a public town hall conducted via telephone, joined by more than 9,000 people. In addition, MOIA has worked to provide services to affected New Yorkers, including by holding DACA-themed Know-Your-Rights forums, two DACA renewal clinics, and two Dreamer dinners.

In response to the Trump Administration's decision to end TPS for Haiti, and the uncertain fate of TPS for other nationalities with large numbers of TPS recipients, MOIA formed a TPS Coalition, consisting of more than 20 organizations and stakeholders, including local, state, and federal legislators, labor unions, advocacy groups, CBOs, and faith leaders. In addition, MOIA coorganized three TPS Town Halls in Brooklyn at Linden Public Library, Medgar Evers College, and the Flatbush YMCA, and also participated in seven additional TPS Town Halls, seven TPS press conferences, and two TPS rallies. This is in addition to multiple Days of Action reaching about 30,000 people, and three Faith Weekends of Action.

Moreover, ActionNYC prioritized services for individuals seeking assistance in renewing their DACA applications or re-registering for TPS. These efforts demonstrate the City's commitment to all New Yorkers, and the ways in which the de Blasio Administration moved swiftly to inform and support the many immigrant New Yorkers negatively affected by the Trump Administration's policies.

Finally, the Administration has also sought to advocate on behalf of individuals in their immigration matters and provide connections to services as needed. For example, the City worked to support the family of Private First Class Emmanuel Mensah. On December 28, 2017, a deadly fire in the Bronx killed 13 people including Pfc. Mensah, an immigrant from Ghana and member of the National Guard who heroically ran back into the burning building multiple times to save the life of his neighbors. The fire also took the lives of the Donkor family – Hannah, William, and their father Solomon. In a true team effort, MOIA, the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, Mayor's Office of International Affairs and HRA's Office of Civil Justice, in coordination with the Legal Aid Society, secured expedited travel documents from the U.S. embassy in Accra, Ghana for relatives and close friends of both families to attend their loved ones' funerals.

Conclusion

MOIA's successes at a time when the federal government has targeted immigrants in historically xenophobic ways reflect the Mayor's strong commitment to protecting and serving all New Yorkers, no matter where they are from. We know there is more work to be done, but we are confident that, in collaboration with this City Council and other partners, we can continue to be the most inclusive, immigrant-friendly city in the world.

In 2018, MOIA will continue to work with our partners to strengthen the inclusiveness of City government. In accordance with local law, MOIA will convene a new interagency task force on immigrant affairs, through which key City's agencies' initiatives and practices related to serving immigrant communities will be further highlighted, supported, and strengthened. MOIA will also continue to deepen relationships with and access for underserved communities through its outreach and community services work, including through the engagement of volunteers.

We know that 2018 will bring additional federal changes. The commitment New York City has made to ensuring access to justice for immigrants in this climate is essential to protecting the rights and safety of our city. MOIA will continue to monitor community needs for legal services in the face of federal developments, and coordinate with OCJ to quickly and effectively respond to those needs. Lastly, MOIA will continue to support the City's leadership on advocacy efforts to protect localities from harmful federal policies targeting cities that maintain welcoming, inclusive policies.

I want to thank this Committee and the entire City Council for being a crucial partner in the fight to advance the well-being of immigrants in New York City. I also want to thank the many community-based organizations and service providers whom we work with day in and day out. MOIA will continue to listen to immigrant New Yorkers, monitor and understand the impacts of



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anti-immigrant policies and work towards making New York City a fairer city for our immigrant communities.