



URGENT LETTER CONCERNING CHILDREN'S SAFETY

From: Safe and Supervised Parenting Time Coalition

Date: July 15, 2025

We are writing to express deep concern over the impending closure of Safe Horizon's Supervised Visitation Program (SVP) in the Bronx, Queens and Staten Island due to the lapse in city-contracted funding. This pause will irreparably harm thousands of vulnerable children and families—severing vital parental relationships, intensifying existing trauma, and stripping children of their right to safe and structured time with non-custodial parents.

The Safe Horizon Supervised Visitation Centers are essential resources for vulnerable families, with the Bronx site serving as the only facility of its kind in the borough. All the centers play a crucial role in helping parents comply with court-ordered visitation while maintaining meaningful, monitored contact with their children.

The Children's Law Center, one of the state's largest legal service providers representing children in custody and visitation proceedings, has brought together a Coalition of providers for children. Together, the signatories below are united in profound concern. For decades, we have worked alongside Safe Horizon and other providers to ensure children have access to safe, structured, and nurturing relationships with both parents whenever possible. We see firsthand how supervised visitation reduces trauma, de-escalates conflict, and lays the groundwork for more stable, long-term family outcomes.

Each year, more than 200,000 families turn to New York's Family and Supreme Courts for help navigating custody and visitation. We estimate that in at least 18,000 of those cases, supervised visitation is potentially appropriate—often due to domestic violence, substance use, or serious mental health concerns. Even with current funding, families already face waitlists ranging from two months to over a year. Now, with the Safe Horizon program's closure, these delays will increase, and families will experience further breakdown. When children are cut off from a parent for extended periods, ambivalence turns into fear, and emotional distance becomes estrangement. Children grow anxious and confused, often internalizing the absence as abandonment or rejection.

With this closure, the future of court-involved families in the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island becomes dangerously uncertain. Judges and families will be left with no good options: proceed with unsupervised visits and risk the safety of children and custodial parent, or suspend visitation altogether, effectively erasing the role of the non-custodial parent. Neither outcome serves the best interests of the child.

Children in Manhattan and Brooklyn will not be spared from the impact of these closures, as families from the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island will be forced to seek services there. This will overwhelm the already-limited number of supervised visitation providers in the former boroughs, leading to even longer delays before parents and children can safely reconnect.

Let us be clear: the City's temporary lapse in funding has real and immediate consequences. It is the quiet dismantling of a constitutional relationship. When supervised visitation cannot be facilitated for court-ordered cases, children are effectively denied a relationship with their parent without due process—a direct violation of fundamental rights. This is not hyperbole; it is a legal and human reality.

Moreover, while the City's efforts to restore funding through a new procurement process are welcome and necessary, the broader problem is systemic. The City's investment has long served as a band-aid, never sufficient to meet the enormous need for supervised visitation across courts statewide. We are grateful for the City's leadership—but this moment must galvanize broader action at the state level. The State Senate's reluctance to pass the Safe and Structured Parenting Time Bill (A65A/S3938), despite its passage in the Assembly, has left glaring service gaps unaddressed and allowed inequity in access to persist. We implore you to act now.

We are calling on your offices to:

1. **Provide immediate emergency support to prevent the closure of Safe Horizon's Bronx, Queens and Staten Island Supervised Visitation Program** to ensure continued participation in SVP for high-need families.
2. **Fully restore and expand dedicated funding for supervised visitation services across New York City and the state**, alongside transparency and speed in procurement processes to prevent future lapses in essential services.
3. **Champion a \$20 million statewide investment, as proposed in A65A**, to build a comprehensive, culturally responsive supervised visitation system that meets the needs of all New York families—regardless of income or geography.

Children should not be collateral damage in bureaucratic delays or legislative inaction. They deserve access to both of their parents when it is safe to do so and consented upon, and a belief in the systems that are built to protect them.

We urge your immediate attention to this crisis and welcome an opportunity to speak further on the path forward.

Signed:



The Children's Law Center

Family Legal Care

Her Justice

Lawyers For Children

NYLAG

Sanctuary for Families

Shalom Task Force

Violence Intervention Program

**New York State Coalition Against
Domestic Violence**

Urban Resource Institute NYC