



GENDER EQUITY FOR A JUST RECOVERY



a plan by

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for NYC Comptroller

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Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, glaring gender and racial disparities threatened the long-term prosperity of New York City's families, neighborhoods, and economy. Black women in NYC make 57 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-hispanic men. Latinas in New York City make even less at 49 cents for every dollar paid to white men. Child care costs are the biggest expenses for many families, and women of color in particular bear the responsibility (and receive the low pay) for care work.

The pandemic has been devastating for working women, across professions and income levels. Black and Latina women in particular have been most impacted. Over the course of the pandemic, 2.3 million women have left the workforce entirely. Job losses have been concentrated in retail and hospitality sectors that predominantly employ women of color, leading to Black and Latina women facing the highest rates of job losses and slowest rate of return to work.

More than half of NYC's women caretakers had their working hours cut during the pandemic, and women of color were far less likely to have paid leave available to them. The burden of remote school and child care closures fell overwhelmingly on moms, amplifying inequalities in child care and domestic labor, and straining already precarious work-life balance and mental health for women of all incomes.

Brad knows how hard this pandemic has been for women, and understands that the solutions must tackle longstanding, systemic inequities in pay, support, and representation.

Brad has a long track record as a champion for gender equity in New York City, leading successful fights to strengthen the anti-discrimination and harassment protections of the New York City Human Rights Law, guarantee a stable work week and predictable schedules for fast-food and retail workers and prevent wage theft from freelancers (fields where women predominate), pushing for investments in child care, and fighting for abortion rights and reproductive health care.

NYC's economic recovery depends on whether we can make our a place where families can afford to live and thrive, and where women have robust opportunities for dignity and success in the workplace, and full equality from the classroom to the boardroom to City Hall. Brad is committed to taking an intersectional feminist approach to improving pay and working conditions, expanding child care, and improving healthcare and opportunities for women, using the tools of the Comptroller's office and the role of fiscal watchdog to center cisgender and transgender girls and women in a just recovery for NYC.

From the Comptroller's office, Brad will leverage all the tools of NYC's government to center gender equity in a just recovery for NYC.

KEY GOALS

- Close the gender pay gap in the public and private sector through equity audits of city agency employment practices, public policy to raise wages in industries where women predominate, and shareholder action to demand equity from corporations.
- Provide the support needed for women to thrive equally by investing in childcare and health care, including mental and reproductive health care, and advancing flexible workplace leave policies.
- Invest in the care economy to improve wages and benefits for care workers.
- Advance equality in representation and leadership from the classroom to the boardroom to City Hall through hiring, audits, and shareholder action.

Core strategies to fight relentlessly for gender equity from the Comptroller's office:

- Demand change from companies as one of the world's largest institutional investors.
- Make NYC government set an example as the City's largest employer.
- Leverage procurement reforms to expand pay and opportunities in city contracting.
- Engage in budget oversight and advocacy to prioritize investments in childcare and healthcare.
- Advocate for public policy to advance gender equity in the workplace.

AS AN INVESTOR

New York City's five pension funds have a quarter-trillion dollars under management, making NYC one of the world's largest institutional investors with holdings in funds and companies all across the US and global economies. These funds represent the retirement security of the city's teachers, nurses, crossing guards, payroll administrators, and so many more working people, predominantly women. As a fiduciary, the comptroller must guarantee maximum risk-adjusted returns, so the funds will be there when they need them.

That means looking not only at the risks in individual companies or sectors, but in the economy as a whole, and developing an investment strategy to address systemic risks (like inequality and climate change), and to support broad economic growth. Demanding gender equity in the economy is a prudent, responsible investing strategy, that will increase returns and help our economy to thrive.

As comptroller, Brad will implement a Strategic Plan for Responsible Fiduciary Investing that centers gender equity. That means demanding pay equity in the workplace, women and LGBTQ+ trustees in the boardroom, reproductive healthcare, child care, and workplace policies that support women. As a fiduciary to the city's five pension funds, Brad will hold fund managers and the companies that NYC invests in accountable to meet gender equity goals:

- Pay equity: Brad will build on the work of the NYCERS pay equity initiative, which has successfully pushed insurance and healthcare companies to disclose pay gap data and create plans to eliminate gender pay disparities. He will join and provide aggressive leadership as part of ShareAction's Workforce Disclosure Initiative, which is leading the way in demanding that companies across the economy provide transparency about pay inequities, identify the risks it exposes them to, and make plans to address it.
- Corporate governance: Brad will work to advance gender and racial equity through shareholder resolutions and activism. He will build on the current Comptroller's Boardroom Accountability Project initiatives, which called on publicly-traded companies to adopt a policy requiring the consideration of both women and people of color for every open board seat and for CEO appointments, a version of the "Rooney Rule" pioneered by the National Football League (NFL).
- Reproductive healthcare and child care: Brad will join the Reproductive Health Investors Alliance, a coalition of investors who work together through shareholder resolutions and economically targeted investments to make high-quality, equitable sexual, reproductive, and maternal health available to all.
- Sexual harassment: Institutional investors ignore sexual harassment at their peril. Brad will push companies to address workplace culture and accountability processes by demanding disclosure of policies, incidents, and responses.

AS AN EMPLOYER

With more than 300,000 public employees, the New York City government is the largest employer in the city. The Comptroller's office can play an important role in working to hold city government accountable to high standards for gender equity as an employer, working to ensure equal pay, fair hiring practices, a leadership development pipeline, and robust anti-discrimination and harassment practice across city agencies.

Starting with an assessment of gender equity and workplace culture in the Comptroller's office itself before taking office, Brad will use audits of city agencies to transform NYC government into a model employer. Brad will:

- Establish an "equity audit" team within the Comptroller's Audit Bureau to analyze disparities of pay equity, leadership diversity, service delivery, and outcomes in city agencies and programs. Brad was a co-sponsor of legislation to require the city to issue public reports on pay disparities in the municipal workforce, and will use that new data to target broader changes at particularly problematic agencies. More on Brad's plan for equity audits here.
- Publish anonymized data on sexual harassment claims settled by the city to help identify agencies where additional accountability processes and leadership changes are needed to ensure a safe and respectful workplace culture.
- Work with the City Council to amend the authority of the Commissioner of the Department of Investigations to appoint a Special Inspector General, who would have full subpoena power outside the line-of-authority to the mayor, to conduct investigations of harassment, discrimination, and retaliation and make public recommendations. Read more about Brad's approach to reforming City government accountability processes to address harassment or assault.

IN PROCUREMENT

New York City spends approximately \$19 billion a year on contracts for goods and services to businesses and nonprofits. Through procurement reforms, support for M/WBEs, and living and prevailing wage enforcement, Brad will work to raise pay in sectors

that predominantly employ women, demand that corporations pay women and people of color fairly, and aggressively expand opportunities for women and minority-owned businesses.

- Aggressively pursue M/WBE enforcement and support policies that increase access to contracting opportunities for women and minority-owned businesses in all city agencies. M/WBEs are the lifeblood of our local economy and create high-quality local jobs to support the city's long-term economic recovery. As Comptroller, Brad will explore new ways to invest our city's pension funds into NYC-based M/WBE businesses, support the creation of a separate loan and bond program for M/WBEs to expand and grow, expand M/WBE mentorship and support programs, and push for more accountability of the city's progress toward supporting M/WBEs through hard-hitting audits and the creation of standardized metrics on how well the city is helping M/WBEs. The work to advance opportunities and leadership of women in NYC's contracting starts in the Comptroller's office, with more aggressive efforts to move toward gender parity in contracted fund managers. Read more about Brad's plans to increase contracting opportunities for women-owned businesses.
- Advocate for expansion of living and prevailing wage laws in the care economy and expand enforcement by working in partnership with workers rights organizations. Far too many of the women who kept our city running during this pandemic providing critical and lifesaving support like legal services, housing assistance, and homecare aren't paid enough to make ends meet. As Comptroller, Brad will work with City Council members to expand the city's living wage law to cover the city's contracted human service providers, including workers in foster care, home care, day care, youth and senior services, housing and shelter assistance, and workforce training, among others. The Comptroller's office also plays a critical role in enforcing existing and future prevailing and living wage laws. Brad will strengthen the office's enforcement by working in partnership with workers rights organizations on strategic initiatives to raise standards sector-wide.

IN BUDGETING

With President Biden's American Rescue Plan, New York City has about \$13 billion in federal relief funding coming its way. NYC must set clear and specific goals to ensure these funds are used to advance equity, stimulate shared prosperity, and prepare for the future. As laid out in Brad's recent op-ed in the Daily News, the Mayor should immediately set up an American Rescue Plan Spending Tracker to set and hold the City accountable to those goals.

As Comptroller, Brad will keep a sharp eye on the federal relief spending and the City budget to make sure it is balanced for the long term and in accordance with our goals for a more just city. Budgets are moral documents and City spending decisions reflect who and what we value.

Among other priorities, Brad will work to prioritize investments in two key areas to advance gender equity: child care and education.

Child care has long been one of the largest expenses for NYC families. Center-based child care consumes an average of 31% of median household income for NYC families, a significant burden on many families and often the cause of women leaving the workforce temporarily or indefinitely, with long-term consequences for their careers and earnings. At the same time, child care facilities operate on slim margins with high fixed costs, and workers in the industry, predominately Black and Latina women are paid little more than minimum wage.

Brad fought for the state to release federal funding for child care centers during the pandemic, reopen them safely with the funds needed, and his advocacy for wrap-around child care service led the City to create the Learning Bridges program. As Comptroller, Brad will work to ensure that the City uses one-time federal stimulus money and recurring state and local funding in smart ways to expand affordable child care for NYC families, pay child care workers fairly, and get students back to school safely and supportively, including by:

- Make child care a core priority in spending the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds: New York must make smart use of the \$2.3 billion in federal funding earmarked for child care spending in the state next year. In line with the Campaign for Children's demands, the city should use these funds to create true universal access to infant and toddler care, achieve true universality in both 3K-

for-all and UPK for all four-year-olds, access to extended day, full year programs, after school and summer camp, and multi-year funding to support sustainable summer youth programming. All of these programs must have the resources they need to serve young children with developmental delays and disabilities in preschool education and afterschool programs.

- Fully fund the city's child care contracts, including raises and cost of living adjustments for workers: Brad will fight hard to expand the city's living wage standard to all of the city's human service workers, including our child care workers. These contracts are almost always underfunded, making it difficult to attract and retain workers to this critical sector. As Comptroller, Brad will fight to ensure that those wage increases are funded -- in addition to pay escalators in multi-year contracts and cost of living adjustments. With over a decade of experience in nonprofit administration, Brad also understands that contracts must be flexible, especially when non-profits are forced to be nimble and innovative in response to a crisis like COVID-19. As Comptroller, Brad will fight to ensure these nonprofits can be reimbursed for the critical services keeping kids safe and meeting families' most basic needs.
- Ensure new federal and state school funding is used to reopen schools safely and supportively. Brad will be a watchdog overseeing spending of the new nearly \$7 billion in additional federal school funding and \$600 million annually in Foundation Aid -- fighting to ensure it is used for guidance counselors, nurses, social workers to schools, lower class sizes, bring arts and other social and emotional programming into schools, and ensure equitable technology access. Read more about Brad's approach to reopening schools safely and supportively.

IN PUBLIC POLICY

When work obligations and domestic obligations conflict, all too often women are the ones who are forced to make compromises or sacrifices, at a high cost. On a broad scale, that pattern leads to pushing women out of the workforce temporarily or permanently, leaving them with lower earnings and fewer opportunities.

Brad has been a long-time advocate for fair scheduling and flexible workplace policies, including fighting to pass the city's Paid Sick Leave Law over Mayor Bloomberg's veto in 2013 and passing some of the first Fair Work Week Laws in the country to guarantee two weeks notice of work schedules so that workers can plan for child care, appointments, and other needs.

As Comptroller, Brad will continue to develop and advocate for public policy to support working families, including expanding fair scheduling laws, paid family leave, paid sick leave, and will pursue new approaches to guaranteeing flexible time-off policy for caregivers during and beyond the pandemic. Brad will:

- Enforce and Strengthen the city's Fair Work Week Laws. As Comptroller, Brad will work with the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection and City Council to strengthen and expand the city's Fair Workweek Laws by highlighting egregious corporate actors and advocating for new fair scheduling laws in industries beyond fast food and retail.
- Fight to strengthen and expand paid sick and family leave laws, including by expanding NYC's paid sick leave to cover gig workers and adding a private right of action so that any workers denied paid sick and family leave can bring bad actor employers to court, hold them accountable, and get the benefits they deserve.
- Expand the City's Fair and Flexible Scheduling Laws. Brad will provide the policy research and economic analysis to make the case for new legislation that would require companies to develop flexible time off, work from home, and fair scheduling policies for caregivers.