



## Testimony to the New York City Council Committee on Contracts

January 27, 2026

Good afternoon Chair Restler and members of the Council Committee on Contracts. My name is Alex Camarda, and I am a Senior Policy Advisor for Reinvent Albany. Reinvent Albany is a watchdog organization that advocates for open and accountable government in New York.

Reinvent Albany supports all three bills before the Council today, with some recommendations to strengthen them. We also have one new proposal for your consideration.

There are multiple ongoing investigations into the Adams administration for its [\\$432 million emergency contract with DocGo](#) providing temporary housing for asylees, its payments to hotel operators, and several other contracts. It's possible that even more will come to light as time passes. We are glad to see the Council moving quickly to embrace its oversight role and move legislation to ensure transparency of contracts.

### 1. [Int. No. 156 \(Won\)](#) – **Public Procurement Interface**

We support Councilmember Julie Won's [Int. No. 156](#) that appears to take the long-overdue step of establishing the City's [PASSPort Public web portal](#) in law by requiring disclosure of contract-related information in "public procurement interfaces." PASSPort Public is the natural place to put this information as it already provides much useful information. Establishing PASSPort Public in the Charter will help ensure continued transparency. Yet there are several gaps in disclosure, and there is always the risk that the portal could be taken down since it is not codified.

While we support the legislation, we think Int. No 156 could be improved through the following amendments:

#### **a. Require that the portal publish contracts.**

The NYC Charter [already requires](#) that the City publish contracts available to the public, though PASSPort does not seem to include any contracts. As far as we can tell, published city contracts are scattered throughout [NYC.gov](#), such as through the [Office of Labor Relations](#) and the [Department of Design and Construction](#). The bill should add this

requirement and the Council should find out why contracts aren't being made more widely available.

**b. Require the city's "caution list" of vendors to be published and archived.**

Currently, this list is only available by Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request. Reinvent Albany has received this list via FOIL and [per the OpenRecords portal](#). It is a commonly requested item – our search found 11 requests in 2025 alone for the caution list, and 89 requests since 2017 from the Mayor's Office of Contract Services. The list includes debarred entities and those found to be non-responsible by the City. The federal government publishes a database of debarred and/or non-responsible entities (called "exclusions") that is accessible within their System for Award Management (SAM) website. SAM provides datasets of current and past "exclusions" for [public download](#) that are updated twice annually, and an archive of lists from 2015 to present is available on the website with no sign-in required.

**c. Require that the portal be machine-readable and downloadable.**

Under this bill, the law will only require the portal being published and nothing more. The public will be able to better analyze the data if the Council mandates making the portal accessible for analysis by the public. We recommend making the data available in a machine-readable tabular format by adding the following definition:

*"Tabular format" shall mean a systematic organization of data into rows and columns for easy interpretation, including but not limited to a spreadsheet or csv file.*

And the following requirement:

*Data shall be published in machine-readable tabular format in a manner that permits quantitative analysis. The data shall be available for bulk download in tabular format, as defined in subdivision one of section four hundred thirty-three-b of this chapter.*

**d. The Chief Procurement Officer should examine existing portals and disclosure requirements before designing the public procurement interfaces.**

Section 1(c) should charge the City Chief Procurement Officer with reviewing PASSPort Public, the City Record, City agency procurement plans that forecast anticipated contracting for the next fiscal year (Local Laws 1 of 2013 and 63 of 2011), FISA (6-116.2.a of the Administrative Code), and section 6-131 of the Administrative Code. Some of the requested information in the bill is or should be in these existing sites, documents and systems, and the Chief Procurement Officer should try to organize and

integrate this information in the publicly facing interfaces. Without a strong mandate, government agencies often do the bare minimum when it comes to portal design, and more specific requirements would go a long way toward ensuring the portal is useful to the public.

**e. Require NYC’s Chief Procurement Officer to conduct a beta test of the portal disclosing the information in the bill with interested stakeholders to provide feedback.** After the Chief Procurement Officer has conducted a review of existing portals, systems and requirements, and disclosed contract information in PASSPort Public or other public interfaces, it should review its design with interested stakeholders before making the site public.

**2. [Int. No. 163 \(Menin\)](#) – Require joint approval of extension of emergency contracts**

This bill would require that the Corporation Counsel and City Comptroller must both approve the extension of an emergency contract after 30 days.

Reinvent Albany supports this bill and believes it would create better oversight of emergency contracts, a common way for executives to get around the law and curtail Comptroller review. We detailed in our October 2022 report, “[Empire State of Emergency](#),” how state governors use states of emergency to evade Comptroller review. Emergency contracts have been abused by past mayoral administrations as well.

We believe the bill would be stronger if it required that the Administration notify the public within 15 days of renewal of an emergency contract, rather than “as is practicable” in the bill. We propose adding a section 1-a to the bill that amends section 325 of Chapter 13 of the NYC Charter to require notice to the public via the City Record (deletion and additions by Reinvent Albany):

*d. The notice required by subparagraph a of paragraph three of subdivision a of this section shall not apply to contracts awarded on an emergency basis pursuant to section three hundred fifteen, provided that the agency shall, ~~as soon as is practicable,~~ within 15 days publish notice that such a contract or renewal of a contract has been entered into, pursuant to rules of the procurement policy board, nor shall such notice requirements apply where the notice would disclose litigation strategy or otherwise impair the conduct of litigation by the city.*

**3. [Int. No. 164 \(Menin\)](#) – Maintain information on subcontractors and penalties for providing false information in contracting**

We support increasing the range of penalties to \$1,000-\$100,000 from \$100-\$1,000 for making false statements related to contracting. This will provide a stronger deterrent and greater consequences for misleading government.

We also generally support contractors providing more information on subcontractors to the government. This bill appears to require more detailed subcontractor information be included in the Financial Information Services Agency (FISA) database. Much of this information appears to be reported for another contracts database in the same section of law which may ease providing it in the FISA database.

The bill should also provide titles for unnamed sections of law 6-109, 6-111.1, 6-125, 6-128, and 6-144 of the Contracts and Purchases Chapter as it does for 6-116.2. This will help the public and others researching the law.

#### **4. Introduce new legislation placing doing-business campaign contribution limits on companies receiving emergency contracts**

The existing doing-business restrictions limiting campaign contributions exempt companies receiving emergency contracts (see section 18(a) of 3-702 of Chapter 7 of the City's Administrative Code and [the Campaign Finance Board's website interpreting the statute](#)).

This is a loophole in city law. The Council could address this by introducing legislation that removes this exemption from the definition of "business dealings with the city." It is also notable that companies winning contracts that are competitively bid are also not subject to lower campaign contribution limits under the City's doing business restrictions.

Thank you. We welcome any questions you may have.