



New York City Council
Testimony of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams
Committee on Women and Gender Equity and Committee on Health
October 28, 2020

Hello, my name is Eric Adams, and I am Brooklyn's borough president, representing more than 2.6 million residents who call Brooklyn home. I want to thank Council Member Helen Rosenthal, chair of the Committee on Women and Gender Equity, and Council Member Mark Levine, chair of the Committee on Health, for convening this oversight hearing on "Sexual and Reproductive Rights in New York City."

I am testifying in support of two bills before these committees, which were submitted at my request: Intro 1662 relating to the training and inspection of lactation rooms, and Intro 1828, relating to establishing a committee on female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C).

When we opened our lactation room at Brooklyn Borough Hall in 2015, we knew it was only a first step toward improving the lives of nursing mothers and their children. Intro 1662 is a necessary follow-up to the groundbreaking legislation this Council passed in 2016 requiring lactation rooms in certain public buildings throughout New York City. Intro 1662 builds upon that legislation by ensuring this improved access is clean, comfortable, and safe at locations throughout the city. Putting the lactation rooms in place was the first piece, but we must be sure that they meet the standards necessary for safety and hygiene. When we fail to inspect what we expect, it is suspect.

Intro 1828 addresses a very real problem in New York City. While many people believe that female FGM/C are practices that only occurs overseas, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 500,000 women and girls have undergone, or are at risk of, female genital mutilation in the United States. They estimate that 13 percent of those women and girls live in the New York City metropolitan area. Those are staggering numbers, and this issue must be addressed by this Administration. One area to improve the legislation would be to include the Offices of the Borough Presidents and Public Advocate as recipients of the annual report mandated by the legislation. I thank CMs Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Rosenthal, and partners for working on this issue with my office.

I urge you to pass both of these vital pieces of legislation to protect our citizens and continue our efforts to provide true equity to women and girls in New York City.

Thank you.