

# TAKEROOT JUSTICE

## Testimony Before the New York City Council Consumer and Worker Protection

### Oversight: Street Vending in NYC

December 15, 2023

The Equitable Neighborhoods practice of TakeRoot Justice is pleased to present this testimony to the Committees in support of the campaign for equitable vending conditions led by our partners at the Street Vendor Project.

TakeRoot works with grassroots groups, neighborhood organizations and community coalitions to help make sure that people of color, immigrants, and other low-income residents who have built our city are not pushed out in the name of “progress.”

We believe that vibrant street life, access to economic opportunity and food/retail at affordable prices for New Yorkers of every income level are crucial to equitable neighborhoods; thus, we echo the vendor demand for a rational, decriminalized approach to regulating vending on NYC streets. As our City’s smallest businesses, street vendors reflect the great diversity of our communities, and are a true embodiment of the entrepreneurial spirit of our city. Innovating, creating, and investing in our local economies, vendors are out every day to provide for their families and feed their neighbors—often targeted and criminalized for doing so.

This package of bills will let vendors provide the services New Yorkers want - in a regulated, predictable, enforceable system - and give them a real chance to build wealth in their neighborhoods. The City must not criminalize street vendors for trying to provide for their families, but instead cut the red tape and facilitate a healthy regulatory environment for our smallest businesses to thrive

The City Council can act now to ensure a functioning regulatory system for vendors by supporting the passage of **Int. 1264 and Intro 1253** with urgency, as part of the Street Vendor Reform legislative package. I also support the passage of **Intros 1060, 1062, and 1188**.

**Intro 1264 introduced by Council Member Krishnan**, reduces the criminal liability on food and merchandise vending, ensures that our city’s smallest businesses face civil, rather than criminal summonses. No one should be at risk of arrest for being 1 inch too far from the curb, or having a box on the ground, especially in an industry comprised of primarily immigrants.

Furthermore, it was included as a unanimous recommendation from Mayor Adams' [Street Vendor Advisory Board](#), which included representatives from city agencies, street vendors, retail food stores, property owners, small businesses, and community organizations.

Siting rules and regulations for licensed and permitted vendors are highly regulated, noting the time, place and manner in which vendors must operate. **Intro 1253 introduced by Council Member De La Rosa** continues this tradition, but it addresses a critical safety hazard that vendors face, as it creates a safety hazard which places them a foot and a half or less from the curb - very close to speeding cars, and easily at risk of displacement from longtime vending locations.

While not on the agenda today, we look forward to the City Council addressing the most critical reform to the street vending industry as soon as we enter the new year – reforming the vendor permitting system as outlined in **Intro 1270**. That bill outlines measures to ensure business licensing and regulatory compliance of all mobile food and merchandise in order to maintain an orderly, regulated street vending system while creating economic opportunity for our City's smallest businesses.

Today, many would-be entrepreneurs are forced to rely on underground markets or work without a license due to the state of our City's street vending system, taking advantage of workers, customers, and fellow small businesses.

Thank you for accepting our testimony into the record and considering it carefully. It is TakeRoot's hope that the City Council takes the critical step of passing all of the legislation on the agenda today, and ensuring Intro 1270 is on the agenda early next session.

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