



September 21, 2023

Dear Chair Garodnick,

I am writing on behalf of the Freelancers Union to express our enthusiastic support for Mayor Eric Adams' proposed citywide zoning text amendment, *City of Yes for Economic Opportunity*. Freelancers Union is a national nonprofit organization representing over 95,000 freelancers in the five boroughs and advocating for the rights and interests of independent workers, and small business owners.

Our membership represents a diverse and dynamic group of individuals who rely on flexible work arrangements and entrepreneurship to earn a living. Freelancers and small business owners are integral contributors to New York City's economic vitality, and they face unique challenges that necessitate innovative solutions.

The proposal's focus on enhancing accessibility to business spaces is a game-changer. Small business owners and solo entrepreneurs often grapple with the high costs of commercial real estate in the city. By allowing more types of businesses on ground and upper floors, the city will ease the burden on our members to find affordable and suitable locations to engage with clients and customers.

Moreover, the proposal's support for emerging industries represents increased opportunities for independent workers looking to innovate and grow in evolving sectors. Modernized regulations for industries provide a conducive environment for startups and creative ventures. Independent workers can seize these regulatory updates to scale their operations and remain competitive in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

I also write to express our firm support for the removal of dance-related restrictions from zoning regulations. This move represents a crucial step in addressing a historical injustice that emerged in the wake of the controversial cabaret law's repeal which I shepherded during my time as a NYC Council Member. It's imperative to acknowledge that the implementation and enforcement of this law were marred by racial bias and selectivity and it is time to rectify these wrongs and let NYC dance!

We believe that the *City of Yes Economic Opportunity* proposal represents a positive step forward for New York City and a significant boon for the freelance and small business community. By supporting this proposal, the city can demonstrate its commitment to fostering entrepreneurship, economic growth, and the well-being of its residents.

We commend the city and DCP for its efforts in this regard and stand ready to assist in any way possible to ensure the successful implementation of this proposal. We look forward to witnessing the positive impact it will have on our members and the broader New York City community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Espinal'.

Rafael Espinal, Executive Director