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**G.A.N.G.S. Coalition Calls for the Abolishment of NYPD’s Gang Database with Intro 798**

Stopping Racial Profiling & Protecting our NYC Community

New York, NY – The [G.A.N.G.S. Coalition](#), alongside advocates, legal experts, elected officials, community organizers, and impacted individuals gathered on February 24 on the steps of City Hall to demand the passage of [Intro 798](#), a bill that would abolish the New York Police Department’s (NYPD) discriminatory Criminal Group Database (the “Gang Database”).

During the rally, speakers outlined the Gang Database’s devastating impact on Black and Latino communities, the lack of transparency in its operations, and the urgent need for its abolishment. The rally was then followed by a hearing on Intro 798 in the New York City Council Committee on Public Safety, where supporters and advocates gave their testimonies.

As of 2023, the NYPD’s Gang Database labels around 16,000 New Yorkers—some as young as 13 years old—as gang members without due process.

**Intro 798 aims to:**

- Abolish the NYPD’s Gang Database and prevent similar tracking systems from replacing it, while also ensuring greater transparency and justice for impacted communities

- Require the City to notify individuals who have been added to the database and provide them access to their records
- Mandate a public awareness campaign to inform New Yorkers of their rights

According to the G.A.N.G.S. Coalition, 99% of people in the Gang Database are Black or Latino and one in ten people in the database were added without any supervisory review. Advocates also add that the database increases surveillance, and can lead to heightened police encounters, harsher court outcomes, families being forced from their homes, and ICE detention and deportations.

Intro 798 now currently sits in the NYC Committee on Public Safety.

The G.A.N.G.S. Coalition is formed by Black Attorneys of Legal Aid, Brooklyn Defenders, Bronx Connect, Center for Court Innovation, Common Justice, El Puente, Freedom Agenda, LatinoJustice PRLDEF, Legal Aid Society, the Legal Defense Fund, Policing and Social Justice Project, Queens Defenders, Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.), We Build the Block, and Youth Represents.

**Below are their statements around the need to abolish the Gang Database and why City Council must pass Intro 798:**

"For years, I've been on the frontlines of addressing the NYPD's secret gang database, a system that disproportionately targets Black and Brown youth and operates without transparency or accountability. Two-thirds of the approximately 18,000 individuals in this database are Black, one-third are Latinx, and hundreds are minors—some as young as 13. Yet, most don't even know they've been added until they are arrested, with no clear way to challenge or remove their names." **Council Member Althea Stevens, Chair of the Committee on Children & Youth** emphasizes, "This database isn't about safety; it's about control. It fuels racial bias, criminalizes our youth, and fractures the trust between communities and law enforcement. It's to eliminate this harmful practice, restore trust, and protect our young people from unjust surveillance. We must dismantle systems that harm our communities and build a future where every young person, regardless of race or background, has the opportunity to thrive."

"Racial profiling and over-policing of vulnerable communities does not lead to public safety. The Gang Database endangers the present and future of Black and Latine youth who have committed no crime other than living in a neighborhood deemed suspicious by the NYPD," said **Council Member Alexa Avilés**. "Residents of the Red Hook Houses and other NYCHA complexes have been unfairly profiled by the database for the mere reason that they live in public housing. In the United States, people have the right to due process, which is ignored by systems that criminalize people based on unfounded accusations. We must end the Gang Database to protect the future of NYC's youth, and all vulnerable New Yorkers whose safety is threatened under these secret and discriminatory processes."

"The NYPD's Gang Database is a racially biased surveillance tool that unjustly targets Black and Latinx youth without due process," said **Robert Willis, Justice Advocate Coordinator from Latino Justice**. "It fuels over-policing, wrongful arrests, and lifelong harm. Ending it is about justice, transparency, and real safety—not criminalization."

“It has always been wrong and dangerous to surveil and label Black and Latino New Yorkers as members of “criminal groups” based on association (friendship and neighborhood groups) and expression. However, the urgency of erasing the NYPD’s Criminal Group Database (aka Gang Database) has never been greater than the present moment,” said **Babe Howell, Professor of Law and Member of the Grassroots Advocates for Neighborhood Groups and Solutions (G.A.N.G.S) Coalition**. “As the racialized assault on expression and association have escalated, the NYPD’s inaccurate, secret database based on lawful activity must be eliminated. Chicago and Portland have eliminated their Gang Databases without affecting crime rates, New York can and must follow suit.”

“Black youth and youth of color in New York City continue to be unfairly targeted by the so-called gang database which leverages surveillance to racially profile and police New Yorkers,” said **Yasmine Farhang, Director of Advocacy at the Immigrant Defense Project**. “Additionally, for those youth who are non-citizens, the database further exacerbates the risks of facing ICE detention, deportation and denial of critical benefits. During this time of heightened fear and risk to immigrant New Yorkers, it is more critical than ever that we pass Intro 798.”

“Abolishing the NYPD gang database is about creating safer communities where Black and Latino youth are not treated as guilty by association without evidence or due process,” said **Anthony Posada, Supervising Attorney in the Legal Aid Society’s Community Justice Unit**. “The secretive database stereotypes entire neighborhoods as criminals and being included in it does not produce public safety. Being labeled has life-altering consequences such as heightened police encounters, increased surveillance, wrongful arrests, and, for our immigrant community members, deportation. We understand that true public safety is a result of working with the community and investing in them, not using a weapon, like the gang database, to criminalize them.”

“The NYPD’s Gang Database is a harrowing form of racial profiling that has led to the racialized police surveillance of thousands of Black and Latino New Yorkers. The Database lacks transparency and accountability while providing no public safety benefit,” said **Kevin E. Jason, Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Legal Defense Fund**. “There is no fixing a system that ensnares Black and Latino communities in aggressive enforcement based on unreliable and racialized criteria. The NYPD’s Gang Database must be abolished. We are hopeful that City Council will swiftly pass Intro 798.”

“Our communities are not criminals, they are creators, leaders, and healers. The NYPD’s gang database is nothing more than a tool of racial profiling, criminalization, and surveillance, disproportionately targeting Black and Brown youth. This is not about safety; it’s about control. It’s time to erase the database and invest in real safety—education, opportunity, and justice rooted in the power of our people,” said **El Puente Communications Manager, Fernando Sanchez Carriel**.

“The City Council should have abolished NYPD’s so-called ‘gang database’ long ago, but it’s now more urgent than ever,” said **Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.) Legal Fellow Jason Taper**. “Trump’s far-right agenda and Adams’ willingness to facilitate it pose an unprecedented threat to New Yorkers’ civil rights, including our city’s sanctuary laws. The ‘gang database’ is racial profiling that targets Black and Latinx New Yorkers, many of whom are children whose only ‘crime’ is living somewhere NYPD disfavors, wishing a friend happy birthday, or simply having friends. It is highly dangerous for

NYPD, and ICE by extension, to have access to a mass digital dragnet of pure police fiction to justify targeting BIPOC and immigrant communities. The City Council must pass Intro 798 immediately."

"The gang database stands as a hindrance to true progress. No one should be labeled as a criminal based on the actions of families, friends or where they live. Regardless of what this tool was originally meant for, its design and implementation unjustly targets Black and Latinx New Yorkers. The ends do not justify the means when it comes to racial profiling in our communities. We need to erase this harmful database and any ones like it in the future," said **Reverend Wendy Calderón-Payne, Executive Director, Urban Youth Alliance (BronxConnect)**.

"The NYPD's 'criminal group database,' otherwise known as the 'gang' database, leverages surveillance technology to racially profile and surveil young Black and Latine New Yorkers and justify more aggressive and unlawful stops, frisks, and searches," said **Jacqueline Gosdigian, Supervising Policy Counsel with Brooklyn Defenders' Criminal Defense Practice**. "We urge the City Council to abolish the NYPD's Gang Database once and for all by passing Intro 798 immediately."

"NYPD's Criminal Group Database also known as the GANG Database has not been proven to help decrease crime or promote public safety. What has been proven about this secret database, is that it can be harmful and very dangerous for Black and Latinx New Yorkers that already walk around with targets on their backs," said **Aaliyah Guillory-Nickens, Campaign Organizer at Youth Represent**. "This database stereotypes especially young black and latino New Yorkers solely based on what neighborhoods they come from, which only intensifies over-policing, hostile encounters with NYPD and wrongful arrests. There is no fixing a tool that was meant to be detrimental, the only option is to abolish it. We are counting on the City Council to pass Intro 798."

"Stop and frisk practices, as well as gang policing, continue to target Black and Latinx members of our community disparately," said **Gina Mitchell, Attorney in Charge of Law Reform and Policy at Queens Defenders**. "New Yorkers deserve transparency for how police powers are implemented, and we demand accountability when those procedures are used unfairly. Queens Defenders is proud to be a member of the G.A.N.G.S. Coalition, and we urge 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."

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