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JON D. RIVERA
Assemblymember 149th District
Erie County

March 19, 2026

Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Members of the Erie County Legislature:

I write to you today to urge your body to convene a public hearing with the Erie County Sheriff's Office to bring transparency and accountability to the deeply troubling circumstances surrounding the death of Nurul Amin Shah Alam on February 24.

Mr. Shah Alam's death has raised urgent and unanswered questions, most notably regarding how he was transferred from the custody of the Erie County Sheriff's Office into the hands of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and whether that transfer was conducted in a manner consistent with public safety, human dignity, and the rule of law.

At a minimum, this hearing should clearly and publicly establish the policies and protocols that govern interactions between the Sheriff's Office and federal immigration authorities. In plain terms, the Legislature and the public deserve to know: When the Sheriff's Office detains a foreign-born individual, what procedures are followed? Under what circumstances do deputies contact federal agencies? What standards guide the decision to transfer custody? And what safeguards are in place to ensure that individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable such as Mr. Shah Alam, are not placed in harm's way?

The facts as we understand them suggest a disturbing breakdown in judgment and accountability. Despite the fact that federal immigration detainers are requests, not mandates, the Erie County Sheriff's Office made the decision to involve federal authorities. That decision ultimately resulted in Mr. Shah Alam being placed into a situation that proved dangerous and, tragically, fatal.

These circumstances underscore why I have been a longtime co-sponsor and supporter of the New York For All Act (S.2235/A3506). This legislation would prohibit state and local resources from being diverted to carry out a cruel and inhumane federal deportation agenda. At a time when immigrant New Yorkers face heightened threats, we must take clear steps to prevent local and state law enforcement agencies from collaborating with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection in ways that compromise safety, due process, and basic human rights.

The New York For All Act would ensure that New York's state and local government agencies, including police departments and sheriff's offices, are prohibited from colluding with federal immigration authorities, disclosing sensitive personal information, or diverting personnel and



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resources to further federal immigration enforcement efforts.

Mr. Shah Alam’s death is a stark example of what can happen when local agencies blur the line between public safety and federal immigration enforcement. It is precisely why transparency, oversight, and clear boundaries are so essential.

A public hearing is a necessary first step toward restoring public trust, establishing accountability, and ensuring that no individual is ever again placed in such a vulnerable and dangerous position due to failures within our own local systems.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jon D. Rivera
Member of Assembly
District 149

Sarah Wooton
Partnership for the Public Good
Director of Community Research



Murad Awawdeh
President and CEO
New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC)

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