



## THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK OFFICE OF MARGARET S. CHIN

250 Broadway, Suite 1882  
New York, NY 10007

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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Contact: Sam Spokony (212) 788-7259, [sspokony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:sspokony@council.nyc.gov)

### **COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN INTRODUCES LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE VITAL PROTECTIONS TO STREET VENDORS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

Today, Council Member Margaret Chin introduced legislation that will provide financial security and peace of mind to the families of New York City street vendors, by allowing any vendor who becomes too sick to work to transfer their vending license to a family member who can continue to run the business.

Street vendors and their families currently face extreme financial hardship and uncertainty in situations where the vendor — often the family's primary breadwinner — suffers debilitating illness, incapacitation or death. In those cases, the vendor's family members are generally unable to legally continue running the business, because the vending license cannot be transferred to a different person. The result is that the family members can either no longer support themselves financially, or are forced to continue running the business without a proper license, thereby facing numerous tickets and/or arrests by police. Either way, the outcome is deeply negative and destructive for those families as they struggle to get by.

This difficult issue was recently documented in a New York Times article about Chun Yin, the wife of a street vendor who could no longer run his business due to illness. For more than a decade, Ms. Yin was forced to illegally operate the business, since she and her husband desperately needed the income but were unable to transfer his license to her name. During that time, she endured numerous arrests. In June, the City's Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) finally agreed to temporarily transfer the license to Ms. Yin, after repeated efforts by Council Member Chin, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Chinatown activists.

Although Ms. Yin was eventually able to reach a positive outcome, her situation remains somewhat uncertain since the transfer is only temporary. Overall, this issue remains problematic because DCA is still not required transfer the license to a family member in these situations.

The legislation introduced today by Council Member Chin (Intro No. 432) will solve that problem by clearly requiring DCA to transfer the full vending license to a family member in cases where the primary vendor becomes too sick or incapacitated to work. Under this bill, the families of those vendors will no longer have to suffer the additional pain of financial hardship. Instead, the family will be able to fairly and legally continue supporting themselves by sustaining their own business.

"These are stories we can't ignore — and this bill is about doing the right thing for our city's hardworking street vendors and their families," **said Council Member Chin.** "Vendors and their families already face great challenges as they struggle to get by, and current City regulations only create further hardship in times of debilitating illness or death. We must change that. We must make it right.

"As with any other small business, the owner's death or disability should not prevent his or her family from taking over in order to continue supporting themselves. This must be a legal right for our citizens. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make sure this bill is passed, so New York City can provide this fundamental protection to its street vendor community."

The legislation also closes potential loopholes by stating that, in cases where the vendor dies or is too sick to submit the transfer application, a family member can legally submit the transfer application in place of the original vendor.

This effort already has the strong support of the Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center, a leading voice for street vendor advocacy in New York City.

“Street vendors struggle every day to support themselves and their families,” **said Sean Basinski, director of the Street Vendor Project at the Urban Justice Center.** “The waiting list to get a license can be more than 25 years. We support this bill, and we appreciate Council Member Chin’s efforts to get vending permits and licenses to the people who need them most.”

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