

NEW YORK, NY (October 20, 2023) – This week, Mayor Eric Adams announced harmful policy changes to the City’s decades-old Right-to-Shelter rule that put immigrant children and their families in harm’s way.

The [announcement](#) includes plans to [house immigrant children in congregate settings](#), which is indisputably unsafe for children, and plans to [evict children from shelters after 60 days](#) (and some [after only 28 days](#)). These changes will force immigrant families to needlessly reapply for shelter, to be reassigned to different locations, and force them to [sleep on the streets](#) as New York City heads towards winter.

The following is a statement from Christine Clarke, Chief of Litigation and Advocacy at Legal Services NYC, the nation’s largest provider of free civil legal services:

Legal Services NYC firmly believes that access to safe shelter is a fundamental human right, one that recognizes the humanity and dignity of all people and that is required by the Constitution of the State of New York. We vigorously oppose all attempts by the City to evade or suspend its constitutional obligations to shelter people and we applaud the ongoing litigation efforts of our colleagues at the Legal Aid Society and Coalition for the Homeless.

We are alarmed by NYC Mayor Eric Adams’ recent announcements targeting immigrant children. If implemented, the changes would deprive immigrant families of the opportunity for even a modicum of stability and deprive children of the ability to obtain the public education that New York’s constitution promises them. We also unequivocally condemn the apparent use of children as political props if these changes are intended to solicit federal or state financial assistance and/or deter people around the world from coming to New York. It is never acceptable to inflict suffering on families, much less their children, as a leveraging tool or to deter future immigrants.

New York City, like many cities around the world, is experiencing the effects of global displacement, climate-change-driven migration, and political instability. We cannot close our eyes to the reality that the world is changing and instead pursue short-term measures, or resort to cruel or inhumane tactics. Instead, we must rise together to meet the moment and create sustainable, long-term solutions. We stand with our clients, their families, and all people living in New York City, and support their constitutionally protected right to shelter. Every person, adult or child, deserves dignity and respect, no matter how or when they arrived at the City we all call home.

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