

2020 Letter to NY State Senator Brian Benjamin:

Dear Senator Benjamin,

The Greater Harlem Coalition, a group of more than 6,000 members with an expected 10,000 by year's end, is requesting legislative action to curtail the negative impact of methadone clinics in Harlem.

As our representatives to the New York State Assembly and Senate, you have said "tell me what you would like to see done to mitigate the problems caused by these methadone clinics in Harlem", and we are here today with a response.

Bill A0307 has languished in the Mental Health Committee of the Assembly for almost a decade, and there have been no major changes regulating these clinics in years. During that time, OASAS licensed clinics have expanded in our community, attracting even greater numbers of illegal drug sellers, and increasingly eroded our quality of life by increasing crime, exposing young children to drugs and an unsafe environment, reducing area property values, and negatively impacting Harlem businesses, particularly small businesses.

We are requesting the following amendments to the current bill and/or that a new bill be introduced to address the oversaturation of methadone clinics in Harlem.

Additional regulations should require:

1. A moratorium on the introduction of any new, or the expansion of any existing, clinics in Central and East Harlem. Owner/operators should pay punitive fines for violations, and their actions should trigger an immediate review and possible suspension of their OASAS license for significant violations.

2. Any new clinic opening in New York City should not be placed within 1000 feet of a school, park, church, or existing OASAS licensed program, instead of 500 feet as currently slated.

3. All methadone clinic license issuances and renewals must include an annual environmental impact assessment, to include quality-of-life metrics, conducted by the local police department and select community-based institutions. If the assessment shows clinics have a negative impact on the neighboring community, a license should not be granted or renewed.

- a. We suggest the local police department conduct this review because they issue and reject similar licenses for businesses that may infringe on quality of life. We are of the opinion that a business' ability to serve alcohol (as an example of something the NYPD regulates) has not caused nearly as much damage to quality of life as these clinics.

4. Clinic owner/operators pay a recurring community impacts fee to address quality of life concerns and complaints caused by patients within a 7-block radius of these clinics. The citizens of New

York should not have to suffer through the problems these clinics cause, especially since these clinics make millions of dollars for their owner/operators.

The evidence is irrefutable that these clinics have repeatedly violated community norms, overburdened public resources, and negatively impacted economic development. This should not be the case, and the passage of Bill A0307, or new bills like it, with the amendments we requested, would create the change we are looking for.

We are requesting that you respond to this letter in writing within two weeks. Your response should include timelines that show how you will move forward with our legislative request, including a conversation with us about how these regulations should be framed.

We look forward to hearing from you and working together to improve our community.

Sincerely, Greater Harlem Coalition Member Organizations:

118 Street Block Association 120th Street Block Association 128th Street Block Association 1775 Houses Tenants Association 97-98 Lexington & Park Ave. Neighbors A. Philip Randolph Square Neighborhood Alliance A.K. Houses Tenants Association Advocates 4 The Community Chaiwali Chocolat Restaurant & Bar CIVITAS Columbus Distributors Compass Realty Dorrence Brooks Property Owners & Residents Association Edward Jones Elaine Perry Associates Ephesus SDA Church Freeland Liquor Friendly Hands Ministry Friends of the Harriett Tubman Monument Gastiaburo + Stella Real Estate Ginjan Cafe Graham Court Renters Association Greater Calvary Baptist Church Halstead Manhattan Hamilton Terrace Block Association Harlem Business Alliance Harlem Lofts Harlem Park to Park Harlem Properties Inc. Harlem Shake Harlem Wine Gallery Harlem Home Heart to Heart Community Outreach II Cafe Latte 1 II Cafe Latte 2 Jacqueline Allmond Cuisine INC Lenox to 5th 124th Street Block Association LenoxFive 127th Street Block Association Malcolm Pharmacy Mirada Home Owners Association MXB United Neighbors United of West 132nd Street Block Association New York Council for Housing Development Fund Companies, Inc. Open Hands Legal Services Paris Blues Jazz Club Progressives Educating New Yorkers, Inc. R. Kenyatta Punter and Associates Rubys VintageSayers and Doers Silicon Harlem Sotto Casa Pizzeria Sugar Hill Concerned Neighbors Group The 100-168 West 121st Street Resident Block Association The Harlem Neighborhood Block Association The Mount Morris Park Community Improvement Association The new 123rd Street Block Association (Lenox – 7th) The United New Church of Christ The West 130th Street Homeowners Association The West 132nd Street Block Association Union Settlement House Upholstery Lab Uptown Townhouse Valerie's Signature Salon West 119th Block Association West 121st Street Block Association West 126th Street Block Association West 135th Street Block Association West 136th Street Block Association Wynn Optics

CC: Govenor Andrew Coumo Mayor Bill DeBlasio Dermot Shea, Police Commissioner Chauncey Parker, Deputy Commissioner, NYPD Dr. Dave Chokski, Health Commissioner Hillary Kunins, DoHMH Steven Hanson, OASAS Zoraida Diaz, OASAS Diana Ayala, NYC Council Member Bill Perkins, NYC Council Member Brad Lander, NYC Council Member Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President Scott Stringer, NYC Comptroller Shaun Donovan, Mayoral Candidate Alvin Bragg, NYC DA Candidate Tali Farhadian Weinstein, NYC DA Candidate Inspector Brown, 28th Precinct

Shatic Mitchell, CB10 District Manager Dean Baquet, Executive Editor, NY Times Robert York, Editor, NY Daily News Michelle Gotthel, Editor, NY Post