

**For Immediate Release:** December 16, 2024

**Media Contacts:**

Troi Barnes, [media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

Alejandra Lopez, The Legal Aid Society, [ailopez@legal-aid.org](mailto:ailopez@legal-aid.org)

Alora Sherbert, Queens Defenders, [press@queensdefenders.org](mailto:press@queensdefenders.org)

**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

***Community Organizations, Civil Rights Groups, and Advocates Call on City Council to Abolish the NYPD Gang Database Ahead of Hearing on Stop-and-Frisk Policing***

**(New York, NY)** - Today, multiple organizations and advocates convened a press conference and rally on the steps of City Hall ahead of a New York City Council oversight hearing on the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) use of stop-and-frisk policing. Advocates called on the City Council to pass Intro 798, legislation that would abolish the NYPD's Criminal Group Database, otherwise known as the "gang" database. The database has long been used by NYPD officers to label thousands of Black and Latino New Yorkers as "members" or "associates" of gangs based on imprecise criteria, resulting in community members enduring numerous harms from the criminal legal system process. The policing and surveillance arising out of the gang database are reminiscent of the NYPD's racially discriminatory stop-and-frisk practices.

"Despite our efforts, youth in our communities are still unfairly targeted by stop-and-frisk and investigatory stops. This ongoing surveillance fosters distrust and criminalization. Passing Intro 798 is vital to dismantling these harmful practices and ensuring our young people can walk their streets without fear," said **Victor Dempsey, Representative from G.A.N.G.S. Coalition**. "We urge the City Council to support Intro 798 and protect the rights and dignity of all New Yorkers."

"Stop and frisk practices, as well as gang policing, continue to target Black and Latinx members of our community disparately," said **Lori Zeno, Executive Director of Queens Defenders**. "New Yorkers deserve transparency for how police powers are implemented, and we demand accountability when those procedures are used unfairly. Queens Defenders joins the G.A.N.G.S. Coalition in urging the New York City Council to support Int. 798, which will abolish the discriminatory Gang Database and help protect the individual and privacy rights of all New Yorkers."

"The unfortunate truth is that marginalized young people are unfairly targeted for harassment and arrest by virtue of where they live. This practice perpetuates the cycle of poverty and victimization. To be presumed guilty based solely on your zip code, physical appearance, familial

bonds and/or racial or ethnic identity should not be a tolerated practice. Intro 798 removes a harmful and discriminatory database that unfairly targets young people and leads to disproportionate criminalization. Passing the bill must be a priority to reduce wrongful arrests and mistreatment of communities of color,” said **Reverend Wendy Calderón- Payne, Executive Director, Urban Youth Alliance (BronxConnect)**.

“As Chair of the Committee on Children and Youth, I am committed to creating transparency within the NYPD and addressing practices that unfairly target our city’s young people—especially Black and Brown youth,” said **City Council Member Althea Stevens**. “The Gang Database is a discriminatory tool that perpetuates harmful policing tactics and devastates our communities. By passing Intro 798, we can take a significant step toward fostering trust and safety in our neighborhoods. It is our duty to protect our children and ensure that they have the freedom to thrive without fear of unjust surveillance or criminalization.”

"Our communities deserve safety and dignity, but that will never be achieved through the discriminatory practices of stop-and-frisk or the NYPD’s harmful gang database. These tools have disproportionately targeted young Black and Brown New Yorkers, perpetuating cycles of surveillance and mistrust,” said **City Council Member Yusef Salaam**. “Earlier this year, the How Many Stops Act took effect to bring transparency to police interactions, and now, we take another critical step forward. Passing Intro 798 will dismantle a database that has caused immeasurable harm and replace fear with accountability and justice."

“The NYPD's gang database is a dangerous and racist tool that disproportionately targets young people of color with little to no evidence of criminal involvement,” said **Cassandra Kelly, Staff Attorney with the Criminal Law Reform Team at The Legal Aid Society**. “For too long, this database has fueled over-policing in communities that are already overburdened. The City Council must finally act to abolish this harmful policing practice by passing Intro.798. It's time to shift from punishment to prevention and invest in real safety through community-led solutions, not harmful databases that perpetuate the carceral system.”

###