For Immediate Release

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65 ORGANIZATIONS CALL ON CITY OF NEW YORK TO HALT DANGEROUS IDNYC PLAN

Groups testify at City Council Immigration Committee hearing, opposing the administration's plan to add a smart chip to the existing IDNYC identity cards for banking services, the MTA or other systems

Advocates and experts will detail how the administration's plan would expose IDNYC cardholders to serious and unwarranted privacy, surveillance, and financial risks

NEW YORK, NY - On Wednesday, immigrant and civil rights organizations will tell the New York City Council that adding a smart chip to IDNYC cards could put cardholders in danger. The groups will be testifying at the Council's Committee on Immigration hearing in support of a bill to prohibit a smart chip from being added to the New York City identity card (Int 1706).

Advocates will also share a letter signed by 65 New York based organizations--including community, labor, immigrant, civil rights, legal services, and economic justice organizations--expressing "united and unqualified opposition to the administration's plan to add financial technology and a host of integrations to NYC's municipal identification (IDNYC) cards, which are held by more than 1.2 million New Yorkers."

Since learning of this proposal over a year ago, the organizations, which were actively involved in the initial development and promotion of the IDNYC, have expressed wide-ranging concerns about the De Blasio administration's proposal to integrate financial, transit and other functions on the IDNYC by adding a smart chip. In their testimonies, the groups will demonstrate that, particularly in the context of a hostile federal administration, the risks to which the proposed changes would expose New Yorkers in the IDNYC program far outweigh any potential benefits. In an earlier hearing in February and in meetings with the administration, the groups have repeatedly expressed that it would facilitate large-scale data collection about undocumented immigrants and other New Yorkers who rely on IDNYC as their primary form of photo identification, and who face specific surveillance and privacy risks.

The groups have also expressed their support for pathways to financial inclusion and economic justice for low-income New Yorkers, but are clear that the IDNYC is not the vehicle for this.

The administration has solicited pitches from financial technology (fintech) and other firms to embed an EMV/contact and RFID/contactless "smart chip" in IDNYC identity cards, to enable

integration of the ID with a broad range of public and private systems, including financial services, the MTA, and potentially other NYC agencies and services.

"Six years ago, New York City responded to a community-led campaign for a government-issued ID to expand rights and protections for New Yorkers who were previously unable to access such identification. Privacy and security for ID holders was a guiding principle. Adding a so-called "smart chip" on the IDNYC now puts cardholders at risk of increased data collection and tracking. At a time when the very people who rely on the IDNYC are at heightened vulnerability to surveillance and targeting by police and ICE, communities are saying it is imperative that the City does not take any steps that could expose IDNYC cardholders to additional risk," said **Mizue Aizeki, Deputy Director of the Immigrant Defense Project.**

"The strong record of the IDNYC program has shown that well-designed policies to give all New Yorkers access to the city can bring enormous benefits to our communities. At a time when we are faced with an out-of-control federal administration, New York must work to preserve this program and protect our communities. We should not make any drastic changes that will place the core function of the identification at risk and put the information and protection of New Yorkers in danger," said **Natalia Aristizabal, Co-Director of Organizing at Make the Road New York.**

"The IDNYC smart chip plan would expose New Yorkers to serious privacy, surveillance, data collection, consumer protection, and financial risks that far outweigh any potential benefits. We urge City Council to pass Int. 1706, to ensure the continued integrity of the IDNYC program and the safety of undocumented, homeless, and other New Yorkers who rely on IDNYC in their daily lives. We look forward to working with the City Council and de Blasio administration to advance truly progressive and equitable approaches to financial justice and economic inclusion, and other shared goals," said **Deyanira Del Rio, co-director of New Economy Project**.

"IDNYC has been a lifeline for integration and inclusion for many immigrant New Yorkers, and its success is now threatened by the potential addition of smart chip technology. At a time when immigrants are under near constant attack from a hostile federal administration, it's essential that our elected officials take steps to safeguard residents from unintended and unwarranted risks and exposure of personal data. None of us want to endure the consequences of a data breach, let alone the most vulnerable among us, especially when it could be avoided. We are grateful to Council Member Menchaca and City Council for introducing legislation that would protect the privacy of all New Yorkers so that they can continue to safely use their IDNYC, and look forward to working together to ensure IDNYC's long-term success," said **Betsy Plum, VP of Policy, New York Immigration Coalition.**

"The IDNYC program was originally conceived to serve undocumented, homeless, and transgender New Yorkers without government identification. Proposals to layer it with contactless digital technology so that it can be used as a digital banking or MTA card pose serious privacy risks to the New Yorkers it was supposed to protect. Adding contactless technology and other unsecure technology to the IDNYC program expose cardholders to the risk of surveillance and tracking. This goes against the very reasons why the municipal ID was

created in the first place," said **Jonathan Stribling-Uss, a technologist fellow at the New York Civil Liberties Union.**