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**Testimony by New York State Senator Brad Hoylman
before the New York City Council Committee on Civil Rights
Regarding Anti-LGBT Hate Crimes**

October 31, 2013

My name is Brad Hoylman and I represent New York State's 27th Senate District. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the recent rise in anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) crimes in New York City.

As you know, over the past year, we have seen a dramatic rise in anti-LGBT hate crimes in New York City, which should be a wake-up call for all New Yorkers. The increase in anti-LGBT hate crimes, and the violent and deadly nature of some of these crimes, presents a critical problem for our city. I want to thank the Council, the Committee on Civil Rights, and Chairwoman Deborah Rose for addressing this important issue.

Through the middle of August, the New York Police Department reported that there were 68 anti-gay hate crimes this year -- including 41 assaults -- up from 54 in all of 2012. These crimes, which included two murders, are a shocking reminder of the intolerance and hate still present in our city.

As government officials, we have a responsibility to protect our city and its citizens from such vicious, bias-motivated attacks. The harm caused by crimes motivated by intolerance and hate is not limited to the individual victims. Hate crimes send a powerful and fear-inducing message to all members of a community, and can discourage entire groups of people from participating in aspects of our civil life. We must act formidably in the face of such crimes.

In June of this year, I held a public forum to assess the implementation and efficacy of New York State's Hate Crimes Law (Chapter 107, Laws of New York, 2000). Testimony was given by many hate crimes experts, advocates and government officials, including

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Council Member Daniel Dromm, and subsequently released a report on the findings. The primary recommendations included:

- An audit by the New York State Comptroller of state law enforcement agencies to examine their compliance with the Executive Law's hate crimes reporting requirement and to assess the training they are providing in identifying, responding to and investigating hate crimes.
- Legally requiring periodic, systematic reviews of the Hate Crimes Law to ensure ongoing monitoring of data collection and reporting, law enforcement training, and the impact of the Law on deterrence, punishment, and enforcement.
- Mandating police training in identifying, responding to and reporting hate crimes, and in cultural competency – understanding different cultural groups in order to best handle cases of people from diverse groups in the state.
- Passing New York State's *Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act* (S 195/A 4226) to expand the scope of protected categories to include gender identity or expression to match New York City's existing law.

Secondary recommendations included ensuring full enforcement of the New York State *Dignity For All Students Act (DASA)* which went into effect in June 2012. *DASA* incorporates tolerance, anti-bullying and anti-harassment education into existing civility education for public school grades K-12. It further requires that schools report bullying and harassment to the New York State Department of Education and have at least one staff member trained in recognizing and addressing bullying, harassment and discrimination. Once our schools routinely promote multiculturalism, understanding of other backgrounds and identities, and strong anti-bullying and anti-hate programs, we will begin to change youth perspectives and actions.

While these recommendations will assist in New York's efforts to address hate crimes, there is more we can do to prevent hate crimes in our city and more effectively address such incidents when they do occur. I appreciate the City Council's Committee on Civil Rights holding this hearing today specifically on addressing anti-LGBT hate crimes and I thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify.