



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## Senator Rivera and Colleagues Send Comprehensive Policy Proposal to House Newly Arrived Asylum Seekers to Mayor

GUSTAVO RIVERA October 21, 2022

| ISSUE: **ASYLUM SEEKERS, HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS**

State Senators Gustavo Rivera and Jessica Ramos, Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas, and Councilmember Shahana Hanif delivered a letter to Mayor Eric Adams

NEW YORK, NY- On Thursday afternoon, Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas, State Senators Jessica Ramos and Gustavo Rivera, and Councilmember Shahana Hanif delivered a letter to Mayor Eric Adams that called on his administration to move away from the Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Center (HERRC) model for asylum seekers and consider indoor, temporary shelter options instead. The letter is in direct response to the Mayor's plans that are already underway to relocate **approximately 500 asylum seekers** from the tent encampments on Orchard Beach to a new site on Randall's Island.

In their co-authored letter, the elected officials outlined a series of policy proposals that serve as an alternative to the HERRC model. These proposals ensure asylum seekers have access to vital resources, can stay in safe, indoor temporary shelter, and have a path to obtaining permanent housing. More specifically, the letter calls on the Mayor and his administration to do the following:

- Utilize closed union hotel rooms for temporary shelter as soon as possible;

- Consider using the Jacob Javits Center as a welcome center and resource hub. Javits is in close proximity to the Port Authority, where many asylum seekers will continue to arrive, and is well-equipped to serve all of the aforementioned functions;
- Ensure asylum seekers have the information they need to enter the shelter system and are aware of their right to shelter.
- Decrease the average length of shelter stays, which has ballooned in recent years due to unnecessary barriers to permanent housing placement, to free up more beds for new arrivals;
- Expand CityFHEPS eligibility to asylum seekers and other non-citizens to take pressure off the shelter system and move people into more stable housing;
- Increase staffing capacity at the NYC Commission on Human Rights and the Department of Social Services to allow the City to move through the backlog of CityFHEPS and Section 8 discrimination cases and free up space in the shelter system; and
- Require every shelter setup to adhere to Right-To-Shelter mandates and designate the Department of Homeless Services to manage any new shelters and ensure compliance.