

Dear New York State Legislature,

My name is Eric Nava-Perez, I was born, raised, and still live in East Harlem, New York City. Presently, I work as the Latinx & Spanish speaking member organizer at the Street Vendor Project (SVP). The SVP is a member-led organization with more than 2,000 members who are working to create a vendor led movement for permanent change. Our organization works and advocates for the rights of street vendors across New York City. I am here today to voice my support for formalizing the street vending industry in cities with a population of one million or more. This position of mine is supported by language in the following bills: S1175A (Ramos) / A5081 (Gonzalez-Rojas). We urge the state legislature to include a one time allocation of \$19 million in this year's budget to formalize the street vending industry in cities with a population of one million.

Before joining the SVP team I volunteered in a local mutual aid food distribution in my neighborhood and it shocked me at how many of my neighbors, some who sold food as vendors, were lining up for food themselves. My father's closest friend is a food vendor and I have had several conversations with him about his business. He has his mobile food vendor license but he is unable to obtain a permit for his vending unit. Most of his customer base are other working class people that serve the general public, either as food delivery workers in the gig economy or in the ever important construction industry, and they would all benefit from legalizing street vending in our city. For one, it would allow vendors to promote their business without fear of repercussion or persecution by city agencies, including the police department. Another benefit is that it will generate revenues for the state and profits for our city. For customers, it will diversify the options of food and many other products as well as drive some prices down.

It's time to formalize the street vending industry and to put an end to the system that has and continues to criminalize valued community members and would-be entrepreneurs. It is the responsibility of the state to act, to effectively regulate this industry and create good jobs for New Yorkers. Including street vendor formalization in this year's budget will benefit our state's smallest businesses, benefit the state with increased sales tax revenue, and create good jobs for New Yorkers to be the owners of their own small businesses. To end my statement, I want to reiterate mine and SVP's support to invest the sum of \$19 million to support the legalization of the street vending industry.

Thank you for your time and for providing this space to testify before you this afternoon.

Eric Nava-Perez