



NORTH BROOKLYN ELECTED OFFICIALS' STATEMENT ON THE USE OF SCHOOL GYMS AS MIGRANT SHELTERS

As North Brooklyn elected officials, we were notified alongside our school leaders about the administration's plans to use three standalone school gym facilities in our district to shelter migrants, a direct result of the Mayor's Executive Order 402, which suspends many Right To Shelter laws. Elected offices are not consulted on these emergency shelters.

We once again immediately expressed concerns about the equitable distribution of shelters in our district, and have been focused on obtaining more info about how the sites will be operated, for how long, and mitigating disruption of school activities like recess, special events, and Summer Rising programs, while also ensuring that this new location is safe for both folks who will be housed in it and the surrounding community. We are in constant communication with school leadership, and working with each site to ensure that students' school days and activities are impacted as little as possible.

While the selection of our school facilities is far from ideal, the people who may occupy them are not doing so by choice. From fleeing violence and abject poverty to being treated as political props and bused to NYC by callous elected officials in other states, these folks have been through hell. These migrants are hoping to integrate into our communities, and they are our new neighbors. They are no different than our parents or grandparents who came to this country ten, fifty, or a hundred years ago. We hope everyone can take a beat and be thoughtful about the weight of the words we use, and how words can affect those around us.

This humanitarian crisis is not new, so we continue to wonder: where is the comprehensive plan from the City, State, and Federal governments? This is not just an NYC issue - it affects all of us, and how we respond speaks volumes about our character as a society. The Williamsburg and Bushwick communities have a long history of rising up to help one another and welcoming new neighbors, and with the support of both this community and a more thoughtful and thoroughly-funded plan from State and Federal leaders, we know we can continue that tradition.

This is an opportunity for all of us to work together in the face of the urgency that this humanitarian crisis has brought to us, to show our communities, and especially our children, compassion, and care for our new neighbors.

Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez

Council Member Lincoln Restler

State Senator Julia Salazar

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez

Assembly Member Maritza Davila

Assembly Member Emily Gallagher