

**TESTIMONY OF NEW YORK CITY MAYOR ERIC ADAMS
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
MARCH 5, 2025**

Good morning, Chairman Comer, Ranking Member Connolly, and members of the committee.

As mayor of New York City and a former police officer for 22 years, keeping New Yorkers safe is my top priority and it has been our administration's North Star. When I entered this role, my job was to help our city recover from the negative effects of COVID — most importantly, to bring crime down. As a result, overall crime was down across New York City last year, and we have now had three straight months of double-digit declines in major crimes.

I'm here today to testify on how New York City can continue to reduce crime, even as a so-called "sanctuary city."

To be clear: A "sanctuary city" classification does *not* mean our city will ever be a safe haven for violent criminals. It also does *not* give New York City the authority to violate federal immigration laws. To the contrary, New York City will always comply with city, state, and federal laws, as it does now.

Law-abiding immigrants in New York have an important role. In 2021, immigrant New Yorkers, including those who are undocumented, paid billions of dollars in taxes and contributed billions more in spending power to our economy.

Immigrants also play a vital role in the functioning of the city; this was on full display during the COVID-19 pandemic. The various immigrant residents of our city worked to keep the city moving while many other New Yorkers were able to shelter in place and work remotely. Hospitals, the food industry, and many other businesses were

able to function because of the commitment of our immigrant population.

As mayor, I do not control who enters or remains in our country, but I do have to manage the population that is within our city. In order to carry out this function without having long-term negative ramifications, I must create an atmosphere that allows every *law-abiding resident*, documented or not, to access vital services without fear of being turned over to federal authorities.

I cannot have a city where parents are afraid to send their children to school or where children are sleeping on the streets — creating the potential for child exploitation and sex trafficking. If an undocumented person refuses to seek medical care until they have a medical emergency, our city's healthcare system will be strained. And if an undocumented individual witnesses a crime, but is afraid to call 911 for fear of being turned over to federal authorities, criminals will roam free.

As a former police officer, I have seen firsthand the damage that can be done when someone is too afraid to seek out the police. Early in my career, I responded to a man who was calling out for help. We caught the suspect but when it came to filling out the police report, the individual — an undocumented man from China — said he did not want to file a report and put a target on his back with federal immigration authorities.

Nearly four decades later, our country still has not passed comprehensive immigration reform and, as a result, New York City was hit with the largest humanitarian crisis in our city's history over the last three years.

Federal law did not allow me to stop buses from entering New York City. State law required me to provide all in our city with housing and meals, and to educate children. City law makes it unlawful to collaborate with ICE for civil enforcement. We complied with all of

these legal requirements and still managed the humanitarian crisis with care and compassion, while at the same time bringing down crime, recovering our economy, and preventing any child from being forced to sleep on the streets.

Comprehensive immigration reform is long overdue. While the solution is not within my control, as a mayor, I am committed to working with federal officials — no matter who is president — to go after violent gangs and those who harm residents of our city.

That is why we have over 330 NYPD officers assigned to different federal joint task forces — over 70 of which are assigned to task forces with Homeland Security Investigations, the criminal investigations arm of ICE. Those task forces focus on many different important priorities, including going after violent gangs and child exploitation.

I look forward to sharing how New York City collaborates daily with our city, state, and federal partners to keep our city safe.

Thank you.